

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: STANLEY PARK CAUSEWAY

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Board approve the attached Stanley Park Causeway [Term Sheet](#), also to be approved by the British Columbia Transportation Financing Authority (BCTFA), the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), TransLink and the City of Vancouver, including:**
- 1. Commitment to a long-term objective to remove private automobile traffic from the Stanley Park Causeway by 2030, in conjunction with developing a new crossing of Burrard Inlet.**
 - 2. Comprehensive safety upgrade to the Stanley Park Causeway and park entrance as follows:**
 - a. Widening the three Causeway vehicle lanes from 2.95 metres to 3.5 metres, and re-aligning the s-curve at Lost Lagoon.**
 - b. Rebuilding the Park Drive overpass at Prospect Point.**
 - c. Rebuilding the Pipeline Road underpass at Lost Lagoon.**
 - d. Rebuilding the pedestrian Chilco Street underpass.**
 - e. Developing Stanley Park loop as the new all-season terminus for Stanley Park buses.**
 - f. Turning Chilco bus loop and Chilco Street between Georgia and Alberni Streets into park space.**
- B. THAT no additional or altered legal rights shall arise from this approval in terms of the Provincial tenure of the Causeway as outlined in the agreement of July 12, 1999, between the Province and the Park Board.**
- C. THAT the Board authorize the General Manager to amend the July 12, 1999 Causeway Agreement to reflect the changes described in Recommendations A.(2) and B. of this report.**
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POLICY

On April 11, 1994, the Board passed a motion advising the Provincial Government of the Board's opposition to any Lions Gate crossing option that would require or result in either the expansion of the right-of-way through Stanley Park or any compromise on Lost Lagoon, and of the Board's preference for any crossing option that would result in the elimination of vehicular traffic through Stanley Park.

On July 27, 1998, the Board passed the following motions:

That the Board re-affirms its continued opposition to any expansion of the Stanley Park Causeway.

That staff advise the Province in writing, tomorrow, that proposals received by the Board from the Province to address safety concerns associated with the current Causeway be considered by the Board in good faith.

On September 28, 1998, the Board passed the following motions regarding the Causeway sidewalk/bicycle path:

That the Board approve the widening of the Causeway sidewalks from 1.2 to 2 metres.

That, as a condition of this approval the Board require the following additional improvements to be made to the satisfaction of the General Manager of the Park Board:

- i. That the bike path alignment and access issues be addressed to the greatest extent possible including any overpass locations;
- ii. that the pathway be straightened around pullouts along the sides of the Causeway;
- iii. that adequate lighting be provided on both sides of the Causeway;
- iv. that the surface be suitable for bicycle and in-line skates; and
- v. that no trees be removed as a result of this project.

On July 12, 1999, the Board passed the following motion regarding the legal agreement between the parties:

That the Board approve the Stanley Park Causeway Agreement dated July 12, 1999.

PURPOSE

This report seeks the Park Board' s approval of a proposed agreement between BCTFA, ICBC, TransLink, the City of Vancouver and the Park Board. In the long term, the partners commit to removing private automobile traffic from the Stanley Park Causeway. In the short term, the partners endorse a comprehensive safety plan for the Stanley Park Causeway and park entrance including:

- widening of the Causeway lanes from the current 2.95 metres to 3.5 metres;
- re-aligning the Causeway s-curve at Lost Lagoon;
- re-developing the Pipeline Road underpass and Chilco Street pedestrian underpass; and
- making the seasonal transit loop at the Children' s Farmyard the permanent terminus suitable for electrical trolley service, and turning Chilco bus loop into green space along with a portion of Chilco Street.

BACKGROUND

Ever since its construction in the 1930' s, the Stanley Park Causeway has partitioned the park into two disconnected halves; and as traffic increased on the Causeway, that partition has become a formidable barrier. Re-uniting the two halves of the park has been the goal of many Park Boards, evidenced by the strong stand taken by the Board in the last few years in favour of tunneling the Causeway underneath the park. The decision by the Province in 1998 to rehabilitate the existing Lions Gate Bridge and Causeway has not dampened the Park Board' s desire to see private vehicle traffic eliminated from the Causeway in the long term.

As the population in the metropolitan region will continue to grow, so will both traffic and the desire to escape from it. Stanley Park will become a treasure even more cherished than today. To free the park from the demands and ill effects of regional automobile transportation, and restore it as an urban park and natural refuge, requires long-term commitment by all parties. A first step in that direction is proposed in this report.

Stanley Park falls under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Park Board. The Province of British Columbia holds an operating and maintenance agreement through Stanley Park for the Causeway, wide enough to accommodate three vehicle lanes at 2.95 metres width each. The sidewalks on either side, widened by permission of the Park Board from 1.2 metres to 2 metres, are located outside the Province' s area of agreement. Any widening of the three vehicle lanes beyond this extent requires the approval of the Park Board.

The on-going re-habilitation of Lions Gate Bridge will deliver vehicle lanes 3.5 metres wide. The Province wants to see that lane width continue through the park. In its meeting of July 27, 1998, referenced above, the Board affirmed its opposition to an expansion of the width of the Causeway, but advised the Province that proposals addressing safety concerns would be considered by the Board in good faith. Staff from five agencies have compiled and reviewed safety-related data, and have developed a comprehensive safety plan that is herewith brought forward for the Board' s consideration.

Construction of the re-habilitated Causeway is underway. The east edge of the Causeway has been re-built including services, curb and sidewalk, lighting and gantry bases. Along the west edge of the Causeway, preparatory work has commenced but the curb line has not yet been set. This work, however, is imminent. Any contemplated changes to the curb line, such as a widening of vehicle lanes would require, can be accommodated if the decision is made soon. At a later date, such changes would be more costly.

DISCUSSION

This report proposes that the long-term benefits of an agreement to remove private vehicle traffic from the Causeway, and the short-term benefits of a comprehensive safety plan, including widening of vehicle lanes on the Causeway now under construction and many associated improvements, outweigh the environmental costs of losing a portion of the park.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVE

The proposed agreement is to be signed by the BCTFA, ICBC, TransLink, the City of Vancouver and the Park Board. The parties commit to removing private automobile traffic from the Stanley Park Causeway and Lions Gate Bridge by January 1, 2030, with the facilities being reconfigured as a dedicated transit, cyclist and pedestrian route or turned back to park use. Each party commits to initiating a planning and public consultation process to meet that time line.

Thirty years from now, Lions Gate Bridge will again require major maintenance. Traffic demand at that time will require an alternative crossing, if not already required at an earlier date. The proposition to end private automobile traffic on the heritage bridge in thirty years is therefore realistic.

This agreement constitutes the first time that all the major parties have agreed to a long-term future of freeing Stanley Park from private automobile through-traffic. While the agreement is only the first step on a long road, it is a significant point of departure from positions held previously by government agencies.

COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PLAN

The proposed comprehensive safety plan has the following features, please refer to attached drawings for illustration:

- Widening the three vehicle lanes on the Causeway from 2.95 metres to 3.5 metres each, from Georgia Street to the Lions Gate Bridge. Widening will largely be accomplished by moving the west curb out, leaving the already re-built east curb intact. In total, this will remove approximately 0.82 acres of park.
- Re-aligning the Causeway s-curve at Lost Lagoon, reducing severity of curvature, incorporating raised, treed median on Georgia Street, installing permanent speed monitoring system and upgrading street lighting and drainage. These changes will result in the additional removal of approximately 0.43 acres of park.

- Separating on northbound Georgia Street park traffic from Causeway traffic at Gilford Street, thereby eliminating queue jumping and attendant blocking of park entrance.
- Re-building the Pipeline Road underpass at Lost Lagoon to accommodate a widened Causeway and a northbound sidewalk (for pedestrians and cyclists), also increasing height clearance for Pipeline Road to allow installation of trolley wires and passage of trolley buses.
- Re-building the Chilco Street pedestrian/cyclists underpass to accommodate a widened Causeway, lessening the ramp slopes at the underpass and increasing height clearance.
- Re-development of Chilco Street between Georgia and Alberni Streets as a green space without vehicular traffic; also removing the pavement of the Chilco bus loop and turning that area into park. This will add approximately 0.73 acres of park.
- Re-building the Park Drive overpass at Prospect Point to accommodate a widened Causeway and sidewalks.

The proposed changes are part of an integrated safety package that has benefits not only for traffic participants on the Causeway but also for visitors to the park.

BENEFITS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PLAN

MOTORISTS: The benefits for motorists include consistent lane width at desired standards, improved road geometry, improved sight lines, and better channelisation expected to aid traffic flow. Removal of the Chilco bus loop will eliminate the perennial safety problem of slow buses entering faster Causeway traffic without adequate merging space.

Recent public discussion has focused on the relationship between lane width and safety, at times ignoring other factors such as speed, road geometry, surface conditions and lighting. The proposed safety plan addresses lane width as well as other contributing factors in a comprehensive manner.

In accordance with the Stanley Park Transportation Plan, vehicle traffic entering the park off Georgia Street will be directed towards Pipeline Road and central park parking lots. The scenic route along Park Drive will no longer be the default option, instead it will require a right turn.

TRANSIT: Transit improvements include the permanent relocation of the bus loop into Stanley Park, making transit a more attractive transportation choice for park visitors, extension of trolley wire service into the park allowing non-polluting, quiet buses to replace diesel buses, and relocation of the first bus stop in Stanley Park adjacent to the Seawall eliminating a long-standing safety hazard of pedestrians crossing Park Drive at that point.

CYCLISTS: Cyclists headed for Lions Gate Bridge will have more direct access from Georgia Street to the northbound sidewalk. Within the park, recreational cyclists and in-line skaters will benefit from changes to the Chilco underpass, including a raised base grade, increased height clearance, and lessened ramp gradients.

The existing underpass is dark and uninviting, its ramps are challenging for inexperienced in-line skaters. The proposed changes will improve this crucial link between the recreational path system along English Bay, upgraded in recent years, and paths connecting the new seawall in Coal Harbour with the Stanley Park seawall. The new underpass will be easier to negotiate and friendlier.

PEDESTRIANS: Pedestrians benefit from the re-grading of the Chilco bus loop and re-building of the Chilco underpass making crossing underneath the Causeway more comfortable in terms of ramp gradient, sight lines and illumination. Further improvements include a low wall along the west curb of the Causeway at Lost Lagoon intended to deflect wheel noise from the adjacent pedestrian path.

GENERAL PUBLIC: Greening of Chilco Street between Georgia and Alberni Streets, and greening of the Chilco bus loop will add park space at the door step of the neighbourhood, and make for a more appropriate park entrance from the West End.

The project also provides an opportunity to landscape more extensively the bank between Lost Lagoon and the Causeway, allowing for a mix of trees and shrubs to form a visual screen hiding traffic, and presenting a more amenable background to Lost Lagoon. The cost of these plantings is not part of the proposed safety plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The BCTFA will fund all the improvements to the Causeway north of the Lost Lagoon overpass, replacement of the Park Drive overpass at Prospect Point and modification of the equestrian/pedestrian overpass at an estimated cost of \$5 million.

The remaining short-term improvements will be cost-shared at an estimated cost of \$10 million as follows: the provincial agencies (BCTFA and ICBC) 50%, the local agencies (City of Vancouver and TransLink) 50%.

There is no cost to the Park Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The most severe environmental impact is loss of park land and loss of trees. Widening of the Causeway vehicle lanes will result in the loss of approximately 0.84 acres of park. Realignment of the Causeway s-curve will result in the additional loss of 0.43 acres of park, for a total loss of 1.27 acres of park.

The loss of park land is partially offset by the park space gained in greening Chilco Street between Georgia and Alberni Streets, and in greening the Chilco bus loop, adding 0.73 acres of park.

In total, the implementation of the comprehensive safety plan will result in a net loss of 0.6 acres of park. The park area lost consists mainly of mature forest, the park area gained will probably be designed as a more open, grassy area.

Park Board staff have completed a preliminary inventory of impacted trees. Thirty-six trees of a trunk diameter of 12 inches or more will have to be removed due to the widening of the Causeway, an additional 11 trees will be removed due to the realignment of the s-curve, for a total of 47 trees.

In addition to the trees that have to be removed, there are 91 additional trees located so close to the construction zone that their long-term survival might be compromised. Recent experience with the construction along the east edge of the Causeway has shown that most of these trees, but probably not all of them, can be saved given appropriate design and construction response, including deleting or re-locating pull-out bays, meandering sidewalk around trees, cantilevering sidewalk across important rooting zones, and other measures.

It should be noted that the implementation of the comprehensive safety plan does not compromise the environmental benefits built into the rehabilitation of the Causeway, namely groundwater management benefitting Beaver Lake, and stormwater management collecting and cleaning Causeway run-off to replenish Lost Lagoon via a system that includes oil/water separators and biofiltration marshes. Further benefits

include noise reduction, the re-habilitated Causeway is expected to generate up to 30% less noise due to new pavement.

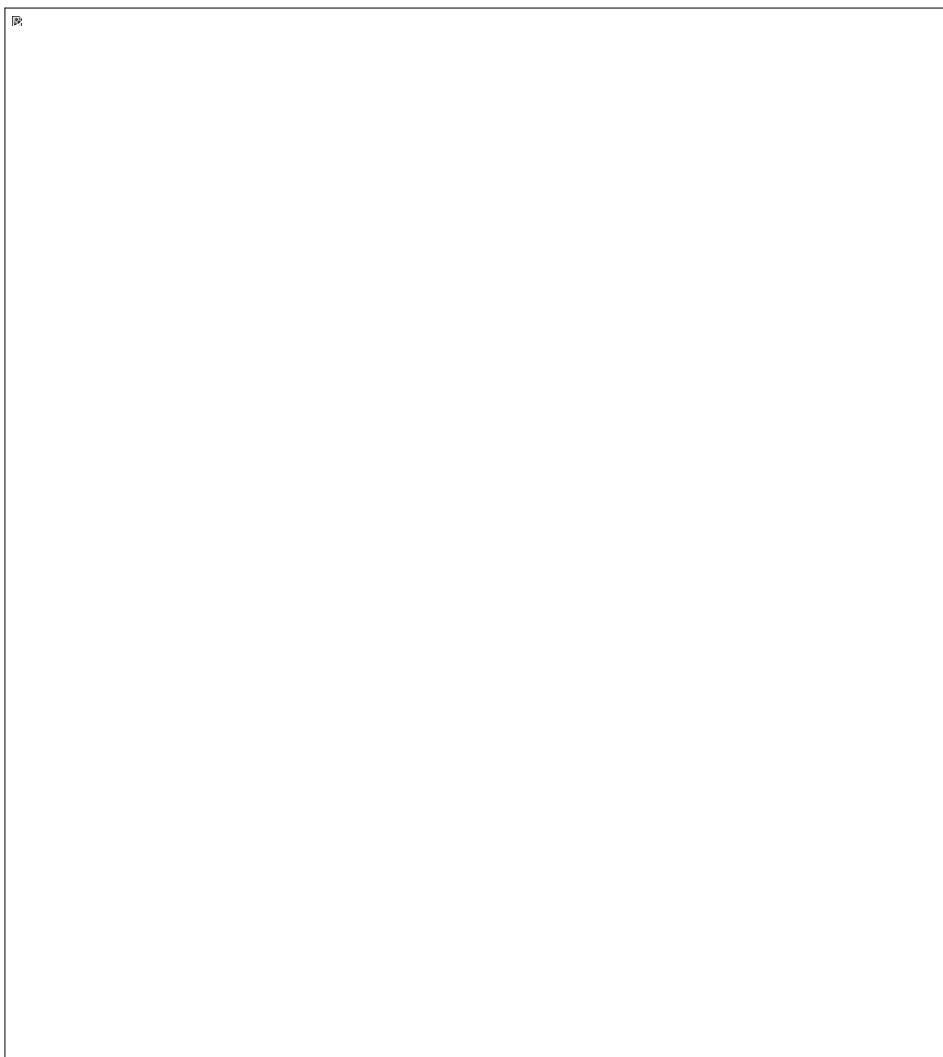
The extension of trolley wires into the new transit loop at the Children' s Farmyard may constitute an aesthetic intrusion, especially along Pipeline Road through the Rose Garden. This impact has to be weighed against the benefit of having cleaner and quieter transit buses in the park.

SUMMARY

The proposed agreement is a compromise between all the parties involved, balancing the safety needs of commuters while protecting Stanley Park as best as possible. Staff from the agencies involved have agreed to recommend this arrangement to their respective agencies. The Park Board is the first agency asked for approval, with City Council hearing the issue on Tuesday, February 1, 2000, TransLink' s Board of Directors the day after.

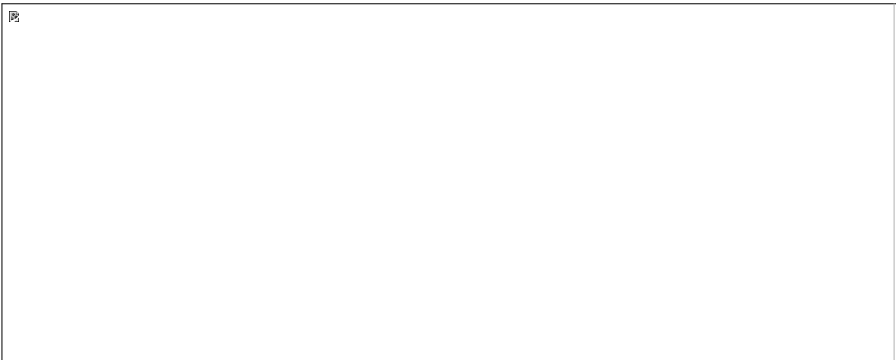
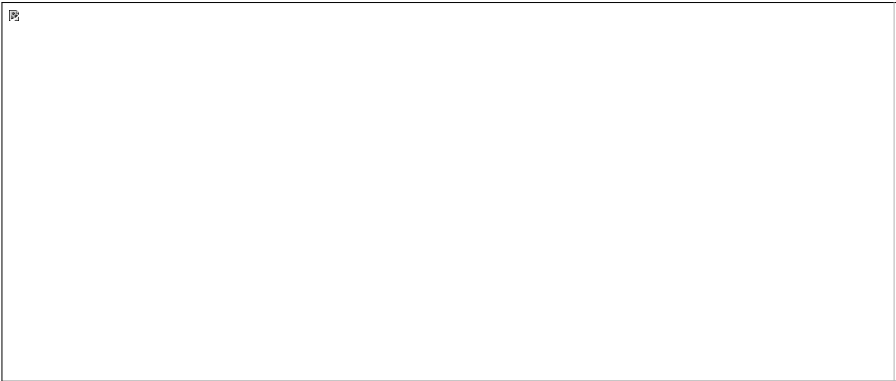
Park Board staff conclude that the long-term benefits of the proposed agreement to remove private vehicle traffic from the Causeway, and the short-term benefits of a comprehensive safety plan, including widening of vehicle lanes on the Causeway now under construction and many associated improvements, outweigh the environmental costs of losing a portion of the park.

APPENDIX 1





APPENDIX 2



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