

**TO:** Transportation and Mobility Commission      **HEARING DATE:** 10/3/2023  
**FROM:** Ryan Lopossa, Transportation Manager  
Chris Harder, Deputy Director EPH  
**SUBJECT:** **Main Street Promise – Final Design Recommendation**



**Report Date:** 10/3/2023  
**Hearing Date:** 10/3/2023  
**Proposal:** Reconstruct the lower section of Main Street to improve safety, foster a sense of community, and support economic prosperity.  
**Location:** Main Street between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
**Proponent:** City of Vancouver  
**City Staff:** Ryan Lopossa, Transportation Manager; Chris Harder, Deputy Director EPH  
**Recommendation:** Endorse the final project design and Public Engagement Process, implementation of the Business Retention Strategy, and a request for City Council to direct city staff to return in five years to present information on the benefits and impacts of temporary street closures of Main Street to inform a discussion of if/when a permanent closure of Main Street may be appropriate.

**I. PRIOR COMMISSION REVIEW:**

Staff have previously met with the Transportation Mobility Commission to discuss the Main Street Promise project as follows:

- June 2022 Workshop – Design Kickoff
- February 2023 Workshop – Review 30% Design
- August 2023 Workshop – Review 60% Design
- September 2023 Workshop – Design Specifics

**II. BACKGROUND:**

The Main Street Promise project is the culmination of nearly thirty years of efforts to improve lower Main Street to meet the needs of our community and the multitude of businesses along the corridor. City Council’s authorization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and General Fund revenues now provides an opportunity to finally move ahead with this much needed and community supported project.

During initial scoping conversations with City Council, the Transportation Mobility Commission and community members, the City team was encouraged to “Think Big” and “Outside the Box.” The team was instructed to consider Main Street as a place for moving people and not vehicles. As such, the team has developed a design that provides a **Safe, Accessible** and **Connected** transportation system that supports Main Street Businesses and provides for a vibrant destination.

**III. PROJECT DESIGN:**

The Main Street Promise project features a complete reconstruction of lower Main Street between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The project includes the reconstruction of sidewalks, curb ramps, streetlighting, traffic signals and the roadway surface. In addition, existing water, sewer, and stormwater utilities will be reconstructed. Other elements include the placement of bike racks (single racks and corrals) along the corridor, and the creation of streetscape areas where outdoor seating, public art, landscaping, and other amenities can occur. Decorative overhead catenary lighting will be installed along the corridor to improve nighttime aesthetics. And finally, a removable bollard system will be installed to facilitate future short-term closures for special events and activities with the potential for a more permanent closure of the corridor as guided by future policy decisions.

A key feature of the Main Street Promise design is a curbless street. Contrary to traditional street designs that feature a curb where the street transitions to the sidewalk, the Main Street project will not have a raised curb and instead, a curbless design will be employed. The curbless design allows for unimpeded mobility throughout the street section and sets the stage for converting Main Street from an auto-centric use to one more focused on pedestrians.

In accordance with the City’s Climate Action Framework and with an eye towards promoting active transportation options, bike parking along Main Street will be greatly enhanced. The existing 82 bike parking stalls along the corridor will be increased to 112 stalls with several of these having access to electricity for e-bike charging operations. Speed tables will be installed in each block along the corridor to slow the speed of vehicular traffic, allowing for a safe shared use with bicyclists and small mobility users.

#### IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The Main Street Promise public engagement process has endeavored to inform the community of this project, its design, and the methods we plan to use to minimize impacts to businesses and property owners along the corridor during the construction phase. Two Open House meetings have been held at the Vancouver Public Library where people have been invited to learn more about the project. In addition, the project team has met with a multitude of Boards and Commissions with varying degrees of interest in the project. These include:

- Vancouver Accessibility Task Force
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission
- Urban Forestry Commission
- Parking Advisory Committee
- Vancouver's Downtown Assoc.
- VDA Design Committee
- Uptown Village Business Assoc.
- Arnada Neighborhood
- Esther Short Neighborhood Assoc.
- NE Hazel Dell Neighborhood Assoc.
- SW Small Business Providers Consortium
- Vancouver Farmer's Market Board
- Downtown Stakeholders forum
- Visit Vancouver Board
- Cycle Vancouver Club
- WA State School for the Deaf
- WA State School for the Blind
- Columbia River Economic Development Council

The public engagement process also featured the creation of a 15-member Project Advisory Group (PAG). PAG members represented a variety of interests along the corridor including businesses ownership, property ownership, patrons, parks and recreation, tourism, cycling, pedestrians, and residents. The PAG met during the Winter, Spring and Summer of 2023 to review design concepts and discuss the proposed business retention strategy.

A final Open House will be held at the Vancouver Public Library on November 29, 2023, at 4pm. Attendees will have the opportunity to review the final design and business retention strategy and can engage with the project team on the upcoming construction phase.

#### V. BUSINESS RETENTION STRATEGY

The most significant component of the Main Street Promise project is the Business Retention Strategy. This Strategy sets forth how the Main Street project will be constructed in a manner that minimizes impacts to downtown businesses and promotes economic vitality. The Vision of the Business Retention Strategy is guided by three essential principles:

- Corridor businesses remain open, and customer counts stable
- Broader business community is aware of the project and its long-term benefits
- Project information is easy to access

The goal of the Business Retention Strategy can be summarized as follows:

- Reach out to businesses in the project corridor to offer technical assistance
- Retain Main Street businesses and customers during project (current count: 293)
- Effectively spread the word that Main Street is open for business

The Business Retention Strategy is intended to serve as a benchmark for future capital projects and how they are conducted in a manner that promotes economic vitality.

**VI. RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Based on the information contained herein and in the associated presentation, staff recommends the Transportation and Mobility Commission forward a recommendation to City Council in support of the following:

- The final project design and public engagement process
- Implementation of the Business Retention Strategy
- Council to direct staff to return in five years to present information on the benefits and impacts of temporary street closures of Main Street to inform a discussion of if/when a permanent closure of Main Street may be appropriate

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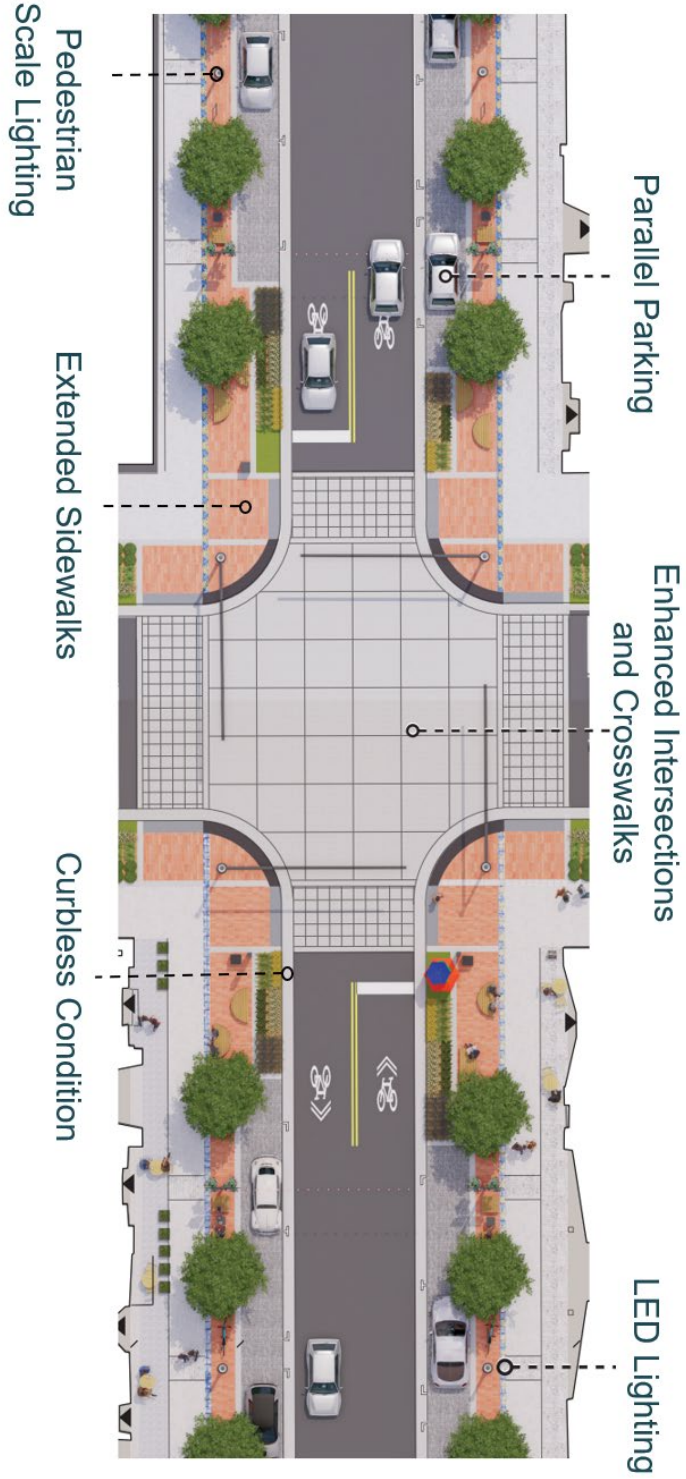
**Attachments:**

**Main Street Promise Typical Single Block Diagram**

**Main Street Promise Typical Multi-Block Diagram**

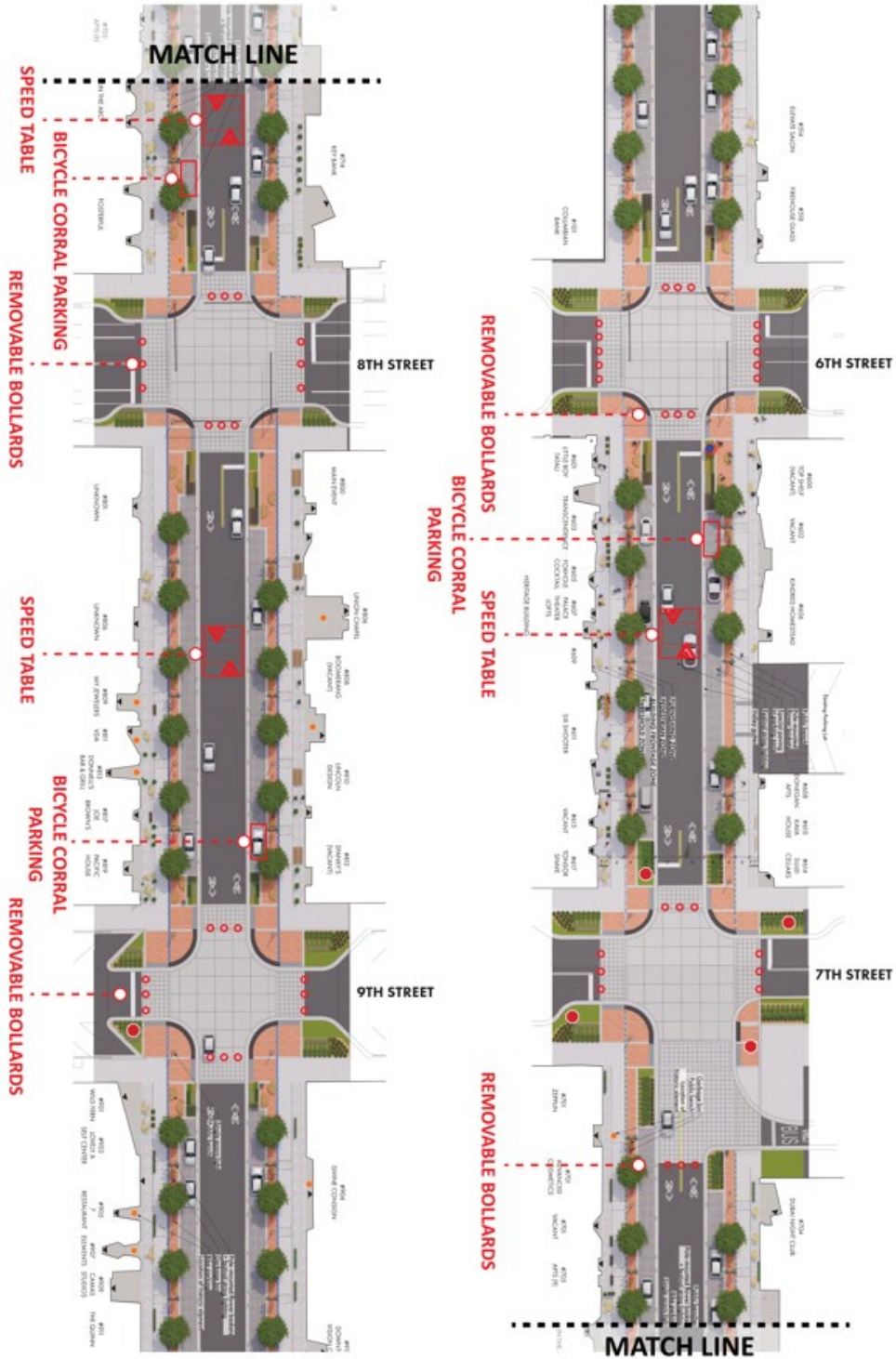
**Main Street Promise Bollard Plan**

### Main Street Promise Typical Single Block Diagram





### Main Street Promise Typical Multi-Block Diagram



### Main Street Promise Bollard Plan

