



Date: April 15, 2005

TO: Board Members – Parks and Recreation

FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: CARRALL STREET GREENWAY

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

POLICY

The Park Board supports a wide variety of public recreation, including the provision of facilities suitable for linear recreation, such as walking, jogging, in-line skating and cycling.

BACKGROUND

The Greenways Plan was approved by Council and reviewed by Park Board in 1995. Greenways are linear public corridors for pedestrians and cyclists that connect parks, nature reserves, cultural features, historic sites, neighbourhoods and retail areas. Parks are an integral part of the greenway system, as many greenways go through or adjacent to parks.



The Greenways Plan identifies 16 greenways, accounting for about 140 km of pathways, trails and streets. About 40% of the system is already in place. The plan includes a greenway connecting the Burrard Inlet and False Creek waterfronts, to be located along a street between Cambie and Main Streets.

Because the vast majority of greenways are contained within street right-of-ways (including the Carrall Street Greenway), the Greenways Program is managed by Engineering Services with participation from the Planning Department. Park Board staff was invited to participate in the review process of the Carrall Street Greenway.

DISCUSSION

A greenway connecting the Burrard Inlet and False Creek waterfronts will complete an 18 km recreational loop around the downtown peninsula and Stanley Park (a shorter 10 km loop around the downtown is also possible if users choose not to go around Stanley Park).



Significant portions of this recreational loop are already in place: about 80% of the Coal Harbour seawall, 100% of the Stanley Park and English Bay seawalls, and about 75% of the False Creek North seawall. Plans are in place for the completion of the Coal Harbour and False Creek North seawalls, and a policy has been established to create a waterfront walkway-bikeway in the Central Waterfront Port Lands. The missing link is the connection from the False Creek to Burrard Inlet. Providing this recreational loop will offer residents, workers and tourists in the downtown an incredible amenity, supplementing the already popular loop around Stanley Park.

Staff reviewed the various street corridors available between Cambie and Main Streets and concluded that Carrall Street was the preferred choice to connect Burrard Inlet and False Creek because:

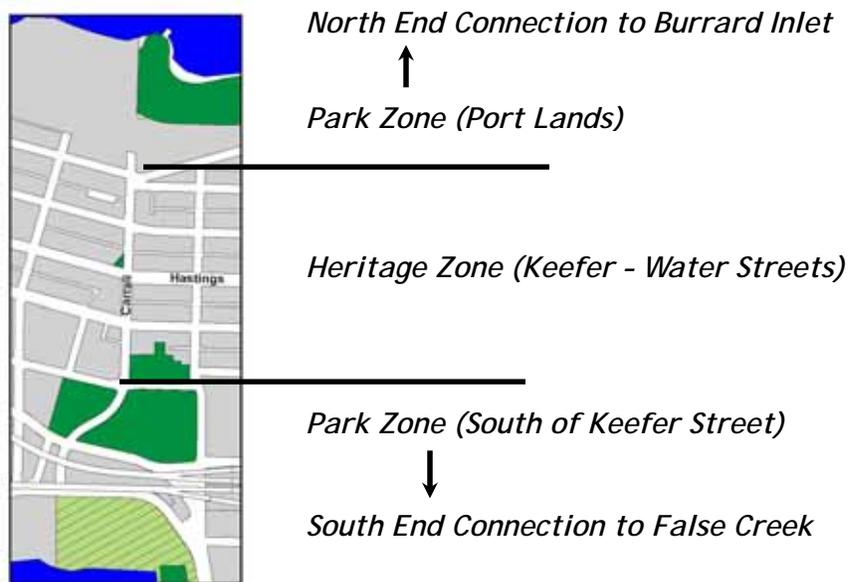
- it passes by many parks and public open spaces (CRAB Park at Portside, Maple Tree Square, Pigeon Park, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden, Andy Livingstone Park, and the future extension of Creekside Park); and
- it crosses through three important historic neighbourhoods: Gastown, the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown.

The Carrall Street Greenway will be unlike any other portion of the downtown recreational loop: it will be very urban in character, flanked by heritage buildings with ground-level retail uses, and in close proximity to notable cultural and tourist destinations. The desire is to encourage users to stop along the greenway and explore the area.

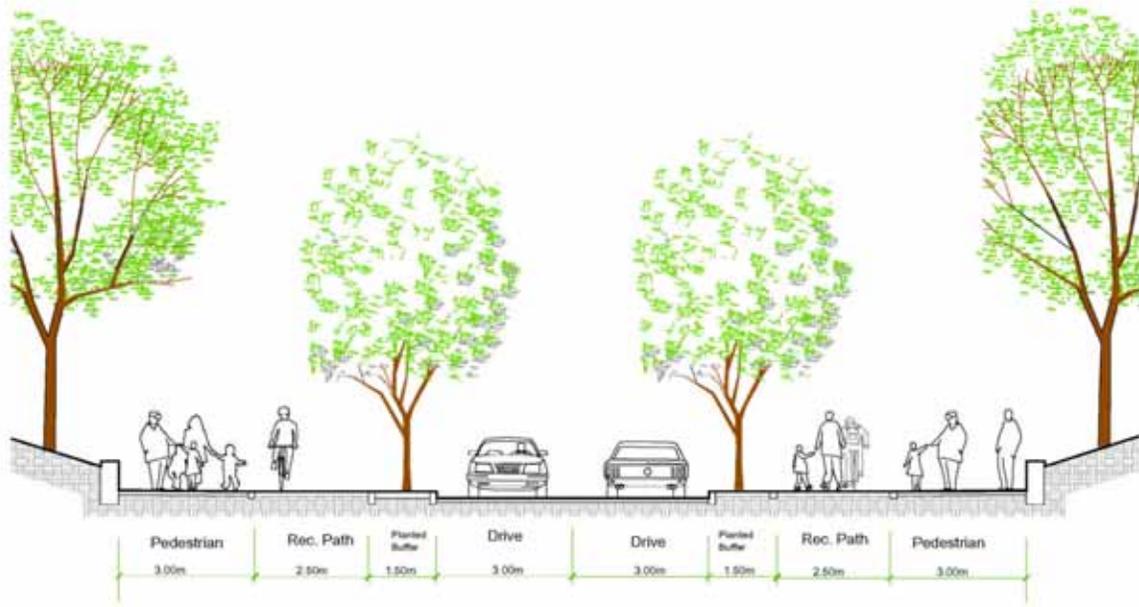
During the last two years, staff from Engineering, Planning and Park Board have worked cooperatively with the public to generate a conceptual design for the Carrall Street Greenway.

Key elements in the design are the provision of wider sidewalks for pedestrians and joggers, the creation of recreational paths for in-line skaters and cyclists, and the planting of additional street trees. The transformation of the street will necessitate the removal of the majority of vehicular parking. Bus stops and drop-off areas for passengers and commercial loading will be maintained where possible.

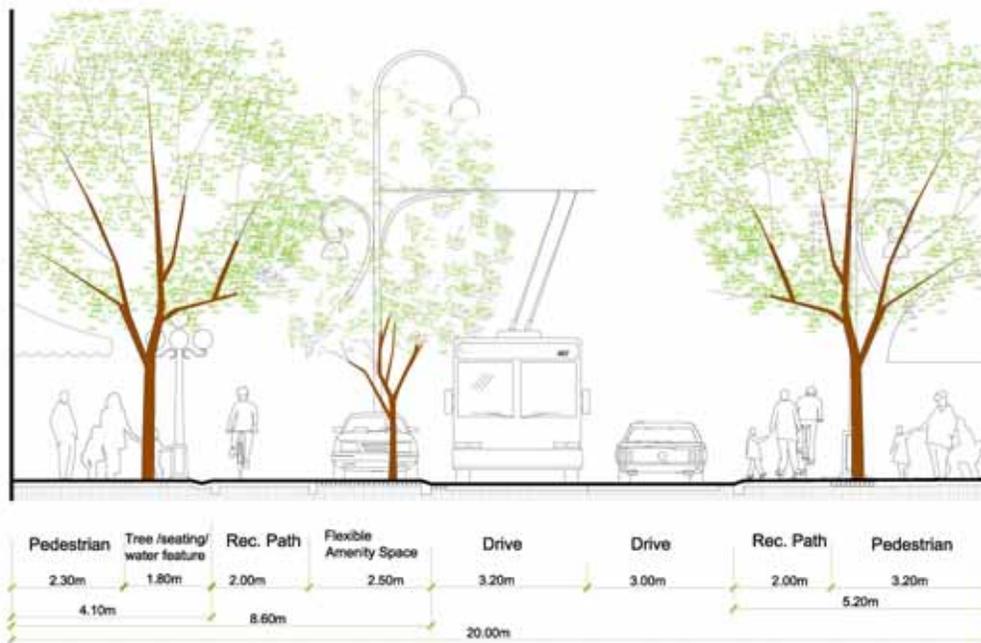
There are two distinct zones to the greenway, reflecting the diverse context along the route. The area north of Water Street and the area south of Keefer Street are referred to as the “park zone”. The area located in between, from Water to Keefer Streets, is called the “heritage zone”.



A key difference is that there will be four rows of trees in the “park zones”, whereas only three in the “heritage zone”. In addition, sidewalks will be wider in the “heritage zone” because of the anticipated pedestrian volumes in this area, and as a result, the recreational paths will be slightly narrower in the “heritage zone”.



“Park Zone” adjacent to Andy Livingstone Park (looking north)



“Heritage Zone” (looking north)

The connection across the existing rail yard located between Water Street and CRAB Park will be a pedestrian-bicycle bridge.

Staff believe that this conceptual design meets the various greenway objectives and responds to the needs of the diverse neighbourhoods along the route.

The conceptual design for the Carrall Street Greenway will be presented to Council's Planning and Environment Committee on April 28th. If approved, staff will proceed with design development and prepare an implementation plan with funding options.

Pigeon Park is located along the greenway, at the corner of Carrall and Hastings Street. It should be noted that the design for the improvements at Pigeon Park will proceed with public involvement this year. A concept plan will be prepared and presented to the Board. Funding for this project has been secured (\$120,000 allocated from a Community Amenity Contribution from a nearby rezoning project).

SUMMARY

The Carrall Street Greenway project is an opportunity to create a recreational loop around the downtown peninsula and to transform Carrall Street into a unique greenway, built on the heritage character of Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside and Gastown. A conceptual design has been prepared with the public. If approved by Council, staff will proceed with design development and an implementation timetable.

Prepared by:

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