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

July 18th, 2005

Dear Mayor Campbell and Vancouver City Councillors:

Re: Burrard Bridge Sidewalk Capacity Improvements for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Further to our letter of June 27th, I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership of Heritage Vancouver to continue to express our adamant opposition to the proposed outward widening of the Burrard Bridge sidewalks at the roadbed level.

In the last few weeks of discussion, a number of salient points have been raised that point to the need to further information before a final decision is made that could irretrievably affect the heritage character of this landmark bridge. Our estimate is that the proposed sidewalk widening would increase the surface area of the Bridge by **50,000 to 55,000 square feet** – a gross intervention that cannot possibly respect the original character of the Bridge. In addition, the widening would involve the removal of large amounts of original structure, and the addition of intrusive new cantilevered structural elements in a manner that will destroy the Bridge's original sublime and elegant proportions.

The outward sidewalk widening is almost exactly the same option that was brought before the previous Council in 2002. Nothing has changed in three further years of consultation. As noted in the *Vancouver Sun* of June 23rd, 2005, this "*Compromise Gets Cool Reception*" from most of the stakeholder groups, including pedestrian, cycling and heritage advocates.

In summary:

Cost: We question the statement in the Engineering Services Memorandum of July 6th, 2005 that "since 2002, construction costs for similar work have increased 10-20%." This seems absurdly low when all indications are that construction costs in Vancouver have been rising by approximately 20% per year. There is little chance that these costs could possibly decrease in the foreseeable future, and every indication that they will continue to rise. The stated cost of the proposed sidewalk widening is unrealistically low, and is guaranteed to rise.

Bridgehead Design: One of the most glaring omissions in the Engineering Services report is the lack of any information about what is proposed for each end of the Bridge. The current proposal, which is not illustrated, would take pedestrian traffic around the existing landmark pylons at each end of the Bridge, and maroon these pylons in a sea of pavement. Other potential pedestrian, cyclist and transit improvements, such as queue-jumper lanes, HOV lanes leading up to each end of the Bridge, and revised intersections, are not even addressed. Surely these are more important improvements from a safety and capacity standpoint than the widening of the sidewalks.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Capacity: All indications are that the proposed sidewalk widening will not increase capacity, as the “pinch points” will provide the same constriction that they do now. These four constrictions provide four potential collision points where the sidewalks narrow, two on each side of the Bridge. This will ensure the failure of the initiative, and in the future Engineering Services 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.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Benefits: As noted in the Engineering Services Memorandum of July 6th, 2005, the proposed sidewalk widening, lane re-allocation and underslung options “would each provide excellent facilities for pedestrians or cyclists using the Burrard Bridge.” If true, it is incomprehensible why Engineering Services would not recommend a less costly and less intrusive option.

Other, More Comprehensive Solutions: Despite constant calls to consider the entire False Creek crossings problem, Engineering Services has chosen to focus on the Burrard Bridge first, which is arguably already the best bridge for non-vehicular traffic. During the stakeholder process, we continued to ask that the Granville and Cambie Bridges also be considered as part of a broader, more holistic solution to pedestrian and cyclist capacity. Despite this, Engineering Services continues to look at the Burrard Bridge in isolation. This is an unacceptable and short-range approach to a complex set of issues. There is simply not enough information on the table with which to approve this proposed massive expenditure of public resources.

Heritage Standards and Guidelines: Another glaring deficiency of this report is the complete disregard of Heritage Standards and Guidelines. In Appendix D, cycling and other guidelines from European and US 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 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.

Consultative Process: The stakeholder consultation undertaken over the past four years has been a failure. Heritage Vancouver has participated since the inception of the False Creek Crossings Study. We have been constantly frustrated by Engineering Service's unwillingness to consider options other than the sidewalk extensions. Heritage Vancouver has consistently supported other options for increasing pedestrian and cyclist capacity on the Burrard Bridge, including underslung options, lane re-allocations and separate crossings, and consistently opposed this proposed widening. The failure of Engineering Services to study whether or not the underslung option is even feasible or to test the lane re-allocation option indicates their stubborn refusal to accept any other option than what was proposed three years ago. Any studies of alternatives were doomed to be ignored. The three-year public process produced no new results, and no consensus.

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, WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING PROPOSED.

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 tested. No decision should be made until other viable alternatives have been exhausted.

Heritage Vancouver urges Council to reject Recommendations A, B and C of the Administrative Report. We urge you to consider either Recommendations D and E (further study of the underslung option) and/or Recommendation F (a trial lane re-allocation).

We continue to oppose these irreversible and disastrous, and ultimately minimally effective, sidewalk widenings. There are other ways to move traffic, but only one historic, landmark Art Deco Burrard Bridge.

Sincerely



Donald Luxton, President
Heritage Vancouver

CC Larry Beasley, Director of Current Planning
Gerry McGeough, Senior Heritage Planner
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Richard Johnson – City of Vancouver Planning Dept
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