



To: Mayor and Councillors **Date:** July 20, 2020
From: Katie Ferland **File:** 08-4150-01/2020-Vol 01
Manager, Economic Development
Re: Update on Steveston Business Engagement re: COVID-19 Street Usage

Following Council's decision on July 13, 2020, to implement temporary road changes in Steveston Village on the BC Day long weekend, staff conducted further outreach to area merchants to advise them of these changes. Feedback was also sought regarding the possibility of extending these changes beyond the long weekend as a means to support businesses and economic recovery while providing additional space for merchants, residents and visitors to meet physical distancing requirements.

Objective

Ensuring public health and community safety continues to be the number one priority for the City and for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is key to economic recovery. To support this objective the City has implemented various initiatives in Steveston Village including creating extra space for pedestrians and cyclists on Bayview Street, having a team of roving Community Ambassadors to educate the public on physical distancing in parks and open spaces, and monitoring and enforcing public health orders. A temporary patio program was also introduced to provide restaurants, cafes and pubs with additional space to safely accommodate patrons and increase their seating capacity.

In addition, temporary road changes have been introduced for Canada Day and for the BC Day long weekend in order to provide additional space for residents, businesses, customers and visitors when increased crowds are expected.

Beginning in early June the City has conducted multiple rounds of outreach to Steveston Village merchants regarding temporary road changes introduced or considered. Council has been notified of the results of this consultation, which included hand delivery of notices to all businesses in Steveston Village, an on-line and telephone survey conducted between June 6 and 10, an online presentation on June 9, and an invitation to provide feedback on measures implemented for Canada Day. Because of the short time frame to receive input during the initial consultation, and the introduction of subsequent temporary road changes for the BC Day long weekend, additional outreach was undertaken as described below.

Method

Between July 15 and 20 staff from the Economic Development Office, assisted by Community Ambassadors, contacted all businesses with addresses on Moncton Street and Bayview Street to inform them of the temporary changes that will be in effect from August 1 to 3 and to seek their input and feedback regarding the possibility of extending these changes beyond the long weekend. While all businesses in Steveston Village will be notified of the temporary changes in advance, this particular outreach was directed to businesses with addresses on Moncton Street and Bayview Street as the initial survey indicated that they would be the most impacted by such changes.

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102 businesses were contacted through in person visits, by telephone, and via email. 82 businesses responded to that outreach, representing an 80% response rate.

Results

43% of the businesses consulted (35) were in favour of extending the approved road changes beyond the BC Day long weekend. Comments received include:

- There is a need to create additional space for pedestrians and cyclists in Steveston as it becomes busier with improving summer weather.
- Expanding commercial retail and restaurant areas would only be viable for some businesses if street space was repurposed for this use.
- Businesses require certainty on any changes introduced so that they can adequately prepare and plan.

49% of the businesses consulted (40) were opposed to extending the approved road changes beyond the BC Day long weekend. Comments received include:

- Parking is already a challenge in Steveston Village and losing on-street parking would cause difficulties for regular customers and those with mobility issues.
- Moncton Street is not busy enough on a daily basis to warrant the ongoing full closure of the street, which could have a detrimental impact on businesses.
- Regular vehicle access to the streets is imperative for loading, delivery and servicing activities.
- Creating a one-way loop between Bayview Street and Moncton Street could be a viable option to maintain vehicle circulation and some on-street parking, while creating additional space for pedestrian and cyclist movement, as well as for commercial activities to expand onto the street.

9% of the businesses consulted (7) declined to provide a response. 8 businesses were unreachable due to indefinite closures and other reasons, and staff continue to attempt to contact the remaining 13 businesses on Moncton Street and Bayview Street that have not yet provided their feedback.

Conclusion

Businesses in Steveston have been consulted through various means beginning in early June regarding temporary road changes that are being planned or considered. The most recent targeted outreach to 102 businesses on Bayview Street and Moncton Street occurred between July 15 and 20 and yielded an 80% response rate. There was no clear consensus regarding the option of extending the planned temporary changes (one-way traffic on Bayview Street and the closure of Moncton Street) beyond the BC Day long weekend. The wide variety of responses received reflects the different types of businesses operating in Steveston Village and their unique needs. Staff will continue to work with businesses in Steveston and throughout Richmond on various economic response and recovery initiatives.

If there are any questions regarding this information, please contact the undersigned.



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