



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 11, 2016  
Contact: Lon LaClaire  
Contact No.: 604.873.7336  
RTS No.: 11317  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: April 20, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: 800 Robson Street: Creation of a Permanent Public Plaza

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve the closure of 800 Robson Street to motor vehicle traffic to create a permanent public plaza.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to initiate a process for the design, construction and long term management of the new plaza, which may integrate aspects of the redesign of and emerging management plan for the North Plaza of the Vancouver Art Gallery, and report back to Council by December 2016.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report is intended to satisfy Council's November 2012 direction to staff to report back on impacts, challenges and opportunities for potentially creating a permanent public square on 800 Robson Street. The three key areas identified as needing additional analysis and consideration were: 1) the transportation network; 2) the design of the space; 3) the options for year-round programming.

Before advancing work on the design or programming plan for the space, it was necessary to assess the complexity and scale of impacts to the transportation network that would be created by closing the block to motor vehicles on a permanent basis. With the assessment now complete, staff can speak with greater certainty to the feasibility of a permanent closure and mitigation strategies to manage anticipated impacts to the network.

It is recognized that 800 Robson Street also forms an important part of the architectural and social significance of the larger three-block Robson Square and Law Court complex. For this reason, staff are seeking Council approval to permanently close 800 Robson Street to motor vehicle traffic before consulting further with the public on the design and programming plan for the space.

With the transportation assessment now complete, Staff recommend closing 800 Robson Street to vehicle traffic and moving forward with the design of a plaza this summer to build on other significant changes planned for the area including:

- The re-design of the North Plaza of the Vancouver Art Gallery;
- The rehabilitation of Courthouse Annex steps; and,
- The new entryways proposed for UBC

Staff intend to report back before the end of year on associated costs.

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

On December 2, 2010, Council directed staff to continue working on a Downtown Public Space Plan, including the examination of a public square on 800 Robson Street.

In October 2012, Council adopted the Transportation 2040 Plan containing a section on Walking and Public Spaces, which specifically speaks to the creation of public plazas and gathering spaces throughout the city, with a focus on 800 Robson Street as a potential public plaza.

On November 28, 2012, Council directed staff to continue to work on addressing the issues raised by the public and report back to Council no later than July 2013 on impacts, challenges and opportunities for potentially creating a permanent public square on the 800 Robson Street.

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/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends approval of aforementioned recommendations.

### ***REPORT***

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

#### **Site History**

During the early 1970's, local architect Arthur Erickson was commissioned by the province to redefine three blocks in the heart of downtown Vancouver. The provincially owned site, referred to as Robson Square and the Law Courts, is bounded to the south by Nelson Street and the Provincial Law Courts; to the north by Georgia Street, North Plaza and the old courthouse (current home of the Vancouver Art Gallery); and to the east and west by Howe and Hornby Streets respectively. Connecting the north and south ends is a three dimensional urban park including a sunken square with an ice rink below Robson Street. Erickson and his team's landmark public space development introduced Vancouver to a new civic cultural

centre, bringing much needed open space to the downtown core. The site's official completion in 1983, with the renovation of the old courthouse into the Vancouver Art Gallery, transformed civic blocks numbered 51, 61 and 71 into Vancouver's largest urban public space.

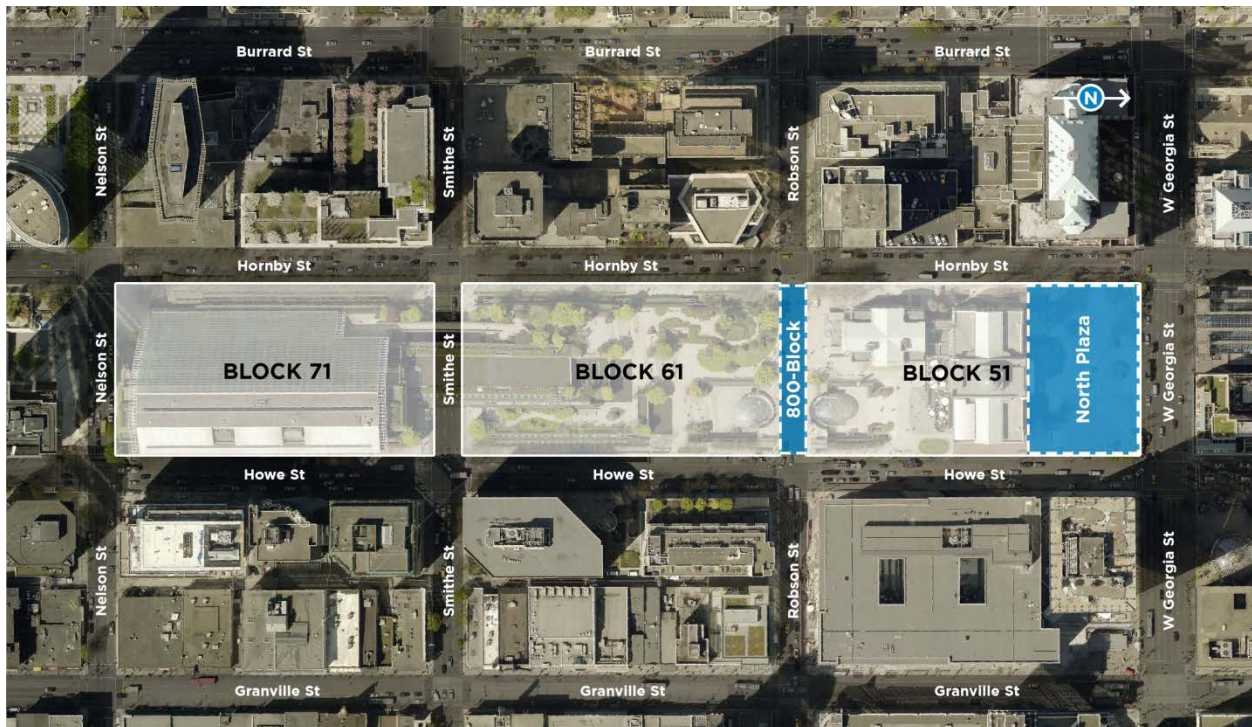


Figure 1: Block 51, 61, and 71 Context Map

Providing approximately 121,000 square metres of space, the Robson Square complex is the largest public space in downtown Vancouver, aside from the Seawall and Stanley Park. What sets this site apart from these larger public amenities is that it offers an introspective view of the city. Whereas Vancouver has successfully capitalized on its natural beauty and surroundings, Robson Square represents a tremendous opportunity to celebrate Vancouver's vibrant urbanism.

Erickson's team designed 800 Robson Street as a traffic-free pedestrian public space, seamlessly connecting blocks 51 and 61 at grade, thus completing the three-block complex as a single connected site. However, after construction was completed, the block was opened to bus traffic and later to regular traffic, reintegrating the block into the downtown street network. In place of an at-grade public square on Robson Street, pedestrians were given wide sidewalks and the same jay-walking rights-of-way as on Granville Mall.

Senior levels of government play an important role in providing and maintaining open space in the downtown. While the province is the land owner of Block 51, it leases it to the City of Vancouver (the City), with the exception of the buildings and publically accessible below-grade portions. The Gallery and the University of British Columbia (UBC) lease and occupy the buildings above and below grade.

## Policy Context

Well located, carefully designed, and thoughtfully programmed public spaces can generate a broad spectrum of urban livability, health, and economic benefits for residents, visitors and businesses. Significant policy documents, including the Greenest City Action Plan, the Transportation 2040 Plan, the Engaged City Task Force Final Report, and the Healthy City Strategy, direct staff to increase opportunities for vibrant public spaces. The first two focus on the connection between spaces for gathering and Vancouver's growing culture of walking and cycling; while the latter two speak to opportunities for enhancing community capacity building and social connection.

There are a number of programs and initiatives that help to articulate the City's public space aspirations in our communities, including but not limited to:

### VIVA Vancouver

The City's public space program, VIVA Vancouver, has been responsible for testing 800 Robson Street as a seasonal plaza throughout the months of June to September since 2011. The annual Robson Redux design-build competition will not take place in 2016 because of anticipated construction on the block by the Province. In lieu of this event, staff are developing other opportunities in line with the anticipated launch of Jim Deva Plaza and the upcoming Pro Walk Pro Bike Pro Place Conference taking place September 12-15, 2016.

### Stewardship Strategy for City-owned and City-controlled Plazas

There is a growing interest to work in partnership with the community to improve the performance and utilization of City plazas. An important outcome of the Jim Deva Plaza planning and design process was Council approval of City Innovation funding towards the drafting of a Stewardship Strategy for City-owned and controlled plazas (RTS 11066). The process to create the Stewardship Strategy is underway with the involvement of key community partners. The initiative will be co-led by Engineering and Planning and completed by the end of 2017, with a report back to Council for approval of the final strategy.

### Downtown Places and Spaces Plan

Over the last year and a half, staff have been focused on the creation of Jim Deva Plaza, implementing the 2013 West End Community Plan, and responding to downtown rezoning applications. As such, work on the anticipated Downtown Places and Spaces Strategy has been limited to scoping the initiative and identifying key issues. Staff continue to see the preparation of the strategy as a priority and anticipate its development to resume once resources become available in Engineering and Planning and the earliest this will likely be is during 2017.

The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association's recently published Re-Imagine Downtown report also highlights the importance of public spaces "from tiny pocket parks and animated alleys to major urban squares at the heart of the city." This report notes that, "it is this theatre of urban life that makes the city irresistible to visitors and residents alike."

From Engineering, to Planning, Cultural Services to Social Policy, Sustainability to Public Engagement, cross-departmental, and community interest is strong when it comes to tapping into the many benefits created by well loved and cared for public spaces. Whether small,

mid-sized or large in scale, public spaces, particularly plazas, offer a valuable visual and physical break in the urban fabric and a range of unique social opportunities. Moving ahead, it will be incumbent upon staff to deftly weave these and other programs and initiatives together into a more comprehensive Vancouver agenda for public space. This includes exploring the creation of a Public Space Action Association, as recommended by the Engaged City Task Force Final Report.

### ***Strategic Analysis***

#### **Block 51 - Vancouver's Preferred Central Gathering Space**

Central squares are very common in cities around the world, like London's Trafalgar Square, Toronto's Dundas Square, and Portland's Pioneer Square. These central gathering spaces are widely recognized landmarks and places for public gathering and civic expression. There is a strong public desire for Vancouver to have a recognized central gathering space and Block 51 is consistently recognized as this space. This was most vividly evidenced by the block's central gathering role during the 2010 Winter Games. Notably, this block was also the most popular choice for a major civic square in the 2009 'Where's the Square?' ideas competition organized by Vancouver Public Space Network's (VPSN).

The North Plaza, serves as the larger, more formal and more visible of the block's spaces, while 800 Robson Street, on the block's south side, is the smaller and more intimate of the two public spaces. Generally, the two at-grade spaces work to complement rather than compete with one another with respect to events, people watching, rallies, demonstrations and protests.

#### **800 Robson Street**

##### **Current Block Performance**

The at-grade pedestrian-oriented, public space on 800 Robson Street, as envisioned and designed by Arthur Erickson and his team, was never realized because two lanes of vehicle traffic were incorporated into the block in the early 1980's. The wider than usual sidewalks introduced in its place perform relatively well for moving people on foot through the block, but are a poor substitute for a public plaza and as a place for political expression. The sidewalks and heavy foot traffic break up and block the space needed by people for stopping, waiting, gathering, socializing, people watching, resting, eating, relaxing, and for easily enjoying events.

Despite missing the formal space needed for a plaza, there has emerged a limited scattering of plaza-like activities along the far edges of the north sidewalk, such as stopping, waiting, gathering, etc. While marginal, this activity is significant because it is the actual living expression of a partially realized public gathering node. The high quality materials, unique landscape features, good solar access, adjacent heritage architecture, and Vancouver Art Gallery destination on this block, when experienced together, signal to passers-by that this is an inviting space to stop and spend time in.

#### **Support for 800 Robson Street as a Public Square**

##### **General Public Support**

Over 2,900 people participated in the City's 2012 public consultation on the future of 800 Robson Street. One of the key findings from the over 2,100 surveys completed was

that 64% of respondents had a preference for 800 Robson Street to function as a permanent public space (RTS 9791). Although limited to the summer period over the last five years, the annual Robson Redux design-build competition has demonstrated that the block, when closed to vehicle traffic, is desirable as a plaza-like space, for sitting, relaxing, people watching, meeting friends and small scale events. See APPENDIX C for results from VIVA Vancouver's Robson Redux monitoring program.

After the Olympic Games, 800 Robson Street remained closed to motor vehicle traffic for regular repair and maintenance until September 2011. In August 2011, Vancouver Public Space Network (VPSN) conducted a petition on 800 Robson Street to gauge the public's interest in having the block permanently closed to vehicle traffic to accommodate a permanent public square. Over 1,900 people were in favour of a permanent closure while 42 indicated their preference for the road to re-open.

#### TransLink

TransLink has supported the City's work by helping to identify a preferred alternate route for the #5 Robson/Downtown bus, and providing resources to improve on the alternative route, such as the trolley overhead switch at the intersection of Burrard and Robson Streets. TransLink prefers year-round transit access on 800 Robson Street (eliminating temporary closures) and supports a permanent closure if year-round access will not be provided. Additional details on this process are provided below in the Transportation Implications section.

#### West End Residents

Residents in the West End, particularly seniors, are concerned with the re-routing of the #5 Robson/Downtown bus as a result of the closure due to losing direct transit access to some key destinations. This feedback has been provided to the City on many occasions since the introduction of seasonal closures. Most recently, staff from the City of Vancouver and TransLink provided a presentation to the West End Seniors Planning Roundtable on February 26, 2016 to update them on the proposed approach that ultimately promotes route consistency year round.

#### Affected BIAs

Earlier this year, City staff met with the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA), Robson Street Business Association (RSBA), and the West End Business Improvement Association (WEBIA) to receive further feedback on the proposal to create a permanent plaza on 800 Robson Street.

##### *RSBA and WEBIA*

Both RSBA and WEBIA are supportive of the City's public space and street vibrancy policy objectives. The two organizations have been involved in the development of this proposal and recommend that City staff commit to monitoring, analysing and improving the operation of key intersections along Robson Street, where necessary, to minimize impacts to traffic flow.

##### *DVBIA*

800 Robson Street is located within the DVBIA's boundaries. While the DVBIA shares similar concerns about traffic flow as RBA and WEBIA, particularly around goods movement, the majority of the organization's concerns relate to plaza design and the long term health and vibrancy of the space. DVBIA support for the permanent plaza is

conditional upon the space's seamless integration into Block 51, establishing a stewardship committee with key community stakeholders, and a robust framework that addresses the ongoing operations and year-round programming of the space, including funding.

#### *Key Area Stakeholders*

UBC and the Vancouver Art Gallery are both major occupants and stakeholders of Robson Square and are generally in support of the closure. They have indicated that they would like the City to consider a set of guiding principles that they have drafted for the oversight and management of the plaza; they suggest overarching and consistent management of the North Plaza and any future plaza on Robson Street to ensure that the two spaces are well connected and complement each other.

The redesign of North Plaza is scheduled to begin this July and will improve the overall experience of the space for both users and event organizers. With construction of North Plaza about to commence and traffic impacts of a permanent closure understood, timing is ideal to close 800 Robson Street to vehicle traffic on a permanent basis and transform the roadway into a pedestrian-oriented public square.

#### **Transportation Implications**

The conversion of 800 Robson Street from its current configuration to a permanent public plaza will create significant opportunities to improve conditions for pedestrians. Currently, there are already more pedestrians traveling through 800 Robson Street than people in vehicles over a typical 24-hour period. The additional space afforded by a permanent public square would make the block more comfortable for people passing through on foot and for people choosing to stay and spend time in the space.

However, there are impacts to other transportation modes, that staff have been able to review and assess over the last several years during the Robson Redux summertime closures.

#### **Transit**

The current routing of the #5 Robson/Downtown bus travels both east and west along this block; therefore, an alternative routing for this trolley bus route will need to be established if 800 Robson Street is to be transitioned into a permanent plaza. This was one of the key drivers for City and TransLink staff in the Downtown Bus Service Review (DBSR) that was launched in May 2013. The DBSR study concluded in August 2015 and provides clear direction on the preferred alternative routing for the #5 Robson/Downtown bus if 800 Robson Street is unavailable to buses for frequent or prolonged periods.

The proposed bus route for the #5 Robson/Downtown, as shown in APPENDIX B still offers good local transit service in the downtown, but provides less direct connection from the West End to some key destinations on Granville Street. For some passengers it will provide more direct access to the heart of the business district near the intersection of Burrard and Pender Streets.

Throughout the DBSR project, staff received feedback from the public that overall bus route inconsistencies in the downtown caused confusion and frustration for transit passengers. The closure of 800 Robson Street to transit buses each summer, and the resulting re-route is one

such example. Although the alternative routing shown in APPENDIX B may not be preferred by all, it would provide a consistent year-round route.

This desire for route consistency was also a key consideration when City and TransLink staff investigated the option of having transit-only through this block. If the block was to be improved in such a way to allow for better programming (e.g. removal of curbs), the expectation is that events within this block would be more frequent and/or prolonged in nature. This would increase the likelihood that buses would need to be re-routed, and therefore worsen the bus route's overall predictability.

Building on the strong partnership established through the DBSR, City staff further consulted this winter with TransLink on the permanent plaza proposal. TransLink understands the City's desired public space objectives of having 800 Robson Street closed to motor vehicle traffic. From a transit customer perspective TransLink generally prefers the current #5 Robson/Downtown bus route. They support the preferred alternative bus routing outlined in the DBSR, if Council approves the recommendations in this report. TransLink staff have also provided some additional recommendations to mitigate impacts of the bus routing change, which are outlined in their letter to City staff dated April 7, 2016 (APPENDIX A). City staff have completed an initial assessment of these TransLink recommendations and are supportive of them. If Council approves the creation of this permanent plaza, staff would immediately begin more detailed design work on the TransLink recommendations.

#### Other Motor Vehicles

Data collected by staff during the summer of 2015 closure indicated some impacts to motor vehicle circulation, such as longer travel times. Compared to the immediately adjacent parallel streets (Georgia and Smith), Robson carries significantly less vehicle traffic. It is not a critical arterial vehicle link and therefore the impacts are manageable. There are also no direct vehicle access points (i.e. driveways or lanes) on this block of Robson Street that need to be accommodated. As noted earlier, more pedestrians travel through 800 Robson than people in vehicles in a typical 24-hour period. Key pedestrian links are going to be increasingly important within the downtown as population and employment continue to increase, thus making pedestrian corridors, as identified in the Transportation 2040 Plan, all the more critical.

City Transportation staff have also had many discussions with the Provincial Law Courts related to challenges with conflicts on the east side of Hornby Street, immediately south of Robson Street where the Law Courts underground parking exits on to northbound Hornby Street. The alignment of the two-way separated bike facility on the east side of Hornby Street can result in conflicts between people exiting the underground parking by vehicle and people travelling in either direction by bicycle, or by foot. Although this issue is not directly related to the decision of creating a permanent plaza on 800 Robson, the design exercise of creating a plaza will likely present opportunities to improve the intersection of Hornby and Robson Streets and reduce conflicts. These opportunities have not been previously available due to the seasonal nature of plaza.

#### Next Steps

The recommendations in this report focuses on the key transportation decision to reprioritize the block for pedestrians. Following approval of this report, there would still be design work needed to complete the plaza and management issues to resolve regarding the ongoing stewardship of the space. Staff have started conversations with the City's Vancouver Art



Gallery North Plaza design team and will be exploring opportunities to leverage design expertise to expedite construction, if the recommendations in this report are approved. Regardless of the approach, staff will report back to Council by end of year with more detail on outcomes of the public engagement process and design, construction and stewardship costs.

#### Summer 2016

As a result of construction work planned by the Province, which is anticipated to have impacts to 800 Robson Street, VIVA Vancouver is not holding Robson Redux 2016. Instead, to remain flexible for the Province's construction needs and to maintain the momentum generated in public gathering opportunities, VIVA Vancouver will close 800 Robson for the summer period and introduce moveable tables and chairs to the space. The start of the closure may coincide with the annual TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival. If Council approves the recommendations in this report, the space would then be available to support the public engagement process on the future design for the permanent plaza.

With the recent decision by the Province in Fall 2015 to proceed with the re-design of the North Plaza of Vancouver Art Gallery, there is an opportunity to leverage the existing design consultant team. This opportunity would help to advance a re-design of 800 Robson Street with a more fully integrated design of Block 51 that would be more reflective of the original intent of Arthur Erickson's concept for the Robson Square complex. This design support would not preclude the opportunity for input from the public and other interest groups, such as City Advisory Committees. Rather it would provide the necessary design expertise and construction management skills to keep the project advancing.

In addition to the recommendations by TransLink outlined in their letter to the City of Vancouver (APPENDIX A), there are other transportation modifications that staff are recommending to help mitigate impacts and maximize the benefits associated with the closure. This includes road geometric changes and traffic signal modification.

#### ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)***

##### ***Financial***

This report is not seeking funding for the ultimate construction of the permanent plaza on 800 Robson Street, which will be included in the report back to Council later in 2016. The report back to Council will also include more detail on any funding required for the ongoing programming and maintenance of the permanent plaza.

##### ***Environmental***

Through Greenest City forums and the Transportation 2040 Plan public consultation process, the public identified public plazas as one of the top options for encouraging walking. Now that the transportation assessment is complete, staff are recommending that 800 Robson Street be closed to motor vehicles to allow for a permanent plaza. This new plaza will create opportunities for the implementation of the new City-wide Integrated Rain Water Management Plan.

### ***Legal***

800 Robson Street is home to multiple land owners and lease holders. Any permanent modifications to the street surface and their cost will have to be considered closely by both the Province and the City. A more detailed summary of this issue will be provided in the next report back to Council.

### ***CONCLUSION***

With the unforgettable celebration experience of the 2010 Winter Games at 800 Robson Street and the experimental summertime plazas created by the Robson Redux Design-Build Competition, the last six years have provided considerable opportunities to further explore and showcase the block's gathering potential with encouraging results.

City staff and our partners have assessed the transportation trade-offs for creating a permanent plaza on this block and have concluded that they are manageable and are consistent with Council approved direction to provide better quality streets for our highest priority mode of transportation: pedestrians. Therefore, staff recommend converting 800 Robson Street into a permanent pedestrian plaza to create a unique gathering space in the centre of downtown and will report back before the end of year.

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**APPENDIX A - LETTER FROM TRANSLINK RE: 800 BLOCK OF ROBSON STREET**  
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**TransLink**  
400 - 287 Nelson's Court  
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7  
Canada  
Tel 778.375.7500  
translink.ca

South Coast British Columbia  
Transportation Authority

April 7, 2016

Lon LaClaire  
Director, Transportation  
City of Vancouver  
507 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 0B4

**Email:** [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca)

**RE:** **800 Block of Robson Street**

Dear Mr. LaClaire,

Thank you for letting us know that Council will be considering a recommendation from staff to permanently close the 800-block of Robson Street to all motor vehicle traffic, including transit buses, in order to create a permanent public plaza. TransLink appreciates that the City has a number of objectives to take into consideration regarding the use of the 800-block Robson and we thank you for your proactive approach to keep TransLink apprised of this project over the past several years.

TransLink and City staff met to consider the recommendation to close the block on a number of occasions. As discussed, the purpose of this letter is to communicate the implications for transit and transit customers—should the City decide to permanently close this portion of Robson Street—and to review necessary mitigation measures to address these impacts. We request that you provide this letter to Council.

TransLink and City staff partnered on the Downtown Bus Service Review (DBSR) to develop a near-term vision for the bus network in Vancouver's downtown core. The DBSR looked at the impacts of both the temporary and permanent closure of 800-block Robson. Joint technical work was also done to identify a potential design that would allow the space to be shared by both transit and public space.

**Impacts on Transit Customers of Closing 800- Block Robson**

Having year round access for transit (eliminating frequent and prolonged closures) on 800-block Robson is the preferred approach when considering directness, access, reliability and system legibility for customers, as identified in the DBSR process.

The DBSR found that if Council proceeds with a permanent closure of 800-block Robson, the #5 Robson route (which currently travels this block) would have to be rerouted and there would be the following impacts to transit customers:

- Longer walking distances from the route to key destinations, including Granville Street and the Library Central Branch. This is a particular concern for seniors and others with difficulty walking.
- Longer travel times, compounding the concerns about slow travel times for trips in the downtown.

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**APPENDIX A - LETTER FROM TRANSLINK RE: 800 BLOCK OF ROBSON STREET**  
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City of Vancouver  
April 7, 2016  
Re: 800 Block of Robson Street  
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- Less intuitive understanding of the #5 Robson bus route as it does not service Robson east of Burrard.

For some transit customers, these impacts will affect the convenience of transit, which we know is important for advancing transportation goals regarding increasing transit ridership.

It is important to emphasize that having year round transit access on 800-block Robson is TransLink's preference. That said, frequent and prolonged closures are confusing for transit users and detract from legibility. As a result, TransLink supports a permanent closure if year round access will not be provided.

#### **Impact Mitigation**

There are some measures that would help mitigate the impacts of closing 800-block Robson. TransLink is asking that staff request support from Council to work with us to implement these measures, including:

- Transit priority measures in areas of major delay downtown, including intersections and important bus corridors, such as Burrard and Robson Streets.
- Roadway geometric or lane line modifications in locations where the bus turning radius encroaches onto bike and vehicle lanes.
- Bus stop location adjustments on the # 5 and # 6 bus routes.
- Decommissioning stranded trolley infrastructure, and making other associated trolley infrastructure adjustments.
- Securing bus layover and operator washroom access in eastern downtown.

Thank you again for your consideration of the impacts on transit customers of closing the 800-block Robson. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

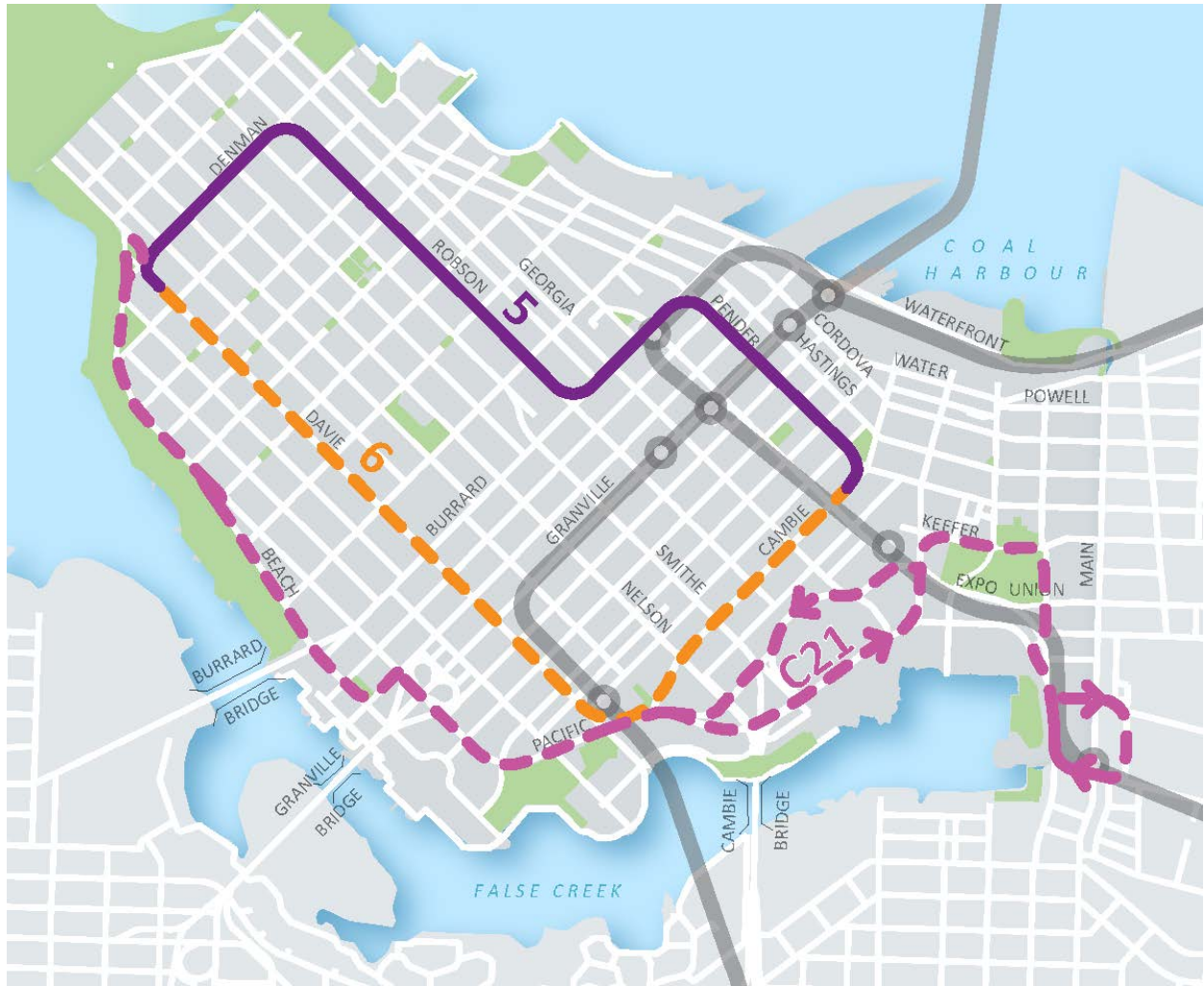


Margaret Wittgens  
Director, Systems Planning & Consultation

cc Tim Savoie, MCIP, RPP  
Vice President, Transportation Planning and Policy

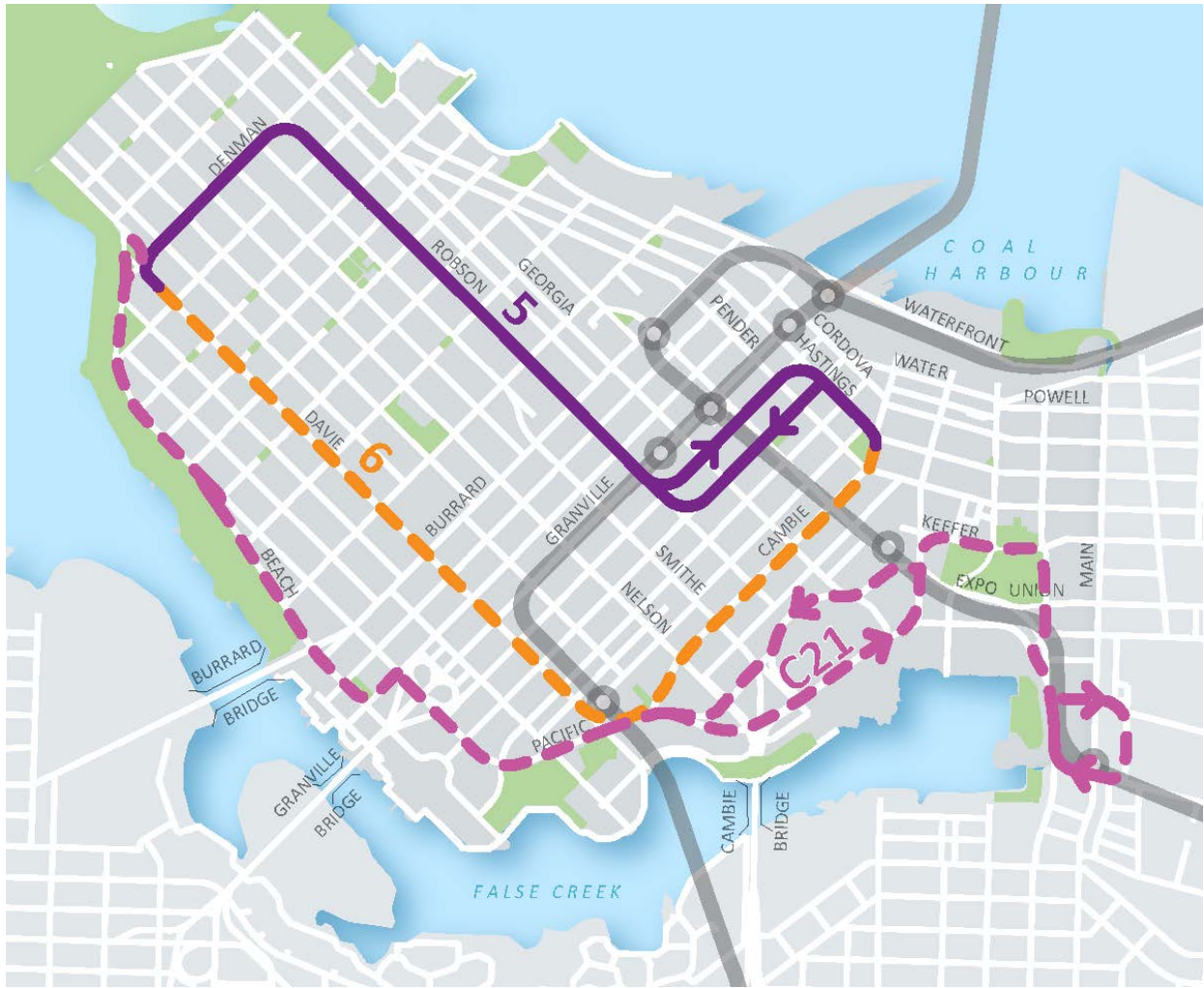
APPENDIX B - BUS ROUTING OPTIONS FOR #5 ROBSON/DOWNTOWN  
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#5 Robson/Downtown Bus Routing with creation of 800 Robson Street plaza  
(via Burrard and Pender)



**APPENDIX B - BUS ROUTING OPTIONS FOR #5 ROBSON/DOWNTOWN**  
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**#5 Robson/Downtown Bus Routing without creation of 800 Robson Street plaza**  
(via Richards/Seymour and Hastings)



**APPENDIX C - VIVA VANCOUVER ROBSON REDUX MONITORING PROGRAM**

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**VIVA Monitoring Summary**

Feedback collected every summer (2011-2015) from passersby on 800 Robson Street has been overwhelmingly supportive of the space's seasonal transformation. Survey results have consistently shown that the temporary plaza encourages people to visit Robson Street and linger and enjoy the public space. Responses to the annual business survey indicate that the summertime closure has had minimal impact on the operations and sales of nearby businesses.

**VIVA Pedestrian Counts (2015)**

- Average Hourly Pedestrian Count During the Day:
  - 1,932 before closure (Jun)
  - 2,874 during closure (Jul-Aug)

**VIVA Intercept Survey (2015)**

- 97% like or are indifferent to the block being transformed into a summertime plaza
- 98% said the summertime plaza contributes to a vibrant and fun walking environment
- 98% are supportive or are indifferent to the summertime plaza returning next summer

**VIVA Business Survey (2015)**

- 72% of businesses said the summertime plaza has improved Robson Street as a destination or has made no difference
- 94% of businesses said they experienced no operational changes (e.g. parking, loading, garbage collection) as a result of the summertime plaza
- 94% of businesses experienced positive or neutral/no noticeable impact to their sales from the summertime plaza
- 77% of businesses support or are indifferent to having 800 Robson Street become a summertime plaza on an annual basis



Figure 2: Winning Design from 2014 Robson Redux - Urban Reef - Designed by Kaz Bremner, Jeremiah Deutscher, Michael Siy and Kenneth Navarra.

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**APPENDIX D - ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COUNCIL MOTION RE: 800 ROBSON STREET**  
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**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**  
**March 2, 2016**

A meeting of the Active Transportation Policy Council was held on Wednesday, March 2, 2016, at 5:35 pm, in the Business Centre Meeting Room, Second Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

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(ii) *800 Robson Street*

The Committee discussed the permanent closure of 800 Robson Street, including potential impacts on motor vehicle traffic.

Following discussion, it was

MOVED by Lisa Slakov

SECONDED by Lisa Corriveau

**WHEREAS**

1. The Active Transportation Policy Council is in favour of car-free spaces to increase opportunities for active transportation.
2. The Active Transportation Policy Council passed a motion on November 21, 2012, supporting the permanent closure of 800 Robson Street to all motor vehicle traffic.
3. The Active Transportation Policy Council passed a motion on April 22, 2015, stating that the design of all car-free spaces should incorporate all active transportation modes, as much and as often as is feasible. The Robson Redux designs were part of a program that has discouraged active transportation even though active transportation was previously encouraged through that block.
4. Sections of Robson Street including the 800 block will be closed in 2016 for an extended period of construction.
5. It is often easier to make transportation changes after people have adapted to changes in traffic flow during an extended construction period.
6. The City is looking for opportunities to create great car-free spaces downtown.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

THAT the Active Transportation Policy Council urges City Council to make the 800 block of Robson Street a permanent space for non-motorized transportation after the 2016 construction is complete.

FURTHER THAT the design and activation plan ensures that all modes of active transportation are encouraged to use the space as much and as often as is feasible.

AND FURTHER THAT the City work with TransLink to design the most direct alternative transit route between the West End and primary transit and shopping destinations in the downtown core, and to consider design options such as designated bus lanes on Georgia Street.

**CARRIED**

(John Calimente opposed)

(Paul Dragan and Adam Vasilevich absent for the vote)