

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on July 24, 2024

1. Installing Means Prevention Fencing on the Granville Street Bridge

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. The Granville Bridge runs directly over Granville Island, which has seen 21 suicide incidents, including 6 fatalities, since 2019, with marked increases in individuals with suicide-related activity since 2019, requiring rescue or response from local mariners¹ and/or Granville Island security;
2. The Granville Bridge Connector project is designed to make the Granville bridge safer and more accessible to people walking and rolling. Attracting more pedestrians will require adequate fencing for basic safety, and the minimum standard for pedestrian fencing in hazardous areas is 1.8 metres. Current fencing on Granville Bridge is 1.14 metres², effective suicide prevention fencing height is a minimum of 2.3 metres;
3. Physical barriers on bridges, such as adequate fencing, are the only effective way to stop suicides by jumping from bridges, and are associated with a 93% reduction in suicide deaths per year.³ Crisis phones on bridges are known to be ineffective deterrents and should be seen as a tool to connect people in distress rather than effective suicide prevention;
4. The installation of suicide barriers on the Burrard Bridge has resulted in zero suicide deaths from that Bridge since 2017;
5. Responding to incidents on bridges without barriers are much more dangerous for both the person in distress and the police, fire, ambulance, and bystanders seeking to help; adding increased pressure on an already high-pressure situation;
6. Rising construction costs suggest that delaying the design and construction of suicide prevention barriers to a later date will cost considerably more than current construction costs;
7. The Capital Plan Mid Term Update, presented to Council on June 26th, includes \$300,000 to support a conceptual design of means prevention fencing on the Granville Bridge, to provide greater certainty on the project cost and scope. Council committing funds to implement the project would help to secure matching funds from senior levels of government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council commit to installing means prevention fencing as part of the Granville Street Connector construction.

¹ Mariners join call for suicide prevention fencing on Vancouver's Granville Bridge (2024, June 11) <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/local-news/mariners-join-call-for-suicide-prevention-fencing-on-vancouvers-granville-bridge-9065184>

² Hemmer et al. *Interventions to reduce suicides at suicide hotspots: a systematic review and meta-analysis* (2017) [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS2215-0366\(15\)00266-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS2215-0366(15)00266-7/fulltext)

³ Interventions to Prevent Suicide from Bridges (2018). <https://novascotia.cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Interventions-to-Prevent-Suicides-from-Bridges.pdf>

- B. THAT Council commit to fully funding this means prevention fencing as an indication of the City's commitment to the project and intention to preserve the lives of individuals in mental health crisis, and direct staff to seek senior government funding and support;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to reallocate funds as part of the next capital plan reallocation update.

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