



# A7

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 23, 2009  
Contact: Jerry Dobrovolny  
Jessica Chen  
Contact No.: 604.873.7331  
604.873.7305  
RTS No.: 6509  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: April 7, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Planning and the General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Carrall Street Greenway: Electrical Infrastructure Funding Allocation

### RECOMMENDATION

- A. *THAT Council approve the concept plan for electrical infrastructure on the Carrall Street Greenway, as detailed in this report and set out in Appendix A, to support community event programming;*
- B. *THAT Council approve the construction of the electrical infrastructure at the Hastings Street and Chinatown nodes of the Carrall Street Greenway, as detailed in this report, at an estimated cost of \$760,000 with funding to be provided as follows:*
  - *\$400,000 from the 2004 Capital Budget for Downtown Eastside Revitalization - Public Realm Improvements*
  - *\$360,000 from the 2009 Streets Basic Capital Budget (Carrall Street Greenway), subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget, with funding provided from the 2009-11 borrowing authority approved by plebiscite; and,*
- C. *THAT Council approve an increase of \$36,500 for maintenance costs to the Engineering Operating Budget, without offset, beginning in 2010 and subject to an annual Budget Review.*

### GENERAL MANAGERS' COMMENTS

The General Managers of Community Services and Engineering Services RECOMMEND approval of the foregoing.

## CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

## COUNCIL POLICY

*On April 28, 2005, Council approved the concept design and a long-term vision for the Carrall Street Greenway. The general principles for the greenway included facilitating community programming of public spaces along the Greenway.*

*July 13, 2006, Council approved the detailed design and the budget for construction and maintenance of the Carrall Street Greenway. This approval did not include costs related to the installation of electrical infrastructure for community event programming, as the concept plan was not yet fully developed.*

## PURPOSE

This report recommends Council approve the concept plan for the electrical infrastructure along the Carrall Street Greenway and the funding for the construction of the electrical infrastructure at the Hastings Street and Chinatown nodes to support and encourage community events and activity in the public realm.

## BACKGROUND

The Carrall Street Greenway is identified as a strategic initiative in the Downtown Transportation Plan and Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan. In addition to completing the downtown seawall loop by providing water-to-water connection between False Creek and Burrard Inlet, this infrastructure project is expected to contribute to neighbourhood revitalization by creating an improved public realm and a setting for community activities and events.

Council approved the detailed design and budget in July 2006, and construction of the Greenway is currently underway. Three blocks (Hastings Street to Expo Boulevard) have been completed. The block between Water and Cordova Streets is currently under construction, and the block adjacent to Pigeon Park (Cordova to Hastings Streets) will be constructed this summer.

## DISCUSSION

There are a series of public parks and historic plazas along the Carrall Street Greenway serving a very diverse population. Events and programs that currently take place in these areas are important, as they activate the public realm and encourage the collaboration and cooperation of diverse communities.

Through consultation on the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Public Realm Program Plan, jointly commissioned by the Planning Department and the Board of Parks and Recreation, the community identified that a key challenge to holding events is gaining access to supporting infrastructure, such as electrical outlets. In order to support community events and activities along on the Greenway, it is recommended that the City install electrical infrastructure in key locations and that this infrastructure be available for community use.

### *Proposed Electrical Infrastructure Design*

The electrical infrastructure concept plan is attached as Appendix A. It shows three areas along the Greenway identified as “nodes” for public programming activity which are the focus areas of the electrical infrastructure. Appendix B describes each community node and the type of programming activities that will benefit from the electrical infrastructure proposed in this report.

The concept plan includes 17 pedestals that house electrical outlets (referred to as “load centres”) along the Greenway in each of the three neighbourhood nodes of Chinatown, Hastings Street, and Gastown. Load centres will be installed on either or both sides of the Greenway to suit the programming needs of each node, as identified in the DTES Public Realm Programming Plan. The proposed design aligns the load centres with the street trees and trolley poles in order to minimize visual and circulation obstructions along the Greenway.

In order to power these load centres, three electrical transformer/distribution kiosks will be required near the power source in the laneways, along with associated underground conduits and wiring. The transformer kiosks will convert electricity from the power source into a voltage suitable for programming use, such as equipment used for sound, lighting and light-load food preparation. Each kiosk will have capacity to provide power for the load centres and other electrical needs such as new and existing street lighting and traffic signals along the Greenway. For the Hastings node, the kiosk will also provide power to an automated public toilet to be installed as part of the planned renovation to Pigeon Park.

The three kiosks are more difficult to accommodate along the Greenway due to their large size and siting requirements. One kiosk will be set into the lane façade of the Pennsylvania Hotel (412 Carrall Street), and staff are exploring similar options for the Hastings Street and Gastown kiosks in order to minimize their presence.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated cost for the proposed electrical infrastructure at the Hastings Street and Chinatown nodes is \$760,000 including material and labour costs, with the source of funds being \$400,000 from the 2004 Capital Budget for Downtown Eastside Revitalization - Public Realm Improvements and \$360,000 from the 2009 Streets Basic Capital Budget for the Carrall Street Greenway, subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

The long term success of the electrical infrastructure will require annual maintenance and a corresponding increase to the Operating Budget. A funding increase of \$36,500, without offset, is recommended to the Electrical Operating Budget beginning in 2010 and subject to an annual review.

The funding for the electrical infrastructure at the Gastown node is expected to be requested in conjunction with the 2012 - 2014 Capital Plan request for the reconstruction of Maple Tree Square.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The electrical infrastructure planned for the Chinatown and Hastings Street nodes will be implemented in 2009, given the opportunity to coordinate with Greenway construction. The Gastown node will require extensive electrical work at Maple Tree Square and thus will be coordinated with the reconstruction of the Square. Reconstruction of Maple Tree Square is anticipated to be included in the 2012-2014 Capital Plan, and funding for the Gastown node of the Carrall Street Greenway electrical infrastructure will be included as part of that funding request.

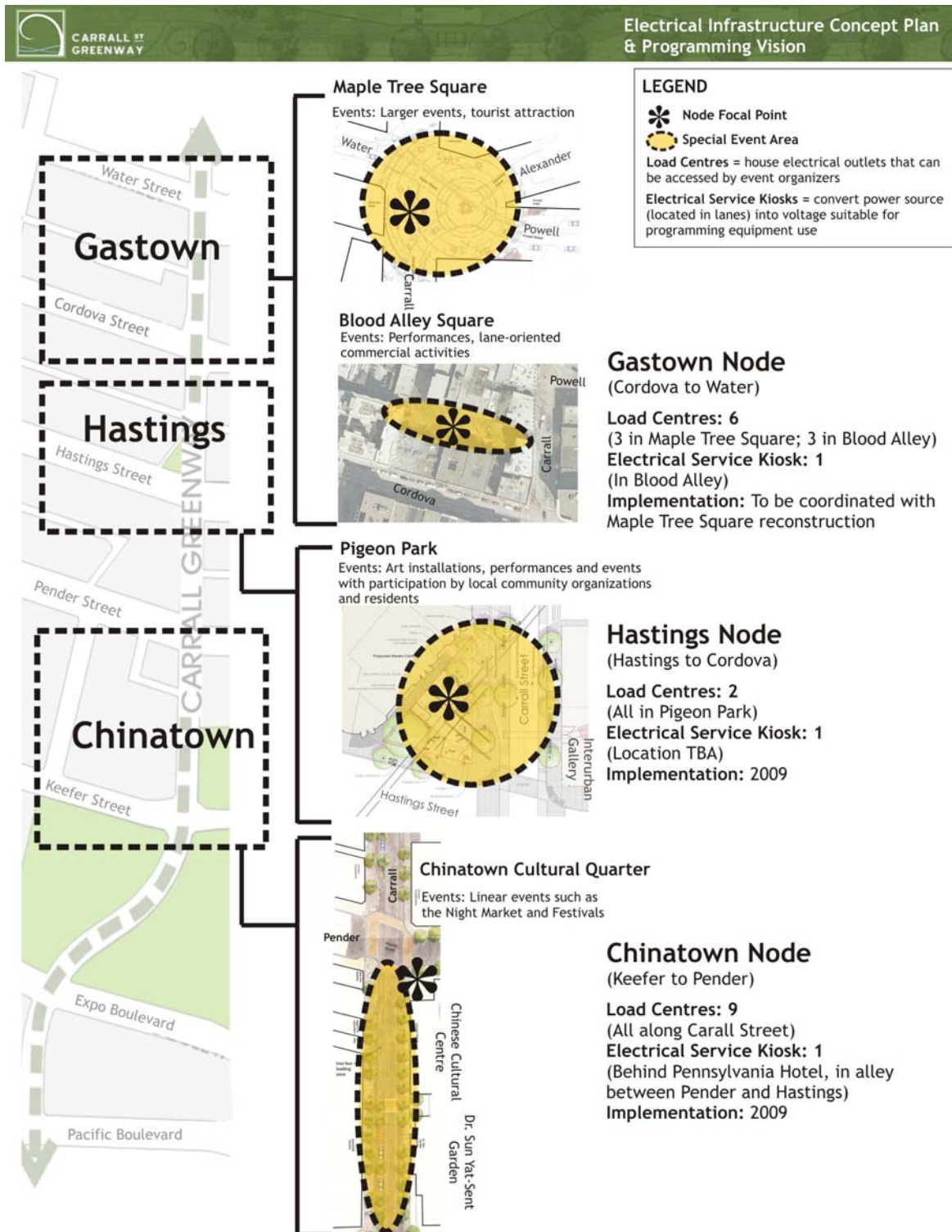
Once the electrical infrastructure is in place, staff will arrange for volunteer community stewardship to coordinate public access by event organizers. This approach has already proven successful in the neighbourhood and builds a sense of ownership of the public realm. For example, events in Chinatown's Memorial Square (intersection of Keefer and Columbia) are coordinated the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association (VCMA), with the VCMA recovering user fees (i.e. BC Hydro fees) from event organizers. This model of community stewardship will be extended to the Carrall Street Greenway facilitating partnerships between community groups and ensuring coordination of electrical infrastructure use. Arrangements for community stewardship of the electrical infrastructure will be made once the concept plan and construction budget have been approved.

## CONCLUSION

The Carrall Street Greenway is a significant public investment by the City of Vancouver. Providing electrical infrastructure accessible to the community will activate the public realm and contribute to neighbourhood revitalization in the Downtown Eastside.

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*Carrall Street Greenway - Electrical Infrastructure Concept Plan and Programming Vision*



### *Carrall Street Greenway - Community Nodes to Activate the Public Realm*

Programming themes and activities have been identified for the Downtown Eastside in the DTES Public Realm Program Plan, including three community nodes along the Carrall Street Greenway as described below.

#### *1) Chinatown - Cultural Quarter*

The Pender-Keefer block of the Greenway runs through the core of the "Chinatown Cultural Quarter", where major cultural facilities including the Chinese Cultural Centre and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden are located. This portion of the Greenway is also a strategic link to Chinatown's network of public spaces including the Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard and Park, Chinatown Memorial Square and Shanghai Alley.

Programming focus for the Chinatown node will include linear events along the Greenway, such as events similar to the Chinatown Night Market with vendor booths. Programming along the Greenway will complement existing events in Chinatown, such as the Chinatown Arts and Culture Festival and the Winter Solstice celebration in the Sun Yat-Sen Courtyard. The Pender-Carrall intersection will be emphasized as a focal point along the Greenway particularly for tourists and visitors. Public art developed through the Storyscapes Chinatown project, celebrating Chinese & Aboriginal friendship, will be located at this intersection. A Tourist Kiosk is also planned for the vicinity.

#### *2) Hastings Street - Pigeon Park*

The intersection of Hastings and Carrall Streets is a major point along the Greenway corridor with high volume of pedestrian and vehicular movements. It is also the location of Pigeon Park, a compact urban space, where the old CPR right-of-way and the Greenway intersect. This is an important community node with buildings on each corner being operated by non-profit community organizations (Interurban Gallery, Pennsylvania Hotel, Centre A Contemporary Asian Art Gallery, and the proposed Media Centre at the Merchants Bank building).

Programming at this space will focus on maintaining the Park as a neighbourhood gathering place and an outdoor "living room" for the local community. Previous events such as the Rive Gauche market and the Intersection video and lighting installation had a strong arts theme and focus on engaging local residents. Future programming will continue this theme of partnership between local organizations and participation from the regular park-users.

#### *3) Gastown - Maple Tree Square & Blood Alley Square*

Maple Tree Square is a civic gathering place and destination at the northern end of the Greenway. Often described as the birthplace of the City, Gastown it is also a site of longstanding Aboriginal history and contributions. To the south of Maple Tree Square accessed off the Greenway is Blood Alley Square, a hidden public space that can provide active laneway

commercial use and support community events. Uses and programming at the two public places can further enhance Gastown's role as a tourist destination and attraction with vibrant commercial uses and festivals.

The Gastown neighbourhood has hosted many larger scale events in recent years, such as the Tour de Gastown and Jazz Festival. These programs have been successful in attracting visitors to enhance Gastown as a major tourist destination in the city. Due to its more secluded location and intimate setting, Blood Alley Square has been the location for smaller scale events, especially acoustic musical performances such as the Christmas Bach Choir celebration. The long-term vision for Blood Alley Square is to animate the space through the activation of lane-oriented commercial units and improved infrastructure. In general, future programming in Gastown will focus on events that support the area's new and expanding businesses and provide active enjoyment for area residents and visitors.