Council Direction:

Regarding the Downtown Transportation Master Plan Five Year Review (PW08023, City-wide, Item 6.1), Committee of the Whole Report 08-027, Item 1 (c) recommends “That with respect to the Gore Park Pedestrianization Plaza Initiative, the concept of closing the South leg of Gore Park (King Street East), to begin as a pilot project, be endorsed,” and Item (c) (i) “All HSR buses will be redirected to the North side of Gore Park and the proposed Multi-modal Transit Terminal,” and Item (c) (ii) “That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized and directed to undertake a functional design study, which will include a consultation and communications strategy, at an approximate cost of $100,000, subject to approval through the 2009 budget process.”

Information:

The purpose of this Information Report is to provide current information on the progress of undertakings associated with the Gore Pedestrianization Initiative, with a focus on the Pilot Project.

The Gore Pedestrianization Pilot is currently being planned for the summer of 2012, as approved by Council through the capital budget process. Location of the Pilot Project is shown on Appendix A to Report PW12024.

Preliminary programming for the Pilot, as identified on the related 2012 capital budget submission sheet, indicated opening and closing of the South leg of King Street East twice per day, three days a week, for four weeks. To reduce operating costs and respond to requests from the Downtown BIA and Culture staff, this has been revised to
a one-time closure in June/July through August, with re-opening of the street at the end of August. Closure will be for one block between James and Hughson Streets. Specific dates are to be determined in coordination with Culture and the Downtown BIA. A one-time closure and re-opening is a better trial-run for the pedestrian space envisioned in the preferred conceptual plan presented to Public Works Committee on January 18, 2010, as it will include day, evening, weekdays, and weekend.

Relevant Consultation:

Landscape Architectural Services (LAS) is working closely with the Downtown BIA, the Culture Division, and other City Sections including: Design; Traffic Engineering; Forestry and Horticulture; Construction; Parking Operations; and Transportation Planning, to program and implement the Pilot Project referenced in Item 1 (c) of Committee of the Whole Report 08-027, as noted above. Programming and operational discussions with involved parties has resulted in the revised approach regarding the timing of the Pilot Project.

In addition to the parties noted above, LAS staff along with staff from Culture have had on-going discussions with the ward Councillor regarding various components of the Pilot.

Through the above noted consultation, it has been established that a one-time closure and re-opening of the street between James and Hughson Streets, provides the following advantages:

- Park and Road Operations prefer a one-time closure followed by the one-time re-open, as it is less costly to maintain than a thrice weekly closing and opening.
- The one-time closure of the street is simple to facilitate for parking operations as it allows a one-time disabling of parking meters and replacement at the end of the Pilot.
- The one-time closure allows for the use of standard signage. For example “No Parking July 27, 2012 to August 31, 2012”. The road will be closed for the duration of the Pilot Project, with the exception of access for delivery and emergency vehicles. No parking will be permitted within the James to Hughson block during the Pilot Project. Existing parking meters will be removed or bagged. This is being coordinated with Parking Operations.
- Culture staff are preparing an information package for event organizers who are looking for event space, and are in favour a one-time closure a and one-time re-open. Reasons for this are that it provides more opportunity for the hosting of events, and organizers feel that activities will be better attended if the schedule is simple. When event goers are not clear on timing, or must refer to a schedule, attendance is lower. Any advertising would be at the cost of the event organizer.

Pedestrianization Pilot Project Space / Design Elements:

1. Large planters will be placed at the Hughson Street access point and the James Street egress point to prevent personal vehicles from entering the pedestrianized space. Planters will be placed to allow emergency and delivery vehicles to enter.
2. Traffic Engineering is assisting the project by providing signage to limit access to the pedestrianized space as noted above. Deliveries will be allowed during a prescribed time period, which is being coordinated with the Downtown BIA.

3. A raised crosswalk will be constructed centre-block to mimic the preferred plan's concept of raising the roadway, to facilitate barrier-free pedestrian access between the park space and the storefront sidewalk along the south edge of the south leg of King Street East. Details of the raised crosswalk are being coordinated with Traffic Engineering, and will incorporate Urban Braille principles. At close of the Pilot Project the raised crosswalk will remain as a traffic calming element until implementation of the Gore Master Plan.

4. The road bed along the south leg of King Street East between James and Hughson Streets will be cleaned, and rutted paver areas will be repaired, if needed, prior to applying street paint to the road surface to mimic the design intent of the Gore Master Plan.
Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork