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UB1. Granville Street Promenade - A People First, Pedestrian Friendly, Summer 2021 Pilot (Member's Motion B.7 – May 19, 2021)

At the Council meeting on May 18, 2021, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on May 19, 2021, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision. Following hearing from speakers and debate, on May 27, 2021, Council postponed decision on the motion to the Council meeting on June 8, 2021, as Unfinished Business. Subsequently, on June 8, 2021, due to time constraints, the motion was referred to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on June 9, 2021.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. At the Standing Committee of Council on Finance and City Services on May 13, 2020, Council unanimously approved the motion Flexible, Innovative and Expedited Patio Permitting. With the continuing pandemic, Council also approved a follow-up motion to extend the program in September, 2020 to provide ongoing support for restaurants and craft breweries; over 500 permits have been approved attesting to the need for and utility of the program;
2. The May 2020 motion also called for the creation of pop-up plazas and space for people to safely enjoy outdoors. Since, activation of nine pop-up plazas by BIA's have been put in place in multiple neighbourhoods, and have been popular and well-enjoyed spaces during Covid;
3. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating economic impact on Vancouver's restaurant and hospitality sector, particularly on Granville Street being among the first closed and anticipated to be among the last to reopen due to public health orders;
4. On May 3, 2021, Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that no large-scale events would be permitted this summer, further underlining the need for places for people to safely enjoy outdoors;
5. Granville Street is slated for an upcoming planning process designed to revitalize and maximize this cultural and entertainment destination; a public space project could help inform future opportunities for the area and help the City move towards a more vibrant and people-focused City in a new, post-COVID world;
6. Local musicians and artists have also been hard hit by Covid losing opportunities to perform and connect with people;
7. Examples of people-first activations in other cities include Montreal where several blocks of Sainte-Catherine Street are shut down to car traffic in the spring and summer to make way to entertainment, sidewalk sales and more, and Toronto's King Street Transit Priority Corridor;

8. Increased public spaces support our local economy, enhance our social fabric and the vitality of placemaking in our City;
9. Social isolation and the mental health impacts of the pandemic are real; giving people places to safely gather outside can help overcome these challenges;
10. The responsiveness demonstrated by the City of Vancouver to adapt quickly to support small business and residents has been a lifeline and demonstrated what a positive economic and social impact the City can have when we are more creative with public space;
11. Translink has seen a significant drop in ridership during Covid and aims to support local business and initiatives that will encourage people to get back on the bus;
12. A Summer 2021 people-first and pedestrian-friendly public space pilot could support welcoming people back to the street, support expanded pop-up plazas and local businesses; and
13. Public response to the idea of increasing space for the public and supporting businesses, has been positive from residents, local business, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA), Hospitality Vancouver Association (HVA), Translink, Music BC, and local musicians.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council affirms its support for a Summer 2021 Granville Street Promenade pilot and direct staff to work with the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, Hospitality Vancouver Association and Translink to support a people-first pedestrian-friendly public space initiative for July through September, with final dates to be confirmed upon discussion with partners.
- B. THAT Council acknowledges the intended area for the Summer 2021 pilot is envisioned to be on Granville Street from Smithe to Helmcken and that the goal is for the space to be bus and car free on weekends (Friday Nights, Saturdays and Sundays).
- C. THAT the pilot Granville Street Promenade activation is envisioned to support local businesses through the Temporary Expedited Patio Program, have open, accessible commons-style public seating and decor, have designated area for local musicians to perform through partnerships with the Translink Busker Program and/or Music BC as facilitated by the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, as well as potential local artist displays.

The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association will also explore the feasibility of activations on the blocks north of Smithe to Pender (since these blocks are for authorized vehicles only, rerouted buses for the vehicle-free pilot in B above may create opportunities for further activations here as well).

- D. THAT the parties work together to ensure clear signage for the public with respect to changes to bus routing, as well as any identified taxi and ride share drop off zones on cross streets.

- E. THAT Council direct staff to report back on the results and learnings from the Summer 2021 pilot by the end of January 2022, including options for continuing similar initiatives on Granville Street annually as part of Vancouver's rethink of public space use in a new post-pandemic world.

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