



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 28, 2012
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Meeting Date: December 12, 2012

TO: Standing Committee of Planning, Transportation and Environment
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Development of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1, described in this report, be constructed at a cost of \$5,460,000, with funding provided from various Transportation Capital Programs as outlined in the Financial section of this report, with the source of funds to be the 2013 Capital Budget (subject to approval of the 2013 Capital Budget).

REPORT SUMMARY

Walking and cycling are Vancouver's top two transportation priorities. The City is actively committed to making walking and cycling to work, shop or to explore a part of everyday life. Construction of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway will enable people of all ages and abilities to get where they need to go, comfortably, safely and conveniently on foot and by bicycle.

The Comox-Helmcken Greenway is part of the Transportation 2040 Plan's All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network. As part of the City Greenway and Regional Greenway network, the Greenway will connect Stanley Park to False Creek and provide an important east-west walking and cycling connection through the Downtown to compliment the Seawall and the network of downtown separated bike lanes. It will provide residents and visitors with a faster and more direct alternative to the often congested Seawall. In keeping with the project goals and objectives, the Greenway will connect schools, parks, community centres, as well as shopping areas, hotels, residential neighbourhoods and St. Paul's Hospital. Once completed, it will be easier for children to walk or cycle to school and more comfortable for seniors to walk, shop and be socially connected.

During the last year of public consultation we heard from citizens and businesses including seniors and youth that the Greenway should improve safety and accessibility, retain on-street parking and access to their homes and businesses including emergency services, reduce traffic and make it safer to walk and cycle. Meeting the objective of safer walking and cycling will

have impacts on both parking and vehicle circulation. While some people are concerned about these changes, in general 74% of those surveyed support the proposed Greenway design.

The City has developed strategic partnerships to leverage funding, knowledge and research. The Greenway provides a unique opportunity for researchers at Vancouver Coastal Health and UBC to study and evaluate how the Greenway improvements will influence the mobility, perceived safety, health and social connectedness of citizens and seniors in particular. The outcomes will help us to better understand the benefits of investments in the public realm.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Relevant Council Policies include:

- Greenways Plan (1995)
- Transportation Plan (1997)
- Downtown Transportation Plan (2002)
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011)
- Transportation 2040 (2012)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager recommends approval of this report.

REPORT

Background/Context

Development of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1 aligns with many City priorities and initiatives including the three long-term overarching priorities that support the City's recently adopted Transportation 2040 Plan - Economy, People, and Environment.



Economy

The Greenway will support and enhance the services, infrastructure and conditions that sustain a healthy, diverse and resilient local economy.



People

The Greenway will help cultivate and sustain a safe, accessible, vibrant, and caring community for the wide diversity of individuals and families who live in, work in and visit the West End and Yaletown.



Environment

The Greenway will help protect and enhance Vancouver's climate, ecology, natural resources and connections to the city's remarkable natural setting of Stanley Park and False Creek for future generations.

Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling are Vancouver's top two transportation priorities. This was established in the City's 1997 *Transportation Plan*, and recently re-confirmed in *Transportation 2040*.

To increase the number of walking and cycling trips, the City is actively committed to making walking and cycling to work, shop or explore a part of everyday life. The Comox-Helmcken Greenway will enable people of all ages and abilities to get where they need to go, comfortably and safely.

The Greenway will help support two of the Greenest City 2020 actions; Green Transportation and Access to Nature and the Transportation 2040 mode share targets and safety goals. It supports the Green Transportation target of making at least half of all trips by foot, bicycle, and public transit by 2020, and Transportation 2040 target of making at least two-thirds of these trips by 2040. It supports Access to Nature by providing all Vancouver residents a park, greenway, or other green space within a five-minute walk of their homes. The Greenway supports the Transportation 2040 goal of moving toward zero traffic-related fatalities, particularly for at-risk citizens such as children, seniors and those with mobility challenges.

Strategic Analysis

This section of the report provides information on the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1 route alignment, public consultation, Greenway design, pedestrian and cyclist safety, parking, emergency and non-emergency vehicle access, and strategic partnerships.

1.0 Overview

The Comox-Helmcken Greenway is part of the Transportation 2040 Plan's All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network. As part of the City Greenway and Regional Greenway network, the Greenway will connect Stanley Park to False Creek and provide an important east-west walking and cycling connection through the Downtown to compliment the Seawall and the network of downtown separated bike lanes. It will provide residents and visitors with a faster and more direct alternative to the very popular and often congested Seawall. In keeping with the project goals and objectives, the Greenway will connect four schools, one regional park, three neighbourhood parks, two mini-parks, and one community centre, as well as shopping areas, hotels, residential neighbourhoods and St. Paul's Hospital. Once completed, it will be easier for children to walk or cycle to school and more comfortable for seniors to walk, shop and be socially connected.

1.1 Strategic Partnerships

The City has developed strategic partnerships to leverage funding, knowledge and research. The focus of the research has been two-fold: to evaluate how development of the Greenway can influence the mobility, health and social connectedness of seniors, and to evaluate the travel, health, perceived safety, and social impacts of the Greenway improvements across the broader community. Our partners include:

- Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (Vancouver Coastal Health and UBC)
- ICBC
- TransLink
- UBC School of Population and Public Health
- Vancouver School Board

For more information on these strategic partnerships, please refer to Appendix A.

1.2 Route Alignment

The Comox-Helmcken Greenway is being developed in two sections. Section 1 in the West End is approximately 2 kilometres long and links Stanley Park and Hornby Street along Comox,

Burrard and Helmcken Streets. (Refer to Figure 1) Comox Street is primarily multi-family residential with commercial uses including hotels at Denman and Burrard Streets, Lord Roberts Elementary School at Bidwell Street and St. Paul's Hospital at Burrard Street. Helmcken Street between Burrard and Hornby has hotels and retail. Section 2 in Yaletown between Hornby Street and the Seawall is more complex and will require additional listening and learning in the next phase of public consultation.

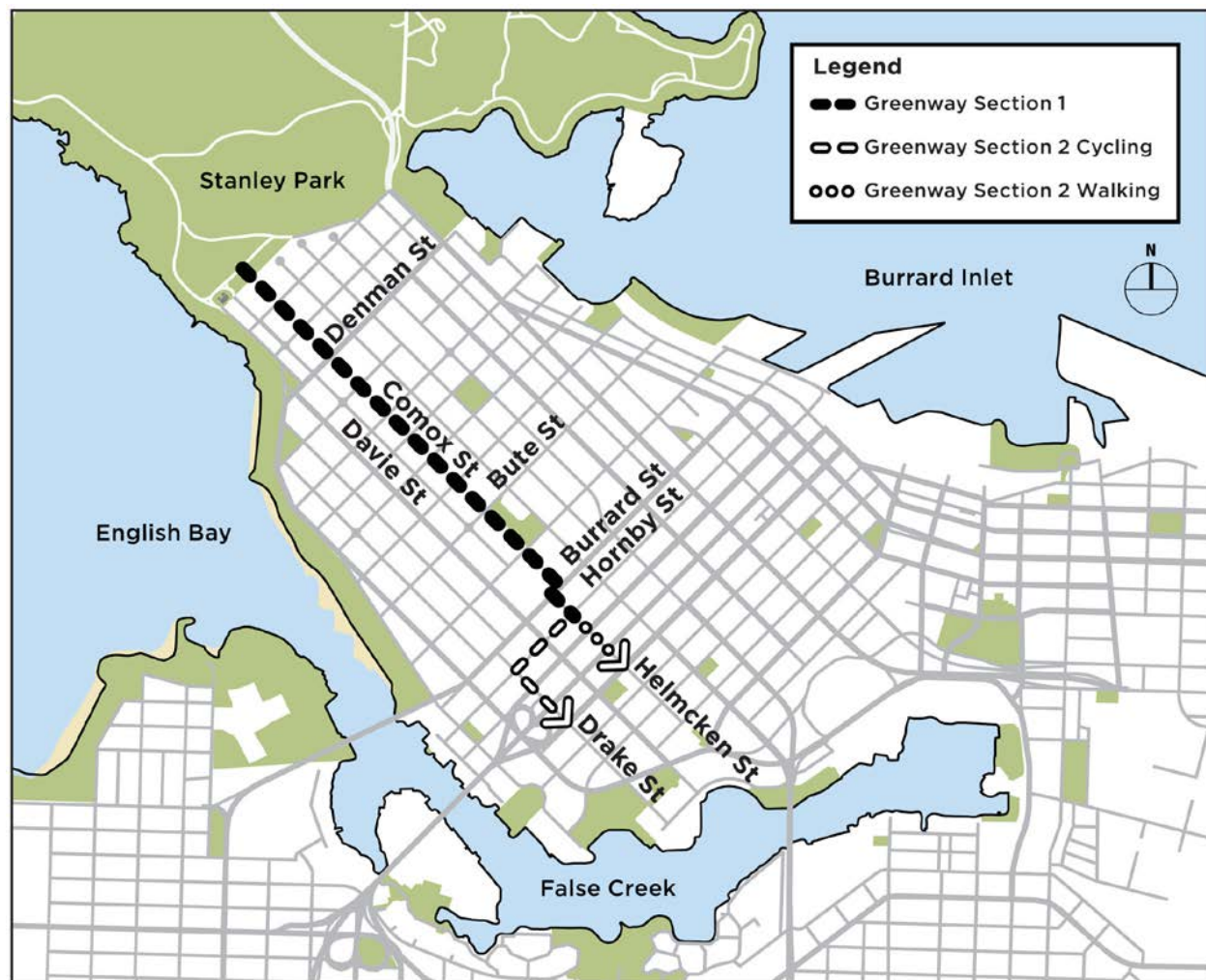


Figure 1 - Comox-Helmcken Greenway Route Alignment

1.3 Public Consultation

The public consultation process was undertaken in two phases and has taken over a year to complete. During the process we undertook some unique work with external partners and as a result we have heard from a wide variety of businesses and citizens including seniors, youth and children. For a summary of events and outreach please refer to Appendix B.

Phase 1 - September/October 2011

In addition to public walking tours and open houses, staff held workshops at the four schools in the Downtown in collaboration with a youth consultant and staff from Social Planning. Staff also held walking tours and workshops with seniors, visited less mobile seniors in care homes and coordinated the seniors' consultation with researchers from the Centre for Hip

Health and Mobility “Active Streets, Active People” (ASAP) program. Staff also met with businesses, the hotels, St. Paul’s Hospital, the West End Seniors Network, the Vancouver School Board, the Stanley Park Ecology Society and other stakeholders. Staff also met with the Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, and the Seniors Advisory Committee.

We heard from citizens that they wanted:

- improved safety and accessibility
- to maintain on-street parking and vehicle access
- less traffic
- better lighting
- wider, more even sidewalks
- bikes off the sidewalk
- safer cycling to school for children
- more places to sit and rest
- more gardens and trees

We heard from businesses and hotels that customer and delivery access, loading and unloading of taxis and coach buses were important to their prosperity, and from St. Paul’s that maintaining convenient and safe passenger drop-off and pick-up near the ER entrance on Comox Street was key to their support of the project. For additional feedback from the hotels and hospital please refer to Appendix B.

Phase 2 - September/October 2012

During Phase 2 staff met with citizens and businesses at four open houses and with stakeholders including the hotels, Taxi Association, Handi-Dart, Stanley Park Ecology Society, Business Improvement Associations and St. Paul’s Hospital to gather feedback on the detailed design and to survey support for the Section 1 design as proposed. Staff also met with the VSB Committee One, the Active Transportation Policy Council, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee.

For the results of the Phase 2 public consultation survey and a summary of feedback from the West End Business Improvement Association and the Taxi Association please refer to Appendix B. Please refer to Appendix E for feedback from the Advisory Committees.

1.4 Greenway Design

The Greenway is designed to balance the needs of citizens and businesses. The objective of providing a safe, convenient and comfortable walking and cycling experience for people of all ages and abilities will be achieved by:

- improving lighting and providing smoother sidewalks to enhance safety and encourage people to walk more often;
- reducing the number of cars on Comox Street to make it safer for walking or cycling to school and more comfortable for people on bicycles to share the street;
- improving intersection safety and accessibility with new signals, lighting, curb bulges and ramps;
- separating cyclists from vehicles on the busier sections next to the hospital and the hotels;
- maintaining on-street parking wherever possible and continuing to work with the West End Community Plan to improve parking throughout the neighbourhood;
- creating places to sit and garden at the corners and mid-block;
- improving safety and accessibility to Stanley Park;

- recognizing the serious safety concerns arising from people cycling on the sidewalk and continuing to work to find solutions;
- maintaining access for Handi-Dart, taxis, coach buses and emergency vehicles;
- enhancing the mini-parks along the route with new seating and lighting to make them more inviting.

For more information on the proposed Greenway design please refer to Appendix C.

1.5 Pedestrian Safety

The West End is primarily a walking neighbourhood with a high percentage of children and seniors where 40% of residents walk to work. People on foot are the most vulnerable users of our streets. They are more likely to be injured or killed when collisions occur, particularly when high speeds are involved. Pedestrians are involved in less than 2% of reported collisions, but account for about 45% of fatalities. Intersections are particularly important, since this is where about 75% of collisions involving people on foot occur.

Pedestrian safety is a key priority of council and will become even more important in the future—as the number of people aged 60 or older is expected to more than double by 2040. Earlier this year the City undertook a Pedestrian Safety Study with the goal of improving pedestrian safety and encouraging more people to walk. Overall, the study found that pedestrian safety in Vancouver has generally been improving and that Vancouver performs well compared to peer cities in North America and Europe. Many of the pedestrian safety treatments from the Study are being implemented as part of the Greenway including corner bulges, pedestrian countdown timers, audible signals, raised crosswalks, and upgraded intersection and street lighting.

For information on the benefits of these treatments please refer to Appendix D.

1.6 Cyclist Safety

Many people are interested in cycling but are afraid of adjacent motor vehicle traffic. For cycling to be a viable and mainstream transportation choice, routes should feel safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults, and novice cyclists.

The Greenway design supports the policies and actions of the Transportation 2040 Plan by:

- lowering the traffic volumes on Comox Street to make it feel more comfortable for people on bicycles to share the street and therefore less likely to feel the need to cycle on the sidewalks
- providing separated bike lanes where appropriate
- improving lighting along the street and at the intersections
- restricting vehicle turning movements at Denman to reduce conflicts and make it safer for novice cyclists crossing Denman
- providing new traffic signals at Denman, Thurlow and Burrard Streets

Residents and the Denman Mall businesses have expressed concerns about the changes in circulation on Comox Street between Denman and Bidwell Streets including the one-way west bound for vehicles and the right-out only turn restrictions at Denman Street. While staff acknowledges that this will present some challenges, the safety benefits of the proposed design are necessary to ensure safe co-existence as we enhance the street for cycling and pedestrians while still accommodating the existing functions such as loading and unloading of taxis and coach buses.

1.7 Parking

We heard that on-street parking was important to residents, visitors and businesses and every effort has been made to retain as much parking as possible. In the residential blocks, on-street parking has been retained with the exception of locations where bulges are proposed to provide space for seating and planting. In the blocks next to the hotels and the hospital separated bike lanes are proposed which will result in the loss of on-street parking.

The total reduction of on-street parking along the Greenway is currently estimated at 56 spaces, of which 27 are currently metered, 3 are two-hour public parking spaces, and 26 are resident permit parking. Of the 27 metered spaces, 21 are near Burrard and 6 are near Denman. The hotels and the hospital provide public parking, and the new hospital expansion will provide additional off-street parking capacity, though this will not replace the on-street parking for residents.

The loss of the 26 resident permit parking spaces is a concern for residents in the affected blocks. This loss represents a 19% reduction in on-street parking supply along the Greenway, a 4% reduction in the corridor which includes one block on either side of the Greenway and about 1% neighbourhood-wide. Changes to residential parking programs are part of the larger West End Community Plan discussion and through that process there are opportunities to address the parking impacts of the Greenway and those identified through the West End Plan process, reduce circling for parking in the West End (which will improve safety and reduce production of GHGs and pollution), and improve parking opportunities for visitors and service providers.

1.8 Emergency and Non-Emergency Vehicle Access

We heard that vehicle access for residents, visitors, taxis, Handi-Dart, coach buses, service providers and emergency services was important. The Greenway has been designed so that emergency vehicles can access any block in any direction, and the separated bike lanes have been designed to accommodate emergency vehicles. Though the existing circulation patterns will change as a result of the proposed one-way streets, non-emergency vehicle access has been maintained along the Greenway. Both Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services and the BC Ambulance Service support the Greenway design including the changes adjacent to St. Paul's Hospital.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk***Financial***

The following five key construction categories together comprise the overall proposed Greenway design and budget.

Category	Description	Amount
Traffic signals	New and upgraded traffic signals	\$1,411,000
Streets	Street paving, concrete medians and curb bulges, catch basins, paint and signs	\$1,020,000
Sidewalks	Sidewalks, curb ramps, raised crosswalks	\$986,000
Lighting	Street, sidewalk and mini-park lighting	\$867,000
Public Realm Amenities	Seating, planting, trees, drinking fountains, wayfinding	\$357,000
Contingency		\$819,000
Total	Construction budget	\$5,460,000

In this report, staff are requesting that Council approve \$5,460,000 from the following 2013 Transportation Capital Plan Program Budgets to enable construction of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1 (subject to approval of the 2013 Capital Budget).

Funding Program	Amount
Active Transportation Corridors and Spot Improvements	\$3,332,000
New sidewalks	\$50,000
Rehabilitation curb ramps	\$75,000
Local streets	\$125,000
City Major Roads	\$100,000
New pedestrian and bike signals construction	\$374,800
Pedestrian and bike signal rehabilitation	\$1,285,000
Street lighting infrastructure	\$118,200
Total	\$5,460,000

Operating budget pressures as a result of the proposed assets include:

Operating Budget	Function	Amount
Electrical	Street lighting maintenance	\$N/A*
Electrical	Traffic signal maintenance	\$30,000
Sanitation	Street sweeping	\$10,000
Streets	Horticultural maintenance	\$10,000
Traffic	Sign and paint maintenance	\$20,000
Parking	Foregone parking meter revenue**	\$250,000

* The proposed LED lighting is more energy efficient and has a longer life span; therefore the maintenance costs associated with the new street and pedestrian lighting will be virtually offset by the energy efficiency.

** Foregone revenue from the 27 metred parking spaces removed for development of the Greenway.

The mitigation of the foregone revenue has been addressed through the 2013 Operating Budget which is subject to approval by Council. The additional expenses will be absorbed in the operating budget.

Environmental

Greenways benefit the environment and help reduce our carbon footprint by enhancing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to walk and cycle in the city. In addition, the amount and diversity of the plant material installed along the greenway increases oxygen production, reduces rain-water run-off, and provides bird habitat.

The Greenway will help support two of the Greenest City 2020 targets and actions, Access to Nature and Green Transportation, and enhance connections to the city's remarkable natural setting of Stanley Park and False Creek for future generations. The project already has citizens who have signalled their interest in becoming Green Street gardeners.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway Section 1, as outlined in this report, provides many benefits for people of all ages and abilities who want to make walking and cycling to school, work, shop or to explore their city a part of everyday life.

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The City has developed strategic partnerships to leverage research, knowledge and funding for the Comox-Helmcken Greenway development including:

- Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (UBC and Vancouver Coastal Health)
- ICBC
- TransLink
- UBC School of Population and Public Health
- Vancouver School Board

Centre for Hip Health and Mobility

The researchers from the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility played a significant role in the seniors' consultation for Phase 1, and provided invaluable experience in developing the outreach program. The Centre for Hip Health and Mobility is a University of British Columbia organization, affiliated with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. The Centre has successfully leveraged their involvement with the Greenway to continue research with seniors in the West End to evaluate the influence of street-level changes on older adult's mobility and social interactions. The Centre's "Active Streets, Active People" (ASAP) is an interdisciplinary research team undertaking an innovative project funded by the Peter Wall Solutions Initiative and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research. They are investigating whether travel patterns, street usage, and social opportunities are enhanced after development of the Greenway.

The Centre's research suggests that falls are the leading cause of injury for seniors. One in three BC seniors over the age of 65 will typically experience at least one fall each year. Improvements along the Greenway including sidewalks, lighting, curb ramps, corner bulges, seating and reducing cycling on sidewalks should all contribute to reducing falls and injury to seniors.

- Seniors comprise only 15% of the Canadian population, but account for 40% of all injury hospitalizations.
- It is estimated that over 200,000 BC seniors experienced a fall in 2008 and, with aging of the BC population; the number of falls will likely double in 20 years if prevention strategies are not in place.
- Falls cause more than 95% of all hip fractures in the elderly and over 20% of seniors who suffer a hip fracture die within a year. Injuries from falls account for 85% of all injuries to seniors.
- The annual average hospital cost for all senior hip fracture hospitalization cases in B.C. is over \$75 million.

ICBC

The City works closely with ICBC to improve road safety and has applied to ICBC for cost sharing for the new signals on Comox Street at Burrard Street and at Thurlow Street. ICBC will review the locations to determine if funding will be provided as part of their 2013 Road Improvement Program.

TransLink

The Greenway is part of the Regional Greenways Plan and our partners at TransLink allocated \$219,000 in 2012 towards the implementation of the project. Additional cost sharing for the Greenway has been applied for as part of their 2013 funding programs.

The UBC School of Population and Public Health, Health and Community Design Lab

The Health and Community Design Lab is working closely with staff on a study to evaluate the travel, health, perceived safety, and social impacts of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway improvements. As the City continues to plan improvements to local neighborhoods, we are seeking validation that these changes realize their intended purpose, to better understand how future projects may be designed to deliver even better results. Results from this study will be directly applicable to other improvements being planned in Vancouver. The study will address gaps in understanding the impacts of pedestrian and cyclist oriented infrastructure improvements on health and social capital, through the creation of a survey instrument, sampling plan and analysis plan for a pre-post assessment of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway. The study is phased to include a survey of residents living along or near to the Greenway, pre and post construction. The goal is to develop a survey instrument that can be used in other neighborhood studies across the city.

Vancouver School Board

Staff met with school trustees, staff from the VSB Sustainability and Facilities offices, the principals or vice-principals from the elementary and secondary schools and the PAC to review operational needs, active transportation programs at the schools and to discuss how walking and cycling could be integrated into the VSB's long term vision. The proposed design was well received by Committee One of the VSB.

The VSB's vision for a sustainable future is to become the greenest school board in North America. One of their goals is to reduce transportation related emissions, and to that end the VSB encourages students to actively commute to school thereby ensuring student health and safety and ensuring transportation practices that are environmentally responsible. The Comox-Helmcken Greenway will support their goal by encouraging more children to walk and cycle to school. Public consultation was undertaken in two Phases.

Phase 1 - Listen and Learn (2011)

This phase consisted of a series of meetings to hear what was important to the community and to stakeholders. Feedback was also gathered using a questionnaire that was available online as well as at the public open houses. The feedback was then used by staff to develop the detailed design of Section 1 that was the focus of Phase 2. The following is a list of the public events and a summary of the feedback.

Open Houses

Saturday September 17, 2011	Comox Street at Nelson Park	9am - 2pm
Saturday September 24, 2011	West End Community Centre	10:30am - 1:30pm
Tuesday September 27, 2011	Roundhouse Community Centre	5pm - 8pm

Walking Tours (General public)

Saturday September 17, 2011	West End	10am - 12pm
Saturday September 17, 2011	Yaletown and Downtown South	10am - 12pm

Seniors Specific Walking Tours

Tuesday September 20, 2011	West End	9:30am - 10am
Wednesday September 21, 2011	Yaletown	11:30am - 12pm

Seniors Specific Workshops

Monday September 19, 2011	Haro Park - Table Talk	2pm - 3pm
Tuesday September 20, 2011	Gordon Neighbourhood House	10am - 11:30am
Wednesday September 21, 2011	Roundhouse Community Centre	12pm - 1:30pm
Thursday September 22, 2011	Sunset Towers - Table Talk	3pm - 4pm

Children and Youth Workshops

August 20, 2011	CUTA Youth Conference	1 workshop
Week of November 19-22, 2011	King George Secondary School Lord Roberts Elementary School Lord Roberts Annex School Elsie Roy Elementary School Robert Lee YMCA (after school program)	15 workshops

General Public Top Five Themes:

Top Five	
Theme	Description
On-street parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-street parking is important to residents in the West End and Yaletown.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many residents would like to maintain access to their front doors while some would like to see streets closed.
Less traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most residents would like to see less traffic on their streets.

Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many residents do not want to see change while others would like to see improvements.
Separating bikes from traffic and pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While many do not want bike lanes, many want bikes off the sidewalk and safer cycling to school for children.

Seniors Top 5 Themes:

Top Five	
Theme	Description
Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate seating at regular intervals along the route to rest particularly on hills and provide places for people to meet and socialize.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate cyclists from pedestrians particularly at intersection conflict points. Maintain emergency vehicle access. Attracting more people to the Greenway is important to the perception of seniors' safety.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve intersection crossings by installing curb ramps and signals. Install smooth and wider sidewalks for walking, wheelchairs and scooters.
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant more trees and plants to provide interest and attract people to use the Greenway.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well lit streets are important for seniors to feel safe when going out at night and would encourage more seniors to walk in the evenings. Seating areas should be well lit.

Youth and Children Top 5 Themes:

Top Five		
Reasons to Encourage Active Transportation	Ways to Encourage Active Transportation	Ideal Street Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitness/ exercise Fun Health Environmental reasons Reduce energy use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate cycling facilities More people walking/ cycling Wider sidewalks Even sidewalks Trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less vehicle traffic Places to sit and hang out Trees Playgrounds People

We heard from the hotels that they wanted:

- customer and delivery access retained
- taxi zones expanded if possible

- coach bus access to be maintained
- the direction of the proposed one-way street maintain their existing circulation priorities for coach buses and access to guest parking

We heard from St. Paul's Hospital that they wanted:

- the direction of the proposed one-way to be west bound
- to maintain the curb side passenger zone near the ER entrance on Comox Street
- to provide some police and ambulance parking adjacent to the passenger zone
- cyclists on Burrard to be on the east side of the street rather than next to the ambulance zone
- a new traffic signal at Comox and Burrard Streets
- to continue working with the City to modify the design for operational reasons as required

Phase 2 - Detailed Design and Survey (2012)

This phase consisted of a series of meetings to share the detailed design with the public and stakeholders and to gather feedback. Feedback was also gathered using a survey. The feedback was then used by staff to refine the detailed design for Section 1. The following is a list of the public events and a summary of the survey results.

Open Houses

Saturday September 29, 2012	Comox Street at Nelson Park	9am - 2pm
Monday October 1, 2012	Roundhouse Community Centre	5pm - 8pm
Wednesday October 3, 2012	Coast Plaza Hotel	5pm - 8pm
Thursday October 4, 2012	West End Community Centre	12 - 3pm

Survey Summary

A survey was available at the Open Houses and online for the month of October. The survey provided staff with a means of measuring support and receiving feedback on the proposed Greenway design. Staff asked for the following feedback:

1. Tell us what you think of Section 1 of the Greenway Design
2. What is the one thing you are most excited about in this proposed design?
3. What is the one thing you are most concerned about (if any) in this proposed design?

1. Tell us what you think of Section 1 of the Greenway Design

Of the 240 people who completed the survey, 26% did not support any changes, while 74% supported the Greenway design. Of those who supported the proposed design, 32% supported it with refinements. The following are the top five themes from the 58 people who supported the design with refinements.

Top Five 'Support with Refinement' Themes:

Top Five	
Theme	Description
Design details	<p>While some people wanted more separated bike lanes others wanted less.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation between bicycles and cars is being proposed where safety is a concern next to the hotels and hospital, while reducing vehicle traffic is the primary tool to improve cyclist safety. <p>While some people wanted more bulges, some wanted less.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb bulges improve pedestrian safety while improving the overall quality of life by providing places for seniors to sit and garden.
Network design	<p>Some people would prefer no change to the street while others suggested that it be one-way for the full length.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of alternating one-ways will retain local access for people who live on the street while reducing the overall number of vehicles and thereby improving safety for people walking and cycling.

Public space	<p>Between Bute and Thurlow people were concerned about losing the community gardens and the Farmers Market and others wanted the street closed to traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community gardens and the Farmers Market are staying and the street is being proposed to be one-way east bound to limit the short cutting through the lane behind Mole Hill. Cyclists will share the street during Market days.
Impacts to drivers	<p>People generally didn't want any changes to the way they currently use the street in their cars including circulation and parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed change to vehicle circulation using one-way streets will make it safer to walk and cycle while retaining parking. Parking was removed in those blocks next to the hospital and the hotels parking to provide a separated bike lane and improve cyclist safety.
Safety	<p>People were concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety during the day and in the evenings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting of the sidewalk, street and the intersections is proposed to improve safety for all users. Corner bulges will improve pedestrian safety by making them more visible to both cars and bikes. The overall reduction in vehicle traffic on the street will reduce conflicts particularly at the intersection where 75% of the collisions between pedestrians and vehicles occur.

2. What is the one thing you are most excited about in this proposed design?

Of the 240 responses, 198 people provided feedback on what they were most excited about. The following summarizes the top five themes from that feedback.

'Most Excited' Top Five Themes:

Top Five	
Theme	Description
Improved safety	People were excited about the proposed walking and cycling safety improvements for people of all ages and abilities including improved pedestrian and intersection lighting, corner bulges and a dedicated cycling route that separates pedestrians, cyclists and cars.
Cycling	Many people were happy with separated bike lanes and a dedicated bike route that had fewer cars on the street which would make it safer to cycle and encourage others to enjoy cycling in the West End.
Better access	People were excited about better bicycle access through the centre of the downtown connecting Yaletown to the West End and Stanley Park.
Walking	People commented on elements that would make the route

	more pedestrian friendly. This included a combination of water drinking fountains, public spaces, green spaces, benches, trees, lighting, better and smoother sidewalks and more places to walk to comfortably.
Traffic calming	People were excited about reducing “short-cut” traffic, fewer cars, one-way streets, calmer streets and better intersections.

3. What is the one thing you are most concerned about (if any) in this proposed design?

Of the 240 responses, 201 people provided feedback on what they were most concerned about. The following summarizes the top five themes from that feedback.

‘Most Concerned’ Top Five Themes:

Top Five	
Theme	Description
Traffic	People were concerned about traffic increasing on adjacent streets and alleys, the intersection designs (specifically the no-left turns) and the one-way streets.
Safety	People expressed concern about cyclist and pedestrian safety including: the lack physical separation for cyclists from cars; that the painted counter flow bike lanes were not intuitive to use; that cyclists would still cycle on sidewalk making it unsafe for pedestrians; cyclists injured by car doors on downhill portions of route; and the number of cars and vehicle speed.
Access	People were concerned about access with the proposed one-way streets including emergency vehicle and access to St. Paul’s Hospital as well as coach access to the Coast Hotel.
Parking	People were concerned about the removal of parking.
Cyclists	People expressed concern that cyclists are not considerate of pedestrians and don’t follow the rules of the road. They felt that cyclists would continue to ride on the sidewalk and that education, enforcement and licensing were needed.

We heard from the West End Business Improvement Association that they wanted:

- parking restrictions removed on Denman
- some resident parking converted to two-hour parking on Comox near Bidwell
- a loading zone retained on the south-west side of Denman and Comox
- a loading/passenger zone accommodated on the south-east corner next to the Denman Mall to serve the Mall and the bistro across the street
- coach buses to be able to safely access the Coast Plaza Hotel
- the taxi stand/passenger zone retained in front to the hotel
- public realm improvements at Denman and Comox as well as one block north and south on Denman

We heard from the Taxi Association that they wanted:

- a new Taxi Stand on Burrard Street in front of the Burrard Motor Inn for 3 taxis if possible
- a left turn signal onto Burrard Street for easy flow of traffic from Thurlow to Davie, when coming east on Davie to Burrard
- a traffic signal on Pendrall and Denman for vehicles to turn left
- to allow taxis to turn left onto Burrard Street at Robson when a vehicle is travelling east on Robson

We heard from Denman Mall that while they supported a one-way street their preference was for an east bound rather than a west bound street to make it easy to access their Comox Street underground parking entry directly from Denman Street. For information on the proposed design for Comox Street between Denman and Bidwell Streets please refer to Appendix C: Comox Street: Stanley Park Lane to Burrard Street

The Greenway will provide many benefits to residents, visitors and businesses in the area. It will:

- encourage people of all ages and abilities to explore their city by walking or cycling in a safe, comfortable, convenient and enjoyable way;
- create vibrant hubs to enhance social connectedness with places to sit, rest and socialize;
- connect parks, schools, community centres, cultural features, historic sites, neighbourhoods and retail areas;
- maintain access for residents, visitors, service providers and emergency vehicles; and
- beautify the street and improve the environment with trees and planted corner bulges which will provide opportunities for Green Streets gardening and improve social connections.

The following is a description and plans for the eleven blocks of the proposed Greenway design:

Comox Street: Stanley Park Lane to Burrard Street

Currently, Comox Street is a neighbourhood street with moderate traffic volumes, one moving lane in each direction and one parking lane. The primary tool to make walking and cycling feel more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities is to reduce the number of vehicles. Of the eleven blocks of Comox Street, five are proposed to be changed to one-way in order to reduce overall vehicle volumes while still providing vehicle access on each block. These include the blocks from Denman to Bidwell (pg.6), Cardero to Nicola (pg.8), Nicola to Broughton (pg.9), Bute to Thurlow (pg.12) and Thurlow to Burrard (pg.13). In these blocks, bicycles will share the street with vehicles in the one-way direction and have their own painted counter-flow bike lane in the other direction.

For the 2 blocks next to the hospital and hotels between Denman and Bidwell (pg.6) and Thurlow to Burrard (pg.13), bicycles will be physically separated from cars in their own lanes. The bike lanes will be a minimum of 3 metres wide to accommodate fire and ambulance services in an emergency. The existing passenger zones will be maintained at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Dr. Peter Centre and expanded at St. Paul's Hospital. A new passenger/loading zone and parking bays will be created between Denman and Bidwell to improve access for service providers and Handi-Dart in response to feedback heard during Phase 2 of the public consultation process.

The entrance to Stanley Park (pg.1) will be enhanced with new lighting and pathways while respecting the existing mature trees and improving the rhododendron garden in collaboration with Park Board staff and the City Arborist. The existing signal on Comox Street at Denman will be upgraded to improve safety. Right-out only diverters are proposed on both sides of Denman to reduce vehicle volumes and conflicts between cyclists and left turning vehicles. A new traffic signal is proposed on Comox Street at Thurlow.

Access for emergency vehicles, Handi-Dart, taxis, hotel buses and deliveries will be maintained. On-street parking will be retained with the exception of locations where bulges or separated bike lanes are proposed.

We heard from Denman Mall that while they supported a one-way street their preference was for an east bound rather than a west bound street to make it easy to access their Comox

Street underground parking entry directly from Denman Street. Currently coaches access the Coast Plaza Hotel on Comox Street in a west bound direction so that passengers can safely step from the coach onto the sidewalk in front of the hotel. The proposed west bound direction will continue to provide safer access for taxis and coaches to the Coast Plaza Hotel. Access to the parking entrances at the Mall on both Nelson and Comox Streets could be managed with improved wayfinding signage. (pg. 6)

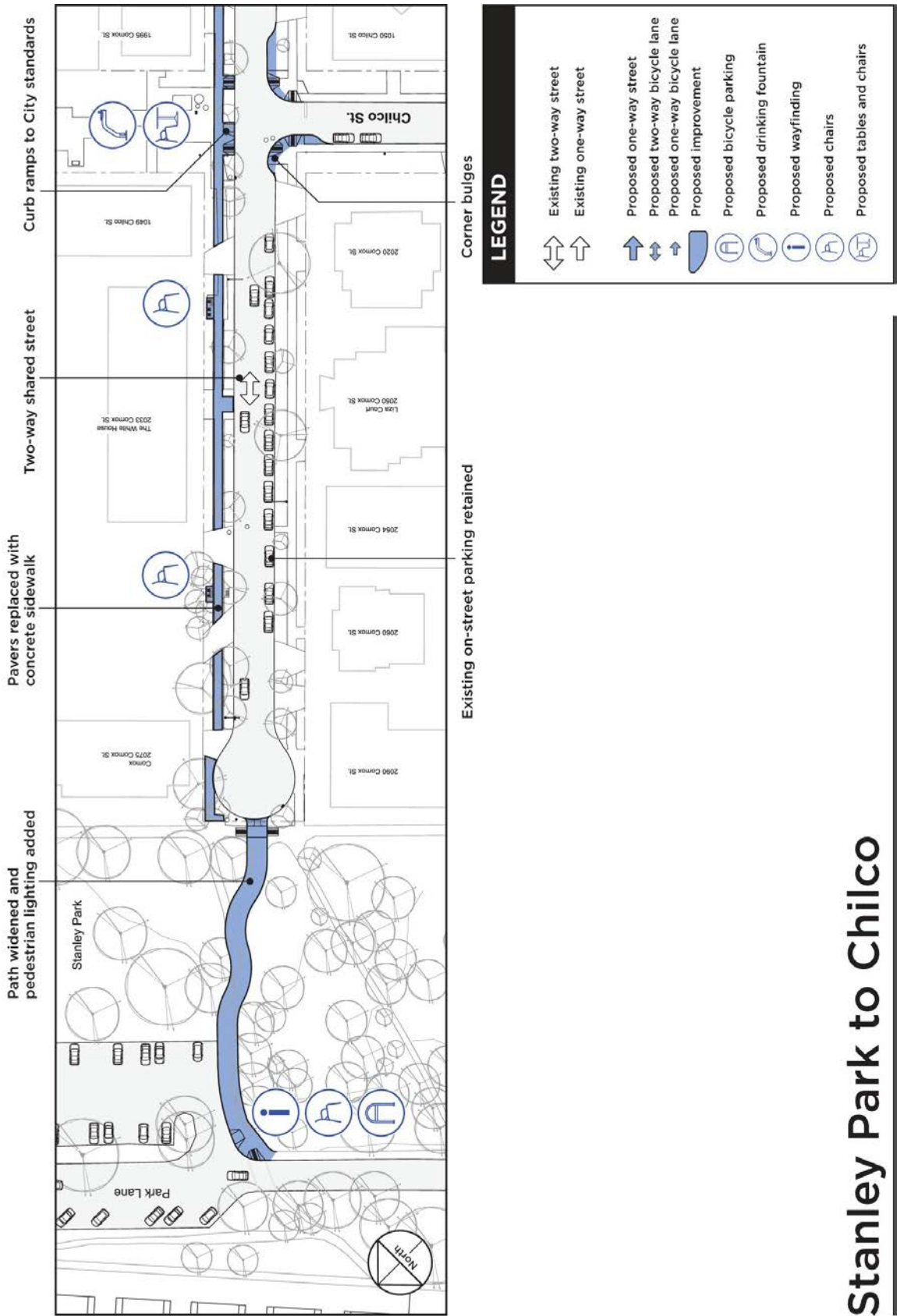
Burrard Street: Comox Street to Helmcken Street

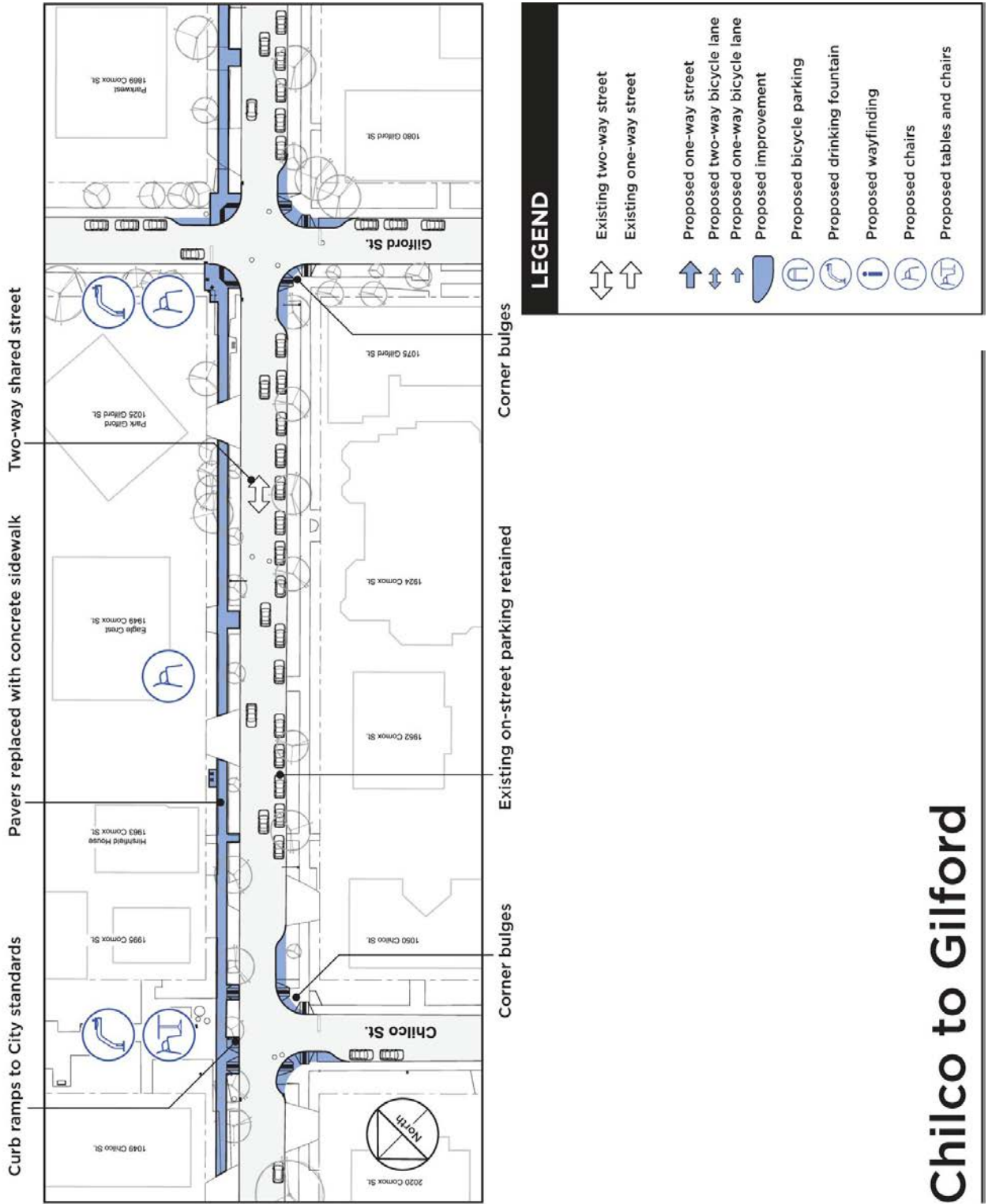
Burrard Street is a busy arterial street with high traffic volumes, peak period priority bus lanes and a south bound painted bike lane. The need to maintain current vehicle and bus volumes precludes having a separated bike lane on the street therefore the sidewalk will be designed for pedestrians and cyclists each in their own dedicated space. In response to safety concerns expressed by St. Paul's Hospital regarding bicycles on the sidewalk next to the ambulance entrance, a separated bike lane is being proposed for the east side of Burrard. The east sidewalk will be widened and people walking and cycling will be separated from each other. A new traffic signal is proposed on Comox Street at Burrard to improve circulation for all users. (pg.14)

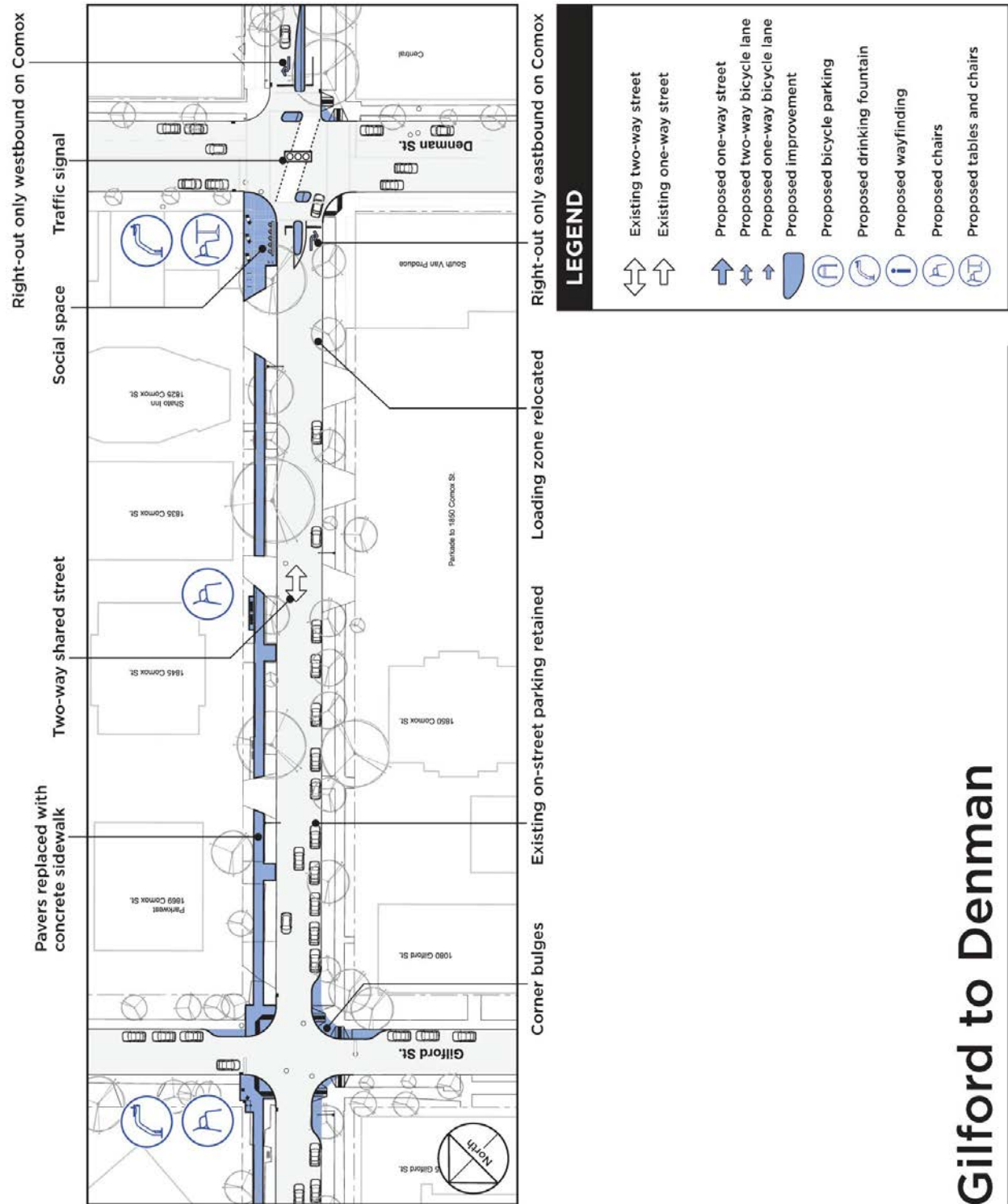
Helmcken Street: Burrard Street to Hornby Street

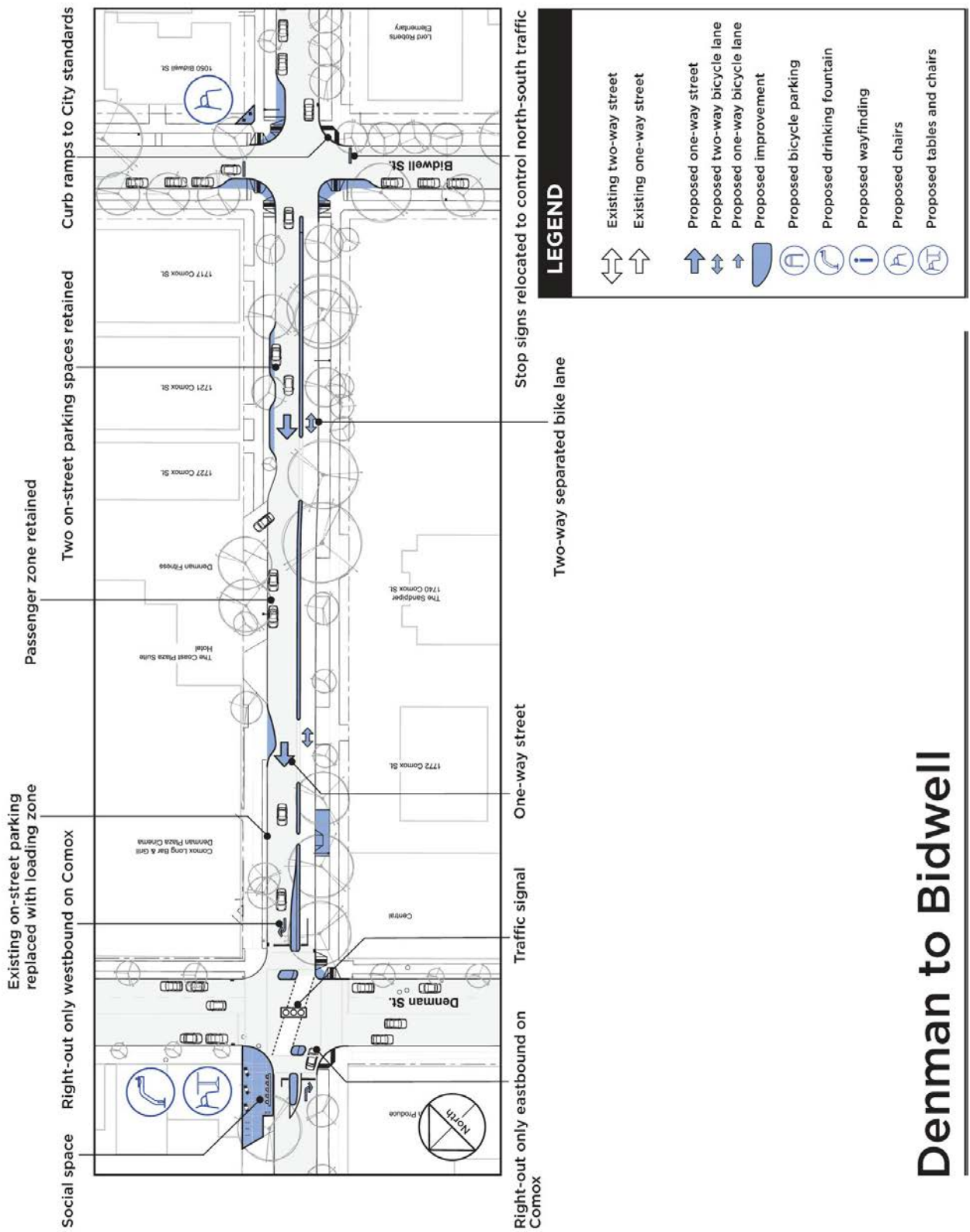
Helmcken Street is a two-way arterial street with moderate traffic volumes, one moving lane in each direction and two parking lanes. People on bicycles will be separated from vehicle traffic in a two-way separated bike lane on the south side of the street. The bike lane will be a minimum of 3 metres wide to accommodate emergency vehicles. The existing taxi zone will be moved to the north side of the street next to the hotel. The crosswalks and signal phasing will be modified to improve pedestrian comfort and safety and minimize conflicts with people on bicycles. (pg.14)

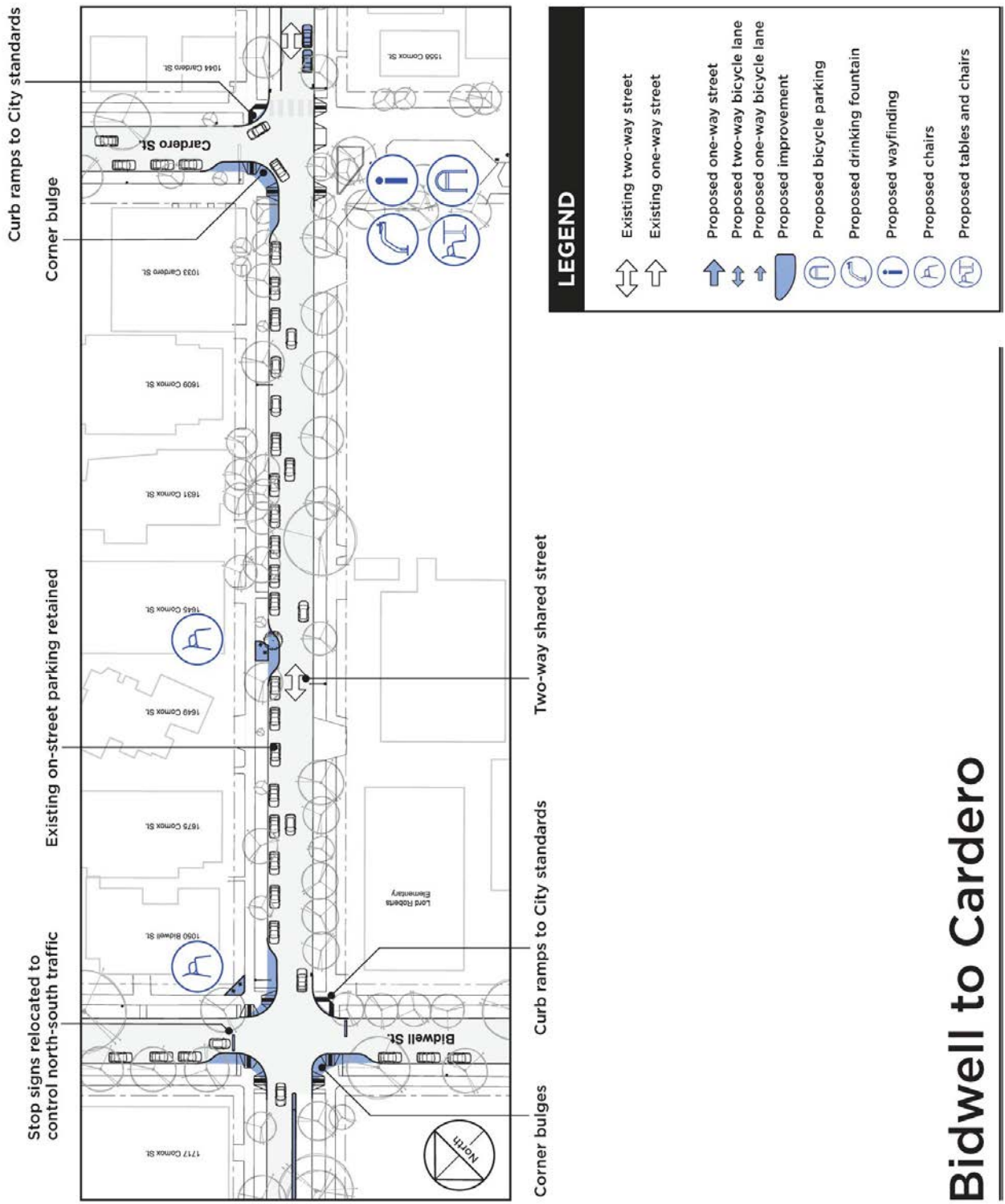
Please refer to the design drawings for each block on pages 3 through 14.



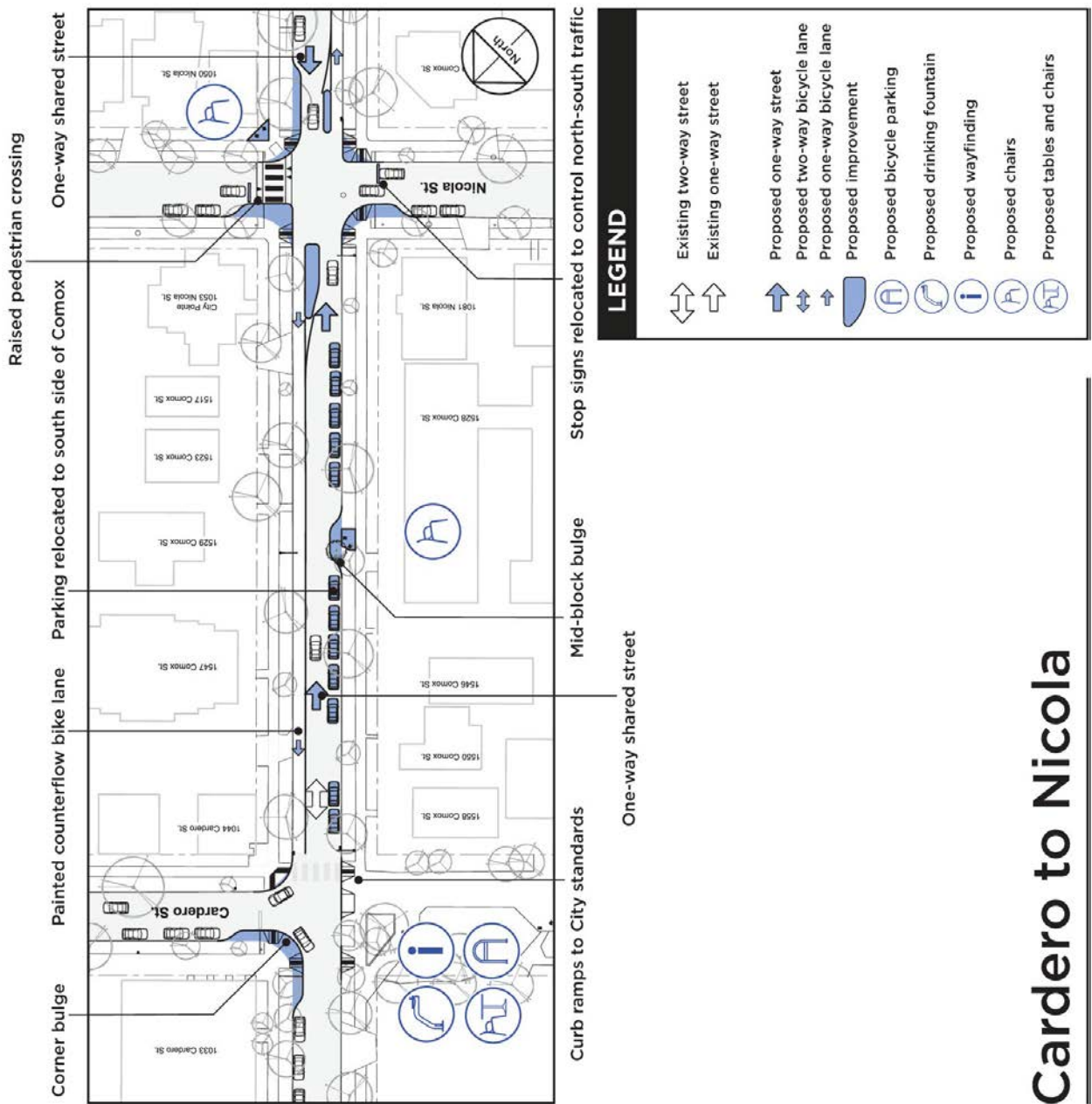




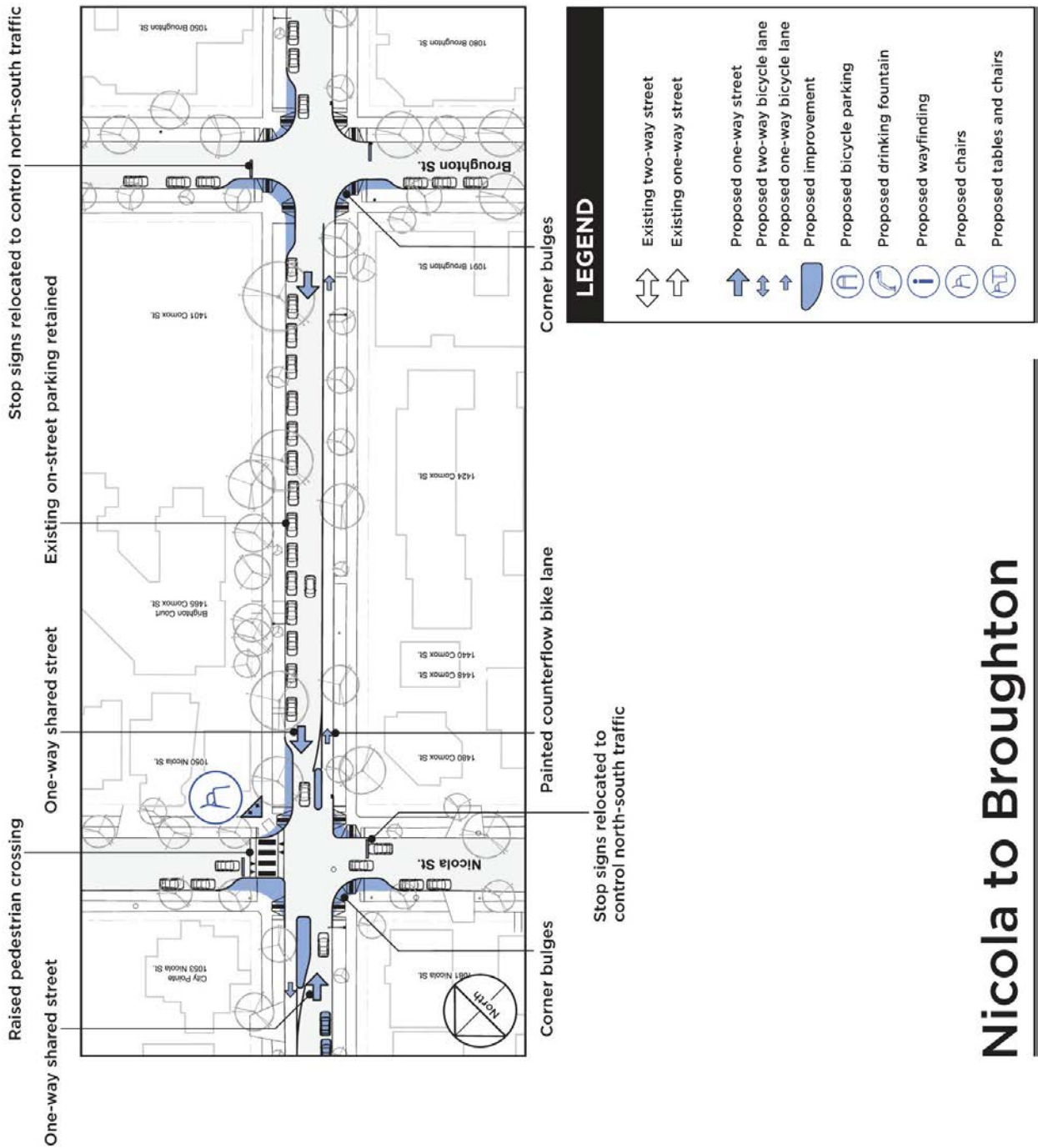


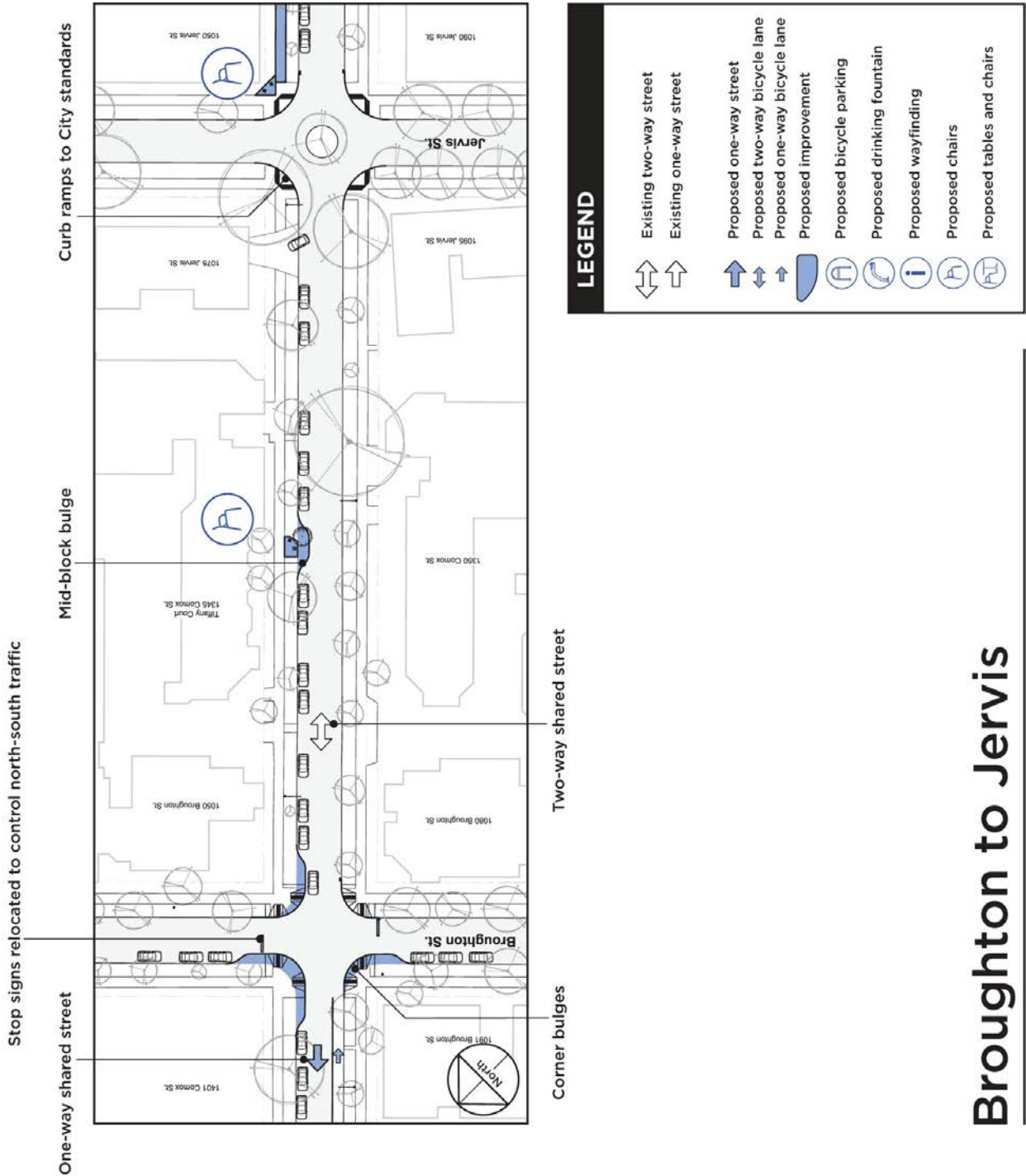


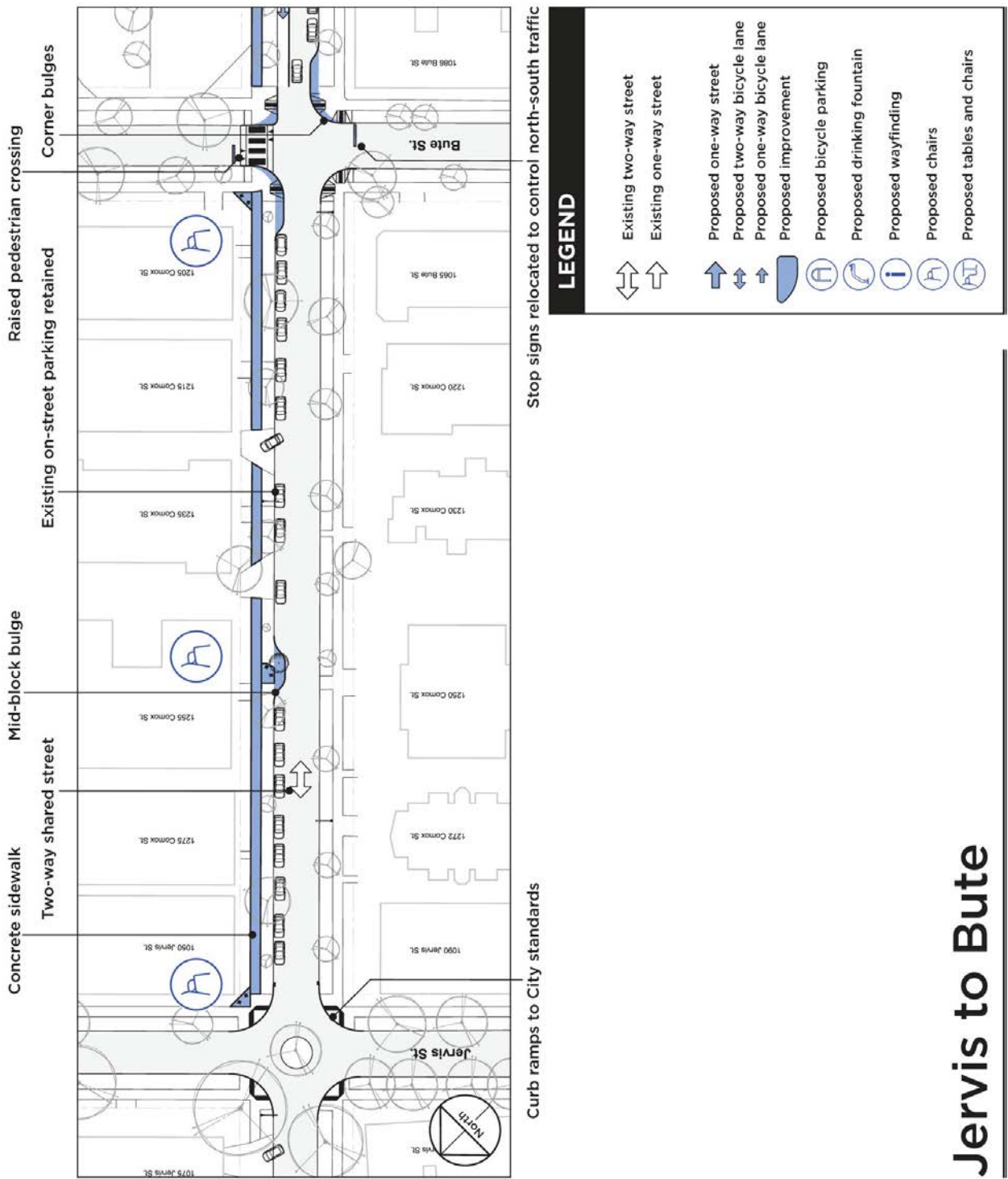
Bidwell to Cardero



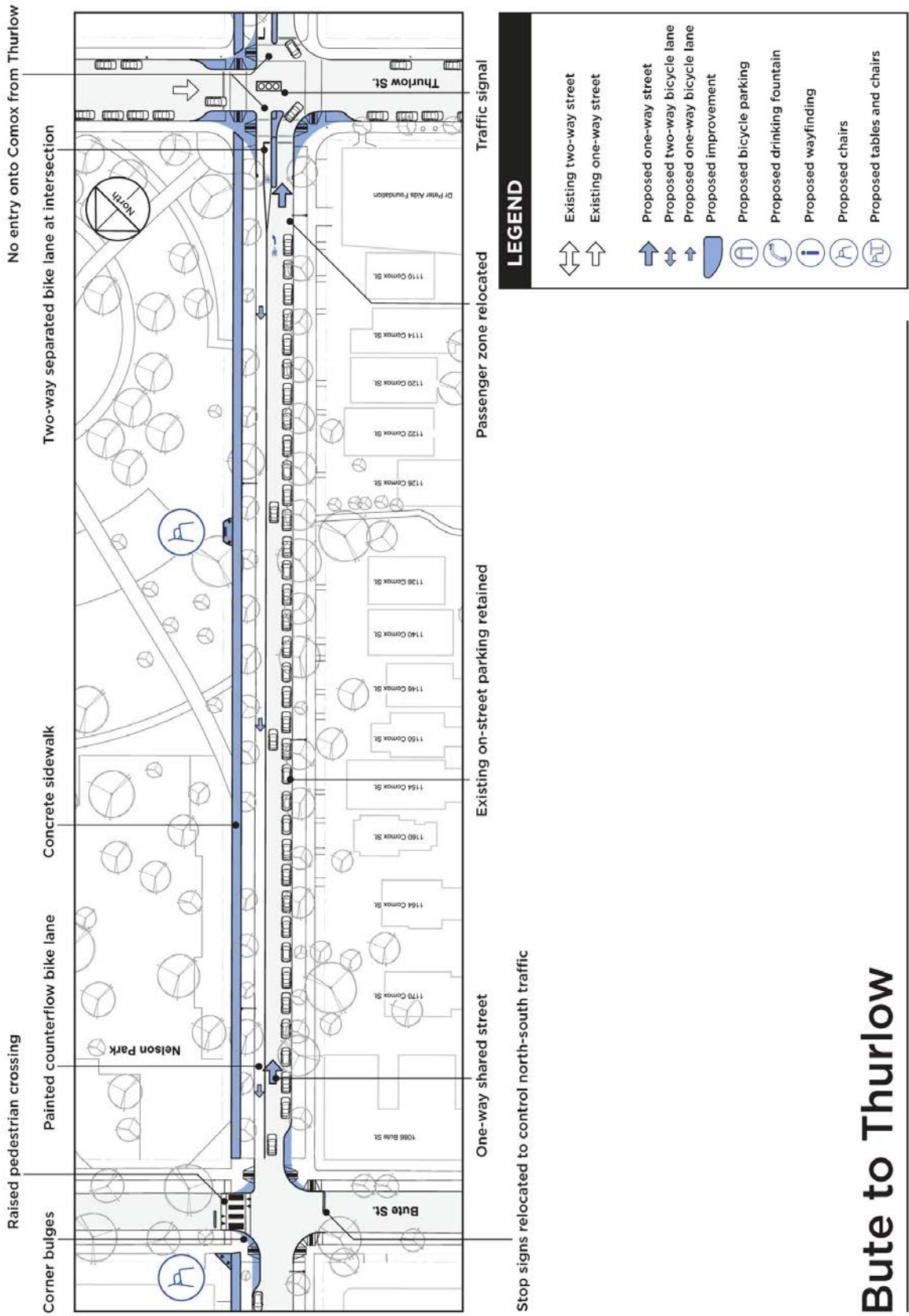
Cardero to Nicola



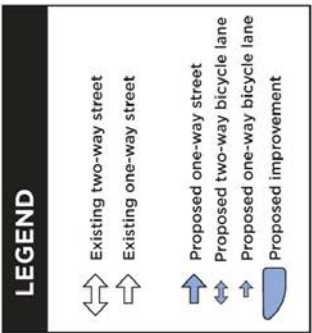
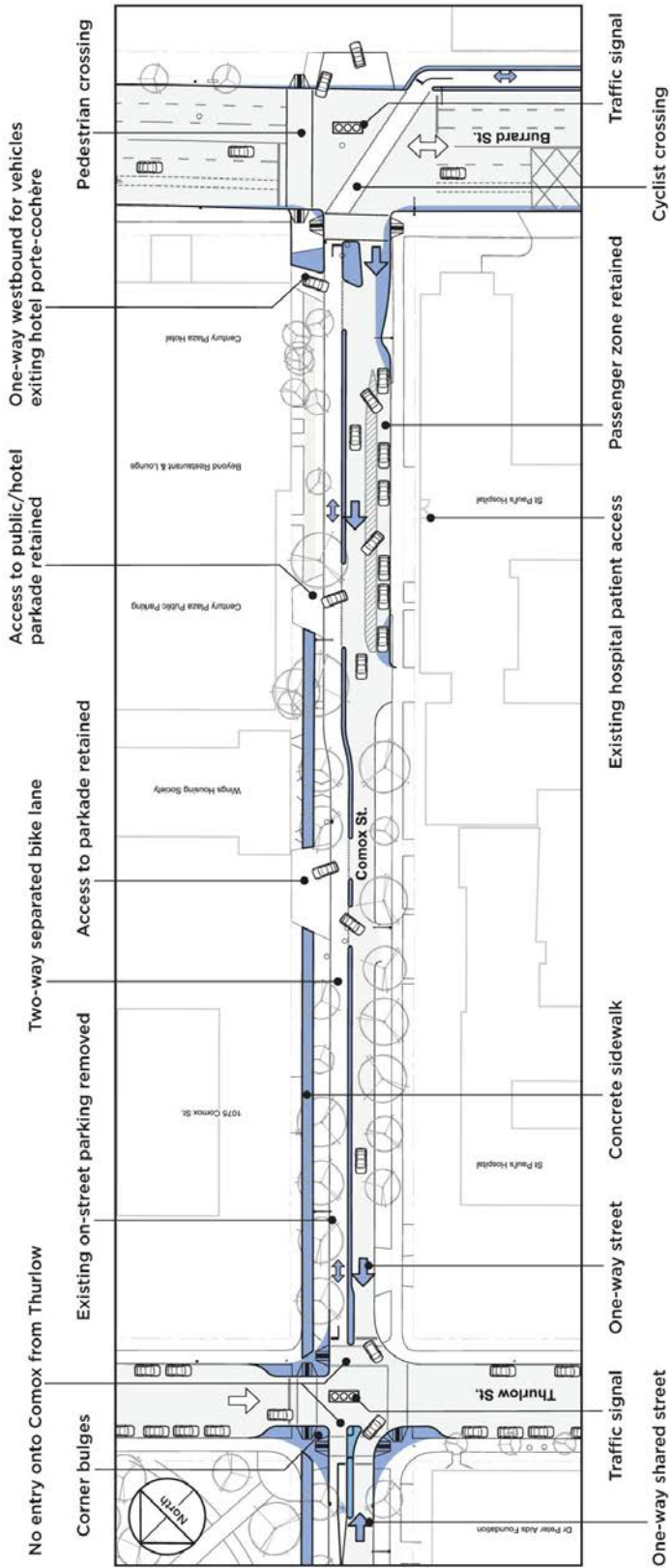




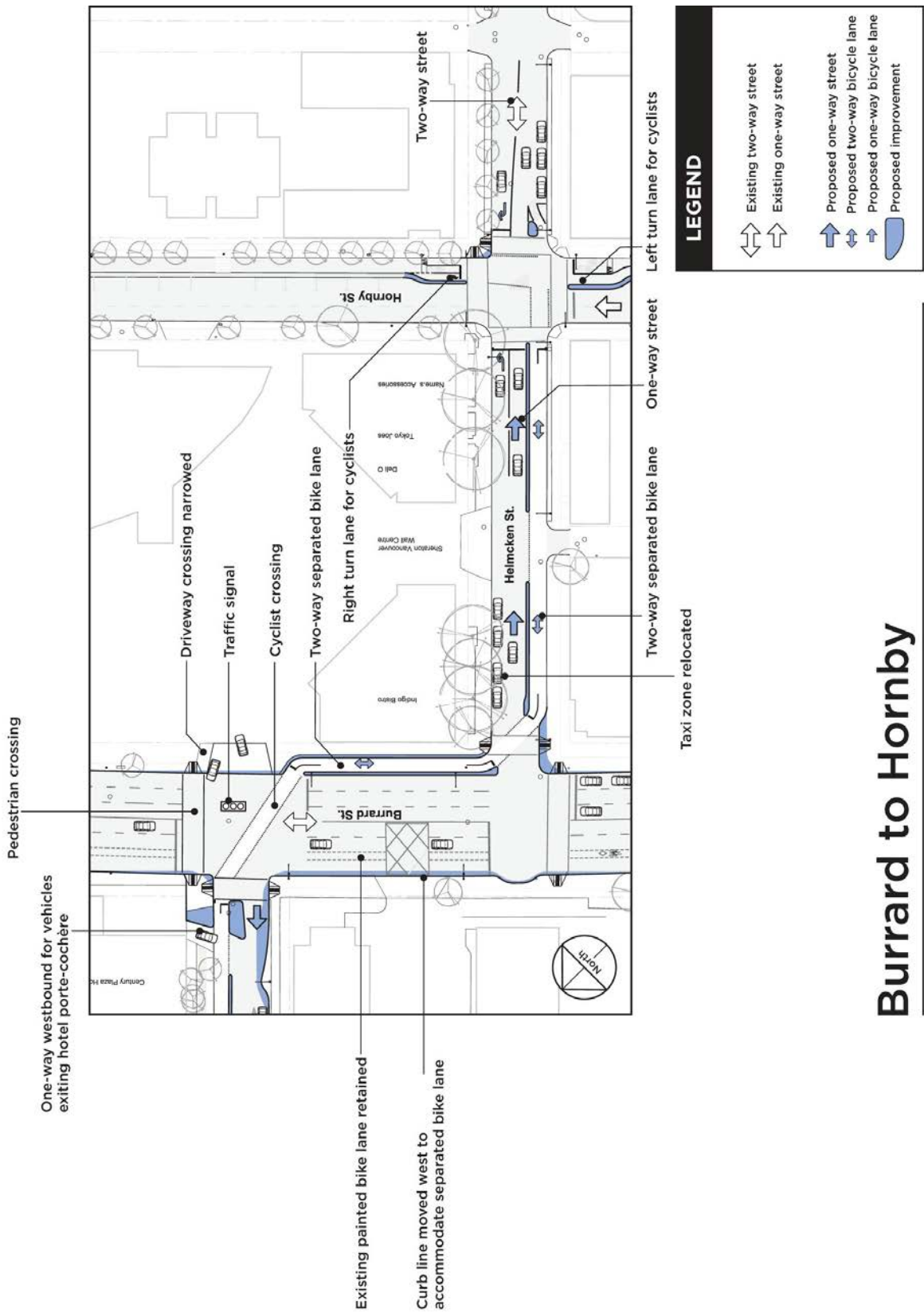
Jervis to Bute



Bute to Thurlow



Thurlow to Burrard



Burrard to Hornby

The following treatments recommended in the City of Vancouver 2012 Pedestrian Safety Study have been implemented as part of the Greenway:

Audible Pedestrian Signal

- Provides crossing assistance to pedestrians with vision impairment at signalized intersections
- Improves safety for visually impaired pedestrians

Corner Bulges

- Improves motorist visibility of pedestrians
- Reduces speed of turning vehicles
- Encourage pedestrians to cross at designated crossings
- Decreases crossing distances for pedestrians
- Improves sight lines for pedestrians
- Provides Green Street opportunities for West End gardeners

Pedestrian Countdown Timers

- Provides pedestrians with the amount of time left to complete their crossing
- Reduces the number of pedestrians remaining in the crosswalk after the crossing interval ends

Raised Crosswalks

- Reduces vehicle speeds
- Increases pedestrian visibility
- Potential to reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities by as much as 35%

Upgraded Intersection Lighting

- Increases visibility of pedestrians
- Highly effective for improving pedestrian safety by reducing pedestrian injuries by more than 75% and lowering fatalities by more than 40%

**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COUNCIL
MINUTES
September 19, 2012**

A meeting of the Active Transportation Policy Council was held on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, at 5:40 pm, in City Hall Business Centre Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

PRESENT: Rhiannon Chernencoff, Chair
Graham Anderson
Joan Andersen
Adrian Bell
Eugene Chin
Keltie Craig
Jacob Hunter, Vice-Chair
Tanya Paz
Lisa Slakov
Adam Vasilevich
John Whistler
Meghan Winters

ABSENT: Dean Alexander
Tom Lancaster
Liliana Quintero (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Heather Deal, Vancouver City Council
Constable Pat Allen, Vancouver Police Department Liaison
Dale Bracewell, Manager, Active Transportation, Staff Liaison
Marnie McGregor, Active Transportation

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Lori Isfeld, Meeting Assistant

Active Transportation Policy Council
Minutes, September 19, 2012 2

1. Subcommittee Reports**(ii) Comox-Helmcken Greenway**

Graham Anderson reviewed a draft motion regarding the proposed Comox-Helmcken Greenway, and along with Douglas Scott, Landscape Architect, Active Transportation, responded to questions. Comments were provided and concern expressed regarding managing intersections, one-way streets and Denman Street.

MOVED by Graham Anderson
SECONDED by Jacob Hunter

THAT the Active Transportation Policy Commission supports Section 1 of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway plan and recommends that staff investigate:

- A. The possibility of an additional bikeway along the lane between Burnaby and Harwood, connecting to the planned greenway along Bute. This additional bikeway would have a more favorable grade for cyclists than the current route plan.
- B. The closure of the 1100 block of Comox Street to vehicular traffic.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 25, 2012**

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, October 25, 2012, at 5:35 pm, in Committee Room 1, Third Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

PRESENT: Paul Caune, Vice-Chair
Justine Aaron
Tasia Alexis*
Jeanette Andersen
Cathy Browne
Sheryl Burns
Craig Langston
Greg Pyc

ABSENT: Matthew Porter (Leave of Absence)
Jill Weiss, Chair (Sick Leave)

ALSO PRESENT: Trustee Sophia Woo, Vancouver School Board
Anne Nickerson, Director, EEO

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Nicole Ludwig, Meeting Coordinator

3. Comox-Helmcken Greenway

Douglas Scott, Active Transportation, Engineering Services, presented details on Section 1 of the proposed Comox-Helmcken Greenway, responded to questions and sought the Committee's advice. The Committee provided feedback and following discussion it was

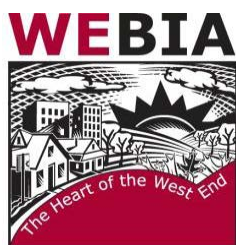
MOVED by Greg Pyc

SECONDED by Craig Langston

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee generally supports the Comox-Helmcken Greenway as presented at the October 25, 2012, meeting, noting the following issues:

- accessible toilets;
- accessible parking especially for people with disabilities;
- accessible tables and benches;
- mid-block ramps;
- wayfinding signs;
- colour contrasting at ramps;
- audible pedestrian signals; and
- consultation with HandyDart.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



October 26, 2012

Jerry Dobrovolny,
Director of Transportation
City of Vancouver
453 W 12th Ave Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Re: Comox Greenway

Dear Mr. Dobrovolny,

On October 2nd, 3rd and again on October 16th we had positive and productive conversations with City staff about the proposed Comox Greenway in a variety of formats including an Open House. During that period we also canvassed businesses most directly impacted by the proposed changes and updated our street-level vacancy rate data. We can report a great deal of concern from impacted businesses. We also note a vacancy rate on Denman Street at 4.6 percent at the end of September (a level of vacancy between 2 and 3 percent does not overly impact the aesthetic of a commercial street in our estimation). The greenway, therefore, is a key development that we hope will ultimately improve the business environment on Denman and contribute to maintaining reasonable vacancy rates. It has the potential but there are some real concerns.

This letter summarizes WEBIA's overall policy framework and provides recommendations specific to the proposed changes to the Comox and Denman intersection that could arise from the greenway project proceeding as proposed.

As you know the West End BIA has been proactive in developing a Streetscape & Design Guideline Vision report covering the commercial streets of the West End. In the report we recognized 'green corridors' and noted that 'the intersections... should be designated and designed a Special Places/Activity Nodes.' Having said that, the overarching principles of our report do not prioritize greenways but rather included the following: a priority placed on economic viability, increasing density, continuous/active ground floor, enhancing public transit and celebrating gateways. 'Green corridors' though 'recognized' did raise some concern at the Board of Directors' level. Specifically, that pedestrian traffic could be diverted from commercial streets; this would not be viewed as supporting economic viability.

Greenway routes carefully designed and aligned with the Transportation 2040 goal of 'supporting a thriving economy' and WEBIA's goal of enhancing 'economic viability' of area businesses is something worth celebrating. The proposals WEBIA has reviewed raise three (3) main concerns though we believe staff are able to develop mitigating options that will lessen the net negative impacts on local businesses. There is also a significant opportunity that if

fully realized, and combined with our proposed mitigating strategies, could go a long way to completely off-setting the overall negative attributes of the proposed greenway on local businesses.

WEBIA's Three Main Concerns & Recommendations (based on information available as of October 16th):

1. Parking is important to local business. We know that the downtown already has a significant reputation for hard to find and expensive parking which is a deterrent for some who might otherwise come down to shop and dine. The removal of six (6) metered spots on Comox is a strong negative within this proposal. Eliminating street parking on Comox, coupled with an already negative perception of West End parking, requires significant mitigation in our view.
Recommendations:
 - i) Remove parking restrictions on Denman, both north and south bound. This street needs to 'work' for local business not as a scenic 'short-cut' for bridge traffic passing through the area (we understand it is not even a short-cut/time saver for commuters but rather a scenic drive with a beach view). We are not saying close the street to bridge traffic (and potential customers), just make it work better for local business.
 - ii) Resident permit parking spots further east on Comox in the same block as the hotel and mall should be converted to 2 hour free parking. These spaces are incredibly popular and well-used.
2. Loading zones are important for local businesses, particularly along Denman when rear lane ways are not available. Lose of any loading zone space is a significant negative. Mitigation is required.
Recommendations:
 - iii) A loading zone must be retained on the south-west side of Comox. One proposal indicated a total loss of this important loading zone.
 - iv) A loading zone, long desired by the restaurant on the south-east corner on Comox, will not be possible with a separated bike lane running down Comox on the south side. A loading zone sufficient for the restaurant on the north side of Comox is essential. In addition, it should reasonably accommodate passenger pick-up/drop-off and support courier trips directed to the Denman Place Mall. Better for all, and aligned with our shared goal of supporting local business, would be a second loading zone on Denman on the north-bound curb lane right in front of the restaurant (complement to recommendation (i)). As there will be no right turn permitted east on Comox, the City has a great opportunity to make a very positive statement in support of business.
3. Traffic flow needs to work for business where passenger movement must be safe and efficient to be competitive. The one way traffic flow regulation and cement separated bike lane will be a negative on businesses particularly on the block of Comox just east of Denman. Mitigation is required.
Recommendations:
 - v) Larger vehicles such as coach buses must be able to safely and efficiently pull into and out of the Coast Hotel on Comox. A cement separation along this section of Comox is not advised.

- vi) Time is money for passenger businesses like taxis and the one way traffic flow will impact their ability to service the hotel. Poor taxi service will reflect badly on the hotel. A taxi stand/passenger zone must be maintained in front of the hotel.

Key Opportunity:

1. Creation of a 'special place/activity node'. The key opportunity relates to blending and extending the public realm improvements both north and south along Denman for one block. The enhancements to traffic signals, pedestrian lighting, street furniture, garbage receptacles, landscaping and more are all very positive for businesses. Having said that, there is a concern that Comox will look new, welcoming and vibrant while Denman continues to appear old and tired. We are not advocating to tone down Comox enhancements but rather to take this as a strategic opportunity to extend some upgrades in the public realm along Denman.

Recommendations:

- i. Given the West End Planning process consider the improvements as setting the tone and standards along the entire street for years to come. We would not want to be in a position of advocating for changes to the Denman/Comox intersection in two years' time so that it can meet a higher standard as directed in the West End Plan and encouraged through WEBIA's rebranding process.
- ii. Blend and extend key improvements to poles, street furniture and landscaping up to one block north and south along Denman. Create opportunities for the WEBIA to supplement the improvements at Comox and Denman with beautification investments in lighting and landscaping both at the intersection itself and up to one block north and south along Denman. Ensure more and better designed garbage receptacles are placed so that WEBIA can help keep the area clean. Ensure surface treatments are graffiti resistant and/or easy to clean.

This is an important project for the West End business community and comes at a very strategic time. Greenway routes carefully designed can enhance economic viability for area businesses. WEBIA can be a key partner to ensure successful implementation including providing a positive endorsement. This project should be something worth celebrating.

We are available to meet with City staff as needed to discuss our recommendations and explore how best to leverage our investments in maintenance and beautification with this project.

Sincerely,
West End Business Improvement Association



Stephen Regan
Executive Director

cc: Mayor & Council, City of Vancouver
WEBIA Board



November 27th, 2012

Douglas Scott
Landscape Architect
Engineering Services
City of Vancouver
507 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 0B4

RE: COMOX-HELMCKEN GREENWAY PROJECT

Dear Douglas,

We fully support this project with a few suggested changes to assist us with the pickup and drop off of passengers that may be affected with these changes. They are as follows:

1. A new Taxi Stand on Burrard Street in front of the Burrard Motor Inn for 3 taxis if possible. We have been informed that the stand on Helmcken will be moved to the opposite side of the street for the Wall Centre.
2. Thurlow to Davie, when coming East on Davie to Burrard request a left turn signal onto Burrard Street for easy flow of traffic.
3. A street light on Pendrall and Denman for vehicles to turn left.
4. Burrard and Robson when a vehicle is travelling east on Robson, allow Taxis to turn left onto Burrard Street as Hornby Street is always backed up because of the bicycle lane.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you require further information.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Bauer
Kulwant Sahota

On behalf of the Vancouver Taxi Association.
1441 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3K9, 604-258-4701

