



P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y3, (604) 254-9411

**Attention: Mayor and Council,
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4**

June 27, 2005

Dear Mayor Campbell and Councilors:

Re: Burrard Bridge Sidewalk Capacity Improvements for Pedestrians and Cyclists

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership of Heritage Vancouver to express our adamant opposition to the proposed outward widening of the Burrard Bridge sidewalks at the roadbed level.

The Burrard Bridge is one of Vancouver's most visible and significant heritage structures. Its heritage value is well recognized, and its historic elements are appreciated daily by thousands of motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, seawall users, pleasure boaters and tourists. To quote from this administrative report: "The Burrard Bridge, which was opened in 1932 and has remained largely unchanged since, is a valued heritage resource." However, Recommendation A, the proposed outward sidewalk widening, would involve the removal of large amounts of original fabric, and the addition of intrusive new cantilevered structural elements in a manner that will irretrievably destroy the bridge's original sublime and elegant proportions. How this work will proceed "while respecting the heritage values of the Burrard Bridge" is unexplained, and incomprehensible.

Heritage Vancouver was a participant in the False Creek Crossing Stakeholder's process from its inception, and we are appalled that after four years of ongoing discussion we have ended up exactly where we were when we started, with an option that neither recognizes the significant heritage value of the Burrard Bridge nor fully addresses the issue of pedestrian and cyclist capacity. Three years ago the same concept of "outrigger" extensions was brought before the previous Council – despite all the subsequent discussion and consultant studies, nothing has changed.

THE ONLY OPTION FOR IMPROVING THE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST CAPACITY OF THE BURRARD BRIDGE THAT HERITAGE VANCOUVER HAS CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED IS THE OUTWARD EXTENSION OF THE SIDEWALKS AT THE ROADBED LEVEL.

The consultative process undertaken over the past four years has been a failure. We have been constantly frustrated by the Engineering Department's unwillingness to consider options other than the sidewalk extensions. Because of the difficulty in finding a solution agreeable to all stakeholders, Heritage Vancouver joined with a number of other stakeholders, including BEST, SPEC, and the West End Residents Association to support a solution that addressed the common goals of our organizations. In order to increase non-motorized and pedestrian traffic on the Burrard Street Bridge and maintain it as an important heritage gateway structure, by sea and land, we proposed that two lanes of traffic, one northbound and one southbound, be closed to vehicular traffic. In addition, Heritage Vancouver has consistently supported other options for increasing pedestrian and cyclist capacity on the Burrard Bridge, including underslung options and separate crossings. The failure of the Engineering Department to study whether or not the underslung option is even feasible indicates their stubborn commitment not to accept any other option than what was proposed three years ago. Any studies of alternatives were doomed to be ignored. The public process produced no results, and no general consensus.

Another deficiency of this report is the complete disregard of Heritage Standards and Guidelines. In Appendix D, design guidelines from other jurisdictions are included, but the report does not even mention the existence of the 2004 "Federal Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada," the new pan-Canadian benchmark for heritage conservation. Even the most cursory examination of these guidelines indicates that the proposed sidewalk widening does not even meet minimum heritage standards. This blatant and destructive intervention to such a prominent heritage resource would set a new, lower standard for heritage conservation in Vancouver. It would be difficult to imagine sending out a more negative message regarding how to treat the city's heritage.

The idea of the "pinch points" is certainly one of the most ludicrous parts of this recommendation. The four constrictions ensure that there will be no effective increase in pedestrian and cyclist capacity, as there would be four potential collision points where the sidewalks narrow, two on each side. This will ensure the failure of the initiative, and in the future the Engineering Department will be back to complete the job, asking for the sidewalks to be extended around the towers. This is inevitable, and would complete the destruction of the heritage character of the Burrard Bridge.

Council clearly has other choices. There is no reason to proceed with such a drastic intervention to a unique heritage resource when there are options that haven't been exhausted. Trials could be undertaken to see if a one or two-lane closure would be feasible, and further study of the underslung option should be undertaken. The alternatives have not been exhausted.

Heritage Vancouver urges Council to reject Recommendations A, B and C of the Administrative Report, and accept Recommendations D, E and F

To conclude, we will continue to oppose these irreversible and disastrous alterations. There are other ways to move traffic, but only one Burrard Bridge.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Luxton", followed by a long horizontal flourish and a period.

Donald Luxton, President
Heritage Vancouver

CC Larry Beasley, Director of Current Planning
Gerry McGeough, Senior Heritage Planner
Yardley McNeill, Heritage Planner
Richard Johnson – City of Vancouver Planning Dept
David Rawsthorne – City of Vancouver Engineering Dept