

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

2. Piloting a Pedestrian Scramble Crossing Trial in Vancouver

Submitted by: Councillor Meiszner and Councillor Zhou

WHEREAS

1. Transportation decisions in Vancouver generally reflect a hierarchy of transportation modes, with walking as the top priority;
2. Increasing the walkability and accessibility of Vancouver's streets and sidewalks is a priority of the City and has been supported by successive City Councils, including measures such as sidewalk curb ramps on street corners to create access for people using wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers to enable all residents to participate fully in the community, regardless of ability; ⁱ
3. According to Walk Score, Vancouver is considered to be a "Very Walkable" city with an overall walk score of 80. Most errands can be accomplished on foot, according to Walk Score, and some areas of the city have walk scores greater than 80 such as Downtown (97), the West End (95), Fairview (93), Mount Pleasant (92), and Strathcona (92);
4. Many cities around the world use pedestrian scrambles to provide safe and accessible crossings in high-pedestrian areas. Pedestrian scrambles enhance walkability, which encourages more people to choose travel options that are active, healthy, and environmentally sustainable, while increasing foot traffic that supports local business;
5. A pedestrian scramble is an exclusive pedestrian crossing phase at a signalized intersection where vehicular movements are prohibited at all approaches while pedestrians are permitted to cross diagonally and longitudinally. The separation of vehicular and pedestrian movements is intended to reduce conflicts between the two modes; ⁱⁱ
6. In July 2019, the City of Vancouver implemented a trial "all-walk" crosswalk phase at Hornby and Robson whereby all vehicle traffic was stopped and pedestrians could walk from any corner at the same time within the existing painted crosswalks, around or through the four corners of Robson and Hornby Street;
7. In contrast to the "all-walk" crosswalk trial at Hornby and Robson, a traditional pedestrian scramble differs by allowing diagonal crossing in any direction through an intersection;
8. A pedestrian scramble was considered in the design stage for the Hornby and Robson trial, but the all-walk phase was chosen to provide increased walk time for pedestrians who could also proceed in the south crosswalk

with eastbound left turning vehicles given that there would be no vehicle/pedestrian conflict within the south crosswalk during this phase;

9. Public interest in a traditional pedestrian scramble in Vancouver, as opposed to an all-walk crosswalk phase, is longstanding and has frequently been raised as an option during planning and consultation processes. Potential locations for pedestrian scrambles suggested by the public range from Broadway & Cambie to the crossing at 1st and Commercial;
10. Subsequent to the Hornby and Robson all-walk phase trial, staff were set to analyze the intersection operation to assess whether the longer-term roll-out would also include diagonal crossing and whether it could be a new tool for the City's engineering action plan; ⁱⁱⁱ
11. As of the current date, Vancouver has not piloted or trialed a traditional pedestrian scramble crossing, including diagonal crossing, to assess its effectiveness in the local Vancouver context and determine its value in terms of the City's pedestrian and traffic safety best practices and enhanced mobility.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back by the end of Q3 2023 with recommendations and potential location options for a traditional pedestrian scramble crossing pilot that includes diagonal crossing, inclusive of a range of appropriate intersection examples in the city with high levels of pedestrian traffic in order to assess the effectiveness of scramble crossings in the local Vancouver context and determine their value in terms of the City's pedestrian and traffic safety best practices and enhanced mobility objectives.

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ⁱ The City of Vancouver has long recognize the importance of sidewalk accessibility and has been installing over 200 curb ramps per year since the 1960s. There are curb ramps on more than 95% of sidewalk curbs in the downtown core. <https://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/pedestrian-accessibility.aspx>

ⁱⁱ Pedestrian scramble phasing is most likely to be successful and have fewer violations at intersections with large volumes of both pedestrians and motor vehicles. Pedestrian scramble phase usually creates a longer cycle length and wait between crossings. <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/pedestrian-safety-study-2012-final-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ A joint safety study with UBC showed a 96% reduction in vehicle-pedestrian conflicts during the Hornby and Robson all-walk phase trial. This pilot will become permanent as part of the Robson Plaza project, and a second all-walk phase crossing is to be installed on the other side of the plaza at the Howe-Robson intersection. Staff will continue to look for other suitable locations for this type of intervention. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200707/documents/r2.pdf>