



**Governance and Priorities Committee Report
For the Meeting of December 3, 2015**

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** November 27, 2015
From: Katie Hamilton, Director of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning
Subject: Public Engagement for Johnson Street Bridge Public Realm Areas

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to update Council on the outcomes of the Johnson Street Bridge Public Realm workshop and outline recommended next steps for broader public input.

BACKGROUND

At the August 20 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting, Council directed staff to proceed with public engagement on the urban design of the public realm areas around the Johnson Street Bridge in the fall of 2015 and report back to Council with a public realm design and corresponding budget options.

In October, the City hosted a design workshop involving more than 25 people representing stakeholder groups including the Downtown Residents Association, Victoria West Community Association, the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Reliance Properties, Merrick Architecture, members of the City's new Accessibility Task Force, the Delta and Swans hotels, Ralmax, members of Council, PCL, MMM, and staff.

Using plan view drawings of the bridge site, participants worked together to discuss current design challenges as well as opportunities around use of space, connectivity, accessibility, and opportunities for art and placemaking. Input from the workshop was used to produce two different concept plans for re-envisioned designs of the public spaces.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Both concepts build off themes previously identified through earlier engagement with the community in 2012 including a desire for enhanced walkability and cycling connections, improving overall accessibility, a desire to enhance opportunities to view the harbour, and opportunities to animate the spaces through community events, festivals, and entertainment. Both concepts introduce new ideas for how people will move through and enjoy the public spaces around the bridge area and take into consideration the new opportunities with the adjacent park space in the former s-curve area.

These concepts have been reviewed by Engineering, Transportation, and Parks staff to advise on any technical challenges or constraints and are now being developed into illustrative drawings to provide the community with a sense of how the space would feel and be animated.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Recommended next steps include working with both the Downtown and Victoria West Community Associations to co-host an event with the broader public in January where the illustrations can be shared and the community can help identify the preferred option or elements for the public realm areas. Illustrations of the two concepts will also be shared online with an opportunity for the public to provide online feedback.

Results of public input will be shared with Council along with cost estimates for the preferred elements identified by the community as soon as possible after the January engagement period. Staff will also recommend funding options for Council to consider. As mentioned to Council in the August 2015 GPC report on the public realm, there is currently not enough budget in the cash allowance to complete the original landscape and public realm plans.

As there is a strong desire from the community to minimize the footprint of the construction area and see public areas returned to the public as they become available, PCL will complete the landscaping for the boulevard areas west of Harbour Road and along the south end of Harbour Road, and on the eastern public space between Johnson Street and Wharf Street in the coming weeks. These areas were not contemplated in detail during the stakeholder workshop and further public input is not needed to proceed. This is expected to make a positive difference to the businesses in the immediate area. This work is expected to cost \$50,000 will be funded through the cash allowance identified for the Johnson Street Bridge Public Realm areas.

Final landscape construction plans for the public realm areas would be completed by a landscape architect to apply a consistent look and feel across all public spaces in the areas around the bridge.

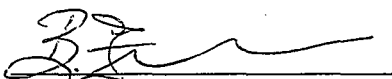
CONCLUSION

Results of public input will be shared with Council along with cost estimates for the preferred elements identified by the community as soon as possible after the January engagement period. Staff will also recommend funding options for Council to consider.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

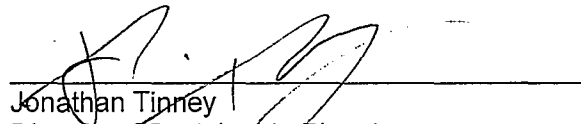
Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Frewer
Citizen Engagement Advisor



Katie Hamilton
Director of Citizen Engagement
and Strategic Planning



Jonathan Tinney
Director of Sustainable Planning
and Community Development



Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager: _____

Date: Dec. 1, 2015