

July 26, 2012

To: Viaducts Planning Team

Re: New Viaducts Concept

The Vancouver City Planning Commission is writing to express its support of the new concept for the future of the Georgia/Dunsmuir viaducts and vicinity, as outlined in the staff report, drawing particular attention to the following points.

Time Frame

It was a pleasant surprise to learn that the analysis of transportation impacts supports the case for removal of the viaducts can be staged over a relative short time frame.

Guiding Principles

The goals embodied in the guiding principles set the bar high for the viaducts review process and led to a bold and innovative result.

Ideas Brainstorming

The process for exploring alternative scenarios for the future of the viaducts, including the juried ideas competition, was successful not only in generating innovative ideas, but also in engaging residents in a creative process.

Public Information

The background information and resources on the website and made available during consultation processes provided residents with a thorough grounding in the key facts and issues relating to the viaducts.

Adjacent Neighbourhoods

Although there has been extensive consultation with the neighbourhoods that will experience the most direct traffic impacts (Strathcona and Grandview-Woodland), there is still work to be done in ensuring that residents understand the projected impacts and that their concerns are clearly addressed.

Mixed-use Development on City Land

The Commission encourages Council and staff to take an innovative look at the mixed-used development proposed for the 2-block site between Quebec and Gore, taking into account principles and ideas emerging from the Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing, while maintaining the site as a City-owned asset. There may also be currently unrealized opportunities resulting from the proximity to the industrial lands to the south-east and to the substation at Quebec and Union, and a closer look at these interfaces could have merit.

Energy Infrastructure

The proposal does not make reference to existing energy infrastructure, specifically the substation at Quebec and Union and the central heat plant Georgia and Beatty. Both of these installations are critical to meeting the energy needs of the area, and the viaducts proposal appears to be an ideal opportunity to integrate the topic of future energy scenarios for the downtown neighbourhoods.

Public Space

The proposal includes significant modifications and enhancements of existing public space, which the Commission expects will undergo detailed planning before implementation, as well as new locations for public space. Two areas, in particular, should receive close public review at an early stage to ensure that the spaces are regarded as part of the public realm providing opportunities for community program activities: the current plaza and stairs beside the stadium, which will be substantially altered in bringing the Georgia viaduct down to grade, and the section of the Dunsmuir viaduct that will be retained as an elevated public space beside the arena.

Pacific Boulevard

The proposal sees Pacific Boulevard combined with Expo Boulevard to create a "great street" east of Georgia. Attention should be paid to a pedestrian crossing at the intersection with Carrall; how the widening of Pacific along Andy Livingstone Park would affect the trees, green space and field house now on the park's southern edge; and whether there will be parking along Pacific.

Carrall Street Re-alignment

The proposed re-alignment of Carrall Street appears to improve the physical site for the future school in terms of park space access.

Council and staff are to be congratulated for completing this very significant undertaking in a comparatively short time frame. It will have a transformative effect on the future of the whole city.



Peter Greenwell, Chair, on behalf of
The Vancouver City Planning Commission

A Council-appointed advisory body with a mandate to consider matters affecting the city's future

Distribution:

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cc: Mayor and Council