



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: April 3, 2007
Author: David
Ramslie/Graham
Winterbottom/Michael
Gordon
Phone No.: 604.871.6195
604.871.6419
604.873.7665
RTS No.: 05507
VanRIMS No.: 11-3600-10
Meeting Date: May 15, 2007

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Current Planning in consultation with the General Manager of
Engineering Services and Director of Legal Services
SUBJECT: Davie Street Sidewalk Widening - Establishing two Building Lines

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Director of Planning be instructed to make application to amend Part II of Schedule E, Building Lines of the Zoning and Development By-law to establish two building lines, one being 7 feet (2.13 metres) north of the current northerly limit of Davie Street, and the second being 7 feet (2.13 metres) south of the current southerly limit of Davie Street, both extending from the westerly limit of Burrard Street to the easterly limit of Jervis Street, to facilitate a future increase of sidewalk width and that the application be referred to a Public Hearing; and

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary by-law generally in accordance with Appendix "A", for consideration at Public Hearing.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS the approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

The Downtown Transportation Plan, Adopted July 2002

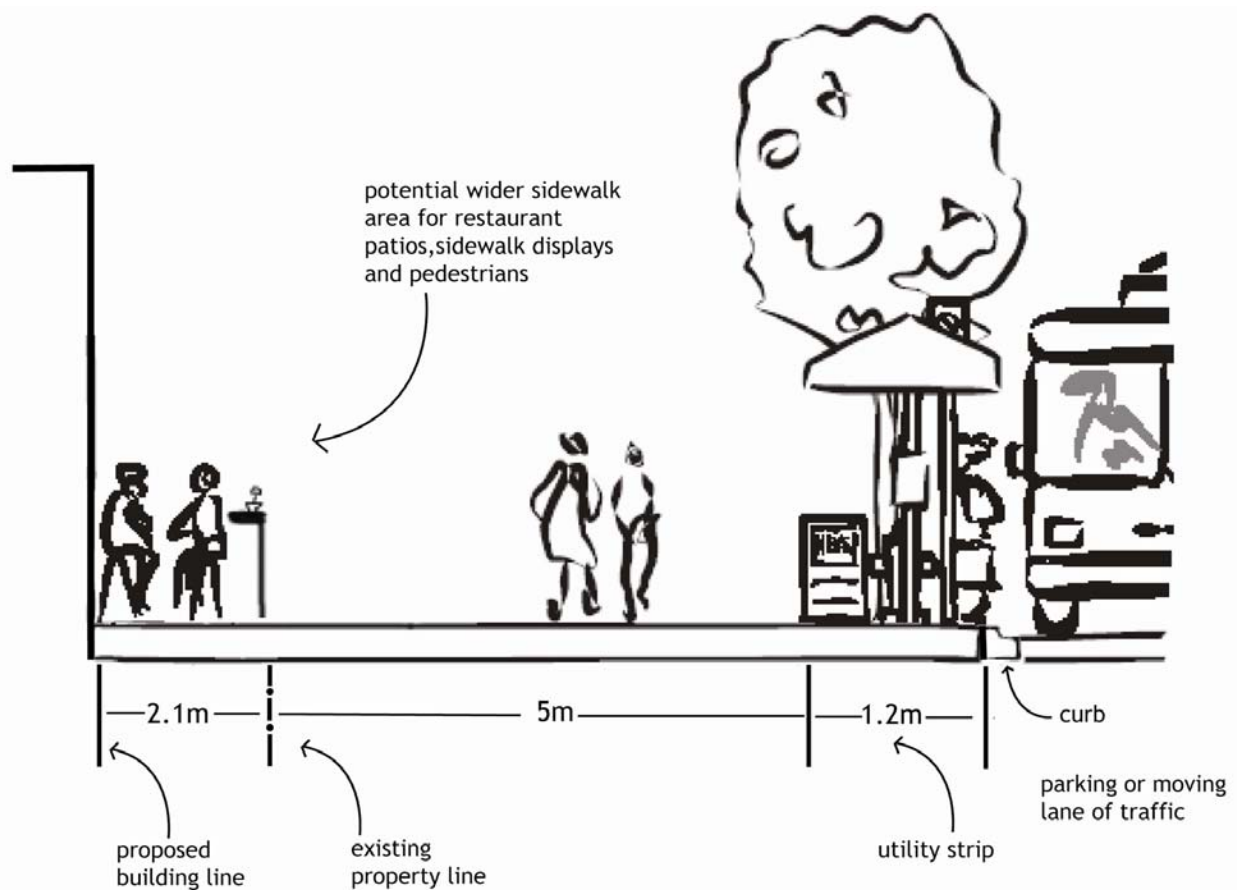
Section 4.3 of the Downtown Transportation Plan, identifies Davie Street for the purpose of promoting and facilitating walking as a more attractive transportation alternative:

- Pedestrian Recommendation PD-19 further recommends to widen sidewalks on Davie Street between Burrard Street and Jarvis Street using building setbacks.

PURPOSE

This report recommends the referral to Public Hearing of a proposed amendment of Part II of Schedule E of the Zoning and Development By-Law to establish two building lines on Davie Street between Burrard and Jarvis Streets, for the purpose of widening the sidewalks, by requiring a 2.1m (seven ft.) setback for new development.

FIGURE ONE



BACKGROUND

The Zoning and Development By-law, through the establishment of building lines, regulates the construction of improvements or new buildings within those areas designated for future public realm improvements, such as widening sidewalks. The building line requires that the front façade of new buildings be setback a minimum distance from the property line. Building lines can be found on many streets in downtown Vancouver such as West Pender Street, Robson Street and Davie Street.

The City of Vancouver Transportation Plan, adopted in May 1997, identifies neighbourhood centres, like the 'Davie Village' as places "where pedestrian environments are to be especially encouraged. Davie Street is a neighbourhood centre for the West End and Downtown South, attracting significant vehicular, transit, and pedestrian volumes. The sidewalks must be wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and sidewalk activities, such as retail flower displays and outdoor seating for cafes and restaurants." This policy requires attention as pedestrian volumes are projected to increase on Davie Street as the population of Downtown South increases.

The Downtown Transportation Plan adopted in July 2002 proposed among its recommendations that, "to accommodate the demand for sidewalk space, new buildings on Davie Street between Burrard Street and Jervis Street could be setback to allow for wider sidewalks similar to Robson Street or Davie Street in Downtown South."

DISCUSSION

The Davie Street corridor is vital not only to pedestrians but to many other modes of transportation on the downtown peninsula. Davie Street is identified as a transit corridor in the City of Vancouver Transportation Plan and is currently serviced by three transit routes, the Number Six bus and the C21 and C23 Community Shuttles. There is also off-peak, on-street parking that accommodates shoppers and is well-utilized and highly valued by the local merchants.

Although public transit and private automobiles rank below walking in terms of the City of Vancouver's transportation hierarchy, both of these modes are very important to Davie Street as they increase the viability of Davie Street as a neighbourhood centre shopping area and contribute to the City's network of transit corridors. Therefore, it is not recommended that the expansion of the sidewalks be done by narrowing or eliminating one or more of the travel lanes as this would either result in delays to the transit service or the loss of on-street parking. Rather, it is recommended that the building line be used to widen the sidewalks. An excellent example of this use of building lines, and a precedent for the recommendation in this report, is Robson Street where building lines have resulted in wider sidewalks and a much more attractive pedestrian environment.

The use of building lines would accomplish the sidewalk widening without any disruption to existing buildings, and without any cost to the City of Vancouver.

To achieve the required additional amount of sidewalk space that is required, an additional seven feet of sidewalk width for each side of Davie Street is needed. This would be best achieved by using two building lines, one measured 2.1 m (seven ft.) north from the northerly

limit of Davie Street, and another measured 2.1m (7 ft) south of the southerly limit of Davie Street, with both extending from the westerly most limit of Burrard Street to the easterly limit of Jervis Street. The proposed building lines are illustrated in Figure Two below.

The building line does not affect the development potential of the sites because the full permitted density is still permitted and underground parking levels can be accommodated efficiently.

It should be noted that proposals for building renovations which involve existing permanent structures (e.g. rebuilding storefronts) go to the Board of Variance for approval if they are located within the setback area defined by the building line. This is standard practice on Robson Street, for example. The cost and time required are minimal and virtually all proposals are approved.

The use of building lines on Davie Street for sidewalk widening received wide spread public support when it was packaged with other recommendations as part of the Downtown Transportation Plan. Since that time a series of meetings have also been held with local stakeholder groups, the Davie Village BIA has expressed support for the establishment of the building line while the West End Residents Association is in favour of the creation of wider sidewalks, but by narrowing the street and eliminating parking. Nonetheless, there is widespread support for widening the sidewalks in Davie Village.

FIGURE TWO. Map of Proposed Building Lines



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications with respect to City budget, fees, or staffing.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The City of Vancouver's goals of moving towards more sustainable forms of transportation in hopes of reducing Green House Gases are clearly outlined in Section 2.3 of the Downtown Transportation Plan, where it states that the City of Vancouver should "encourage more sustainable transportation modes such as walking". Wider sidewalks will not only facilitate a higher capacity for pedestrians on the sidewalks, but also provide more opportunity for amenities, such as café seating and sidewalk displays on Davie Street to make it a more attractive pedestrian destination.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

With Council approval of the recommendation, the Director of Planning will make application to amend Part II of Schedule E, Building Lines, of the Zoning & Development By-Law to establish two new Building Lines as described above. The application will be considered at a Public Hearing following preparation of the necessary amending bylaw by the Director of Legal Services, in accordance with Appendix "A."

CONCLUSION

The widening of sidewalks on Davie Street supports the City of Vancouver's goal of building a more walkable and vibrant downtown with a wide variety of transportation choices. By choosing to use building lines to accomplish this initiative Council will be using the most cost effective and least disruptive method possible.

* * * * *

Proposed Amendment to Part II of Schedule E of 3575 the Zoning and Development By-law

Davie Street, north side, from Burrard Street to Jervis Street

A building line commencing at a point on the westerly limit of Burrard Street, distant 7 feet northerly, measured along the said westerly limit from its intersection with the northerly limit of Davie Street; thence westerly in a straight line to a point on the easterly limit of Jervis Street, distant 7 feet northerly measured along the said easterly limit from its intersection with the northerly limit of Davie Street.

Davie Street, south side, from Burrard Street to Jervis Street

A building line commencing at a point on the westerly limit of Burrard Street, distant 7 feet southerly, measured along the said westerly limit from its intersection with the northerly limit of Davie Street; thence westerly in a straight line to a point on the easterly limit of Jervis Street, distant 7 feet southerly measured along the said easterly limit from its intersection with the northerly limit of Davie Street.