



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 6, 2016  
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Meeting Date: April 20, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: 2016 VIVA Vancouver Program Update

### ***INFORMATION***

The General Manager of Engineering Services submits this report for INFORMATION.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

The purpose of this report is to update Council on public space activities planned by the VIVA Vancouver program for 2016 and on Engineering Services' intention to expand the program in 2017.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

In October 2012, Council adopted the Transportation 2040 Plan containing a section on Walking and Public Spaces which speaks to enabling and encouraging creative uses of the street and creating public plazas and gathering spaces throughout the city.

In April 2014, Council approved the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force's Final Report, which includes a goal to build community capacity through public, community and cultural space activation, helping increase Vancouverites' sense of belonging and inclusion.

In October 2014, Council adopted the Healthy City Strategy which supports greater social connections, increased sense of belonging, opportunities for creativity and active living by creating and enhancing wonderful temporary and permanent public places and spaces.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager submits this report for information.

## **REPORT**

### ***Background/Context***

The VIVA Vancouver Program is the City's primary 'test platform' for new and unusual temporary/semi-permanent public space models, helping address the challenge of creating high quality public spaces in an increasingly dense urban environment. The program identifies and develops opportunities for the strategic reallocation of a variety of road spaces and open spaces for the purposes of creating pedestrian-oriented public spaces and a more vibrant street culture. Community engagement, planning, implementation and monitoring efforts take a coordinated cross-departmental approach.

VIVA creates opportunities to re-think the transportation network from a place making and liveability perspective. VIVA spaces give people extra space to spend time on the street connecting with other people, sitting and sojourning, and helps promote walking and cycling. The program's three-step approach is to innovate, incubate, and then integrate successful models into regular City business or seek a community partner for a particular model's longevity.

### ***Strategic Analysis***

VIVA 2016 is shaping up to be an exciting year. While there are some interesting changes to the usual summer program, residents and visitors alike will get to experience a number of creative on street initiatives. In addition, VIVA will conduct a full review of its achievements to date and determine how best to strategically grow the program.

### **2016 Activities**

With public realm projects such as the construction planned by the province along the north edge of 800 Robson Street and the City's Burrard Bridge Rehabilitation project, VIVA is adjusting its programming to work within these temporary constraints. Significantly, a number of initiatives VIVA has tested for years are transitioning to formalized standalone programs. New ideas, as always, continue to come forward from the community and VIVA will investigate and leverage opportunities to implement them as they emerge.

#### **1) *Parklets***

Parklets are semi-permanent publically accessible seating structures that are placed in on street parking spaces. They are typically wooden platforms that are flush with the sidewalk and include seating and planting features.

With six parklets successfully installed, VIVA is ready to transition its popular Parklet Pilot Program into a new permanent City program. Staff will formally update Council this spring with the details of the program's launch.

#### **2) *Jim Deva Plaza***

Between 2013 and 2014, VIVA piloted a temporary street-to-plaza space on 1200 Bute Street. In December 2015, Council approved the conversion of the half block into a permanent plaza. The plaza commemorates Jim Deva's life and legacy and will be a community-serving gathering space that accommodates a variety of programming, events and activities. It is expected to open in time for 2016 Pride Week and will launch with a series of Pride-related events to showcase and celebrate the opening of the new space. VIVA staff have been involved in the development of the permanent plaza and the creation of the plaza's Stewardship Oversight Committee, which

includes representatives from key stakeholder groups. One of the key outcomes of the Jim Deva Plaza Stewardship Strategy for VIVA is to test a new programming and plaza operating model and identify lessons learned which could then be applied to other community serving plaza spaces.

3) **800 Robson**

Scheduled to go before Council on April 20, 2016, staff will be recommending the permanent closure of 800-block Robson Street. The report notes that the public would be better served by a permanent plaza space rather than by a seasonal one. Staff will explore opportunities for Robson Redux to return to the block as part of a larger programming strategy, if the closure is approved by Council.

In the short term, for summer 2016, VIVA anticipates facilitating the closure of 800 Robson Street for the 2016 TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival. After Jazz Fest, the street will be filled with moveable tables, chairs and colourful umbrellas, and possibly a temporary Public Bike Share station. Burrard Arts Foundation is also considering a return to 800 Robson Street in late August with Façade Fest 2016, which uses the south façade of the Vancouver Art Gallery for evening projection art. If Council approves the permanent closure of 800 Robson Street, then staff would undertake additional public consultation on site during the summer period, regarding the design and programming of the anticipated plaza.

Activity on 800-block Robson after Labour Day will depend on the outcome of the April 20, 2016, Council meeting.

4) **Yaletown Farmers Market**

The popular Yaletown Farmers Market is returning this spring to 1100-block Mainland Street, between Davie and Helmcken Streets, next to the Yaletown Canada Line Station. Some concerns have been raised by a small number of businesses in the area relating mainly to busker activity and parking and the City will continue working on these issues going forward.

5) **Downtown Granville Street**

Due to the Burrard Bridge rehabilitation project, the VIVA Granville event series will be reshaped to minimize impacts to motor vehicles. To maintain momentum and interest in public space interventions on downtown Granville Street, staff are exploring opportunities to activate select sidewalk spaces on Granville instead, which may be timed to support the Pro Walk, Pro Bike, Pro Place Conference and/or the following Placemaking Summit planned for mid-September 2016.

We have seen a number of successful community events emerge from the VIVA Granville event series, which first began in 2010; the DVBIA has been an important partner in the development of the series. VIVA looks forward to partnering with the DVBIA on other initiatives as they move on from VIVA Granville and re-direct their resources to other public space initiatives.

6) **Art Wraps and Murals**

With the anticipated expansion of community-led street murals and utility box art wraps, VIVA is expecting to play a facilitative role between community groups and the City's Integrated Graffiti Management Program. This initiative will encourage a brighter and more interesting public realm through the addition of more opportunities for two-dimensional public art.

7) ***Active Fiction Project***

VIVA will help facilitate the Active Fiction Project's summertime installment of another three 'choose your own adventure' stories in the Riley Park Neighbourhood. Residents walking along the street will find sections of a story located in publically accessible spots throughout the neighbourhood, inviting them to walk or cycle to 'read on' and learn what happens next in the story.

8) ***Public Pianos***

The colourful and popular pianos on the street, free for anyone to play, will be making a return this summer. Final locations have yet to be determined.

9) ***Vancouver Economic Commission***

VIVA is also exploring a partnership with the VEC to animate a public right-of-way located in the False Creek Flats area.

### Looking Beyond 2016

VIVA Vancouver is a very popular and strongly supported program. A half decade in, many of its early public space experiments, such as parklets, have become partially or fully integrated into everyday City business. This makes 2016 is an ideal time to engage stakeholders in a review of our past achievements and to re-envision the program's role as a public space incubator. We will examine our methods for selecting and supporting projects and identify emerging directions in public space creation, capitalizing on international trends and evolving local attitudes. Engineering will come forward with an expanded VIVA Vancouver program as part of the 2017 budget process.

### ***Financial***

An expansion of the VIVA Vancouver Program will come forward as part of the 2017 budget process.

### ***CONCLUSION***

There will be a number of exciting VIVA initiatives for the public to experience on the street this year. Some VIVA initiatives will be formalized as standalone programs, while others will be adjusted to accommodate significant construction projects. VIVA will also undertake a review of its achievements to date and determine how best to expand the program and will come forward as part of the 2017 budget process.

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