



# Exhibition Place

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## Item No. 18

August 29, 2014

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

**ACTION REQUIRED**

From: Dianne Young  
Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **Covered Pedestrian Connection between Hotel X and Allstream Centre**

### Summary:

This report details actions that have been taken with City Planning with respect to a possible covered pedestrian connection between Hotel X and Allstream Centre / DEC and the results of those discussions.

### **Recommendation:**

**It is recommended that the Board not at this time pursue any options related to a fixed pedestrian connection from Allstream Centre to Hotel X.**

### Financial Impact:

There are no financial implications of this report.

### Decision History:

At its meeting of June 25, 2014, the Board adopted the following motion:

On motion duly made by Hugh Mansfield, seconded and **CARRIED**, it was **RESOLVED** that Report No. 11 dated June 10, 2014 from the Chief Executive Officer with respect to the Covered Pedestrian Connection between Hotel X and Allstream Centre, be **REFERRED** to the September 11, 2014 meeting of the Board; and **FURTHER** that, City Planning, Heritage & Economic Development staff be requested to attend the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board meeting in order to discuss this item further.

For the Board's information, David Clusiau and Valdemar Nickel from NORR Limited; Linda Macdonald/City Planning and Mike Williams/City Heritage & Economic, will be in attendance at the Board's meeting of September 11, 2014 to respond to any questions members have.

At its meeting of November 22, 2013, Mr. Northcote, NORR Limited, consultant to the Board, provided a power-point presentation with respect to the two options for a Hotel X / Allstream Centre pedestrian connection – one being a bridge and the second a tunnel.

## Issue Background

The Board's consultant, NORR Limited, recently received a communication from City Planning that from a planning perspective, City staff cannot support the pedestrian bridge due to the impacts to the heritage building as well as to various view corridors

## Comments

The Board requested that Exhibition Place staff explore options for a pedestrian connection from Hotel X to Allstream Centre or to Direct Energy Centre which is not an obligation of the hotel developer to build under the its lease and therefore, all costs associated with design and construction would be a cost for the Board.

Exhibition Place engaged NORR Limited to undertake the study and six possible options were explored: five tunnel options and two bridge options. Some of the challenges that had to be addressed by NORR Limited were as follows:

- Allstream Centre only has a basement level in the south 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the building and that is the location of the kitchen and back-of-house on the first level
- Allstream Centre is "slab-on-grade" at the north 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the building so connecting a tunnel at this location would require major reconstruction and underpinning of Allstream Centre
- The guest tower where the hotel guests would be starting from is at the south end of the hotel site
- Three of the underground tunnels explored (terminating at the existing tunnel from Allstream to DEC; terminating in the DEC garage) were excessive lengths that would be very problematic and unsafe for pedestrians using it; and,
- The tunnel termination at Hotel X would have to be on the north end of the building and to get to this north east corner guests would have to walk from the tower for a distance of approximately 153 meters before reaching any tunnel entrance

Given these challenges, only two options were presented to the Board at its meeting of November 22<sup>nd</sup> which were as follows:

- a) A tunnel that started at the north east corner of Hotel X. To reach this tunnel, a hotel guest would have to take the elevator to the parking garage level, walk 153 meters through the garage to the tunnel entrance and then across a 45 meter tunnel to a another elevator up to a podium on the sidewalk at the north west corner of Allstream Centre and then 6 meters from the elevator exit to the interior of the Allstream Centre. This would be the most costly option estimated to be \$3.6M; would be the least convenient for the guest; and there is a major concern that an elevator would be wholly inadequate to meet the crowd demands associated with any major event.
- b) A 40 meter bridge that would connect from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor meeting room level of Hotel X directly to the south west corner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of Allstream Centre through an existing window. It is estimated to cost \$2.5M; would be the most convenient for the guest; and have the added advantage of connecting the meeting rooms of Hotel X to the meeting room level of Allstream Centre thus expanding the rental potential for both properties.

Following presentation to the Board, there was a motion supporting a pedestrian connection with a preference for the bridge connection and a direction to Exhibition Place staff to undertake the next step to develop this option which was a Heritage Impact Statement given the designation of the Allstream Centre.

ERA Architects Inc. were engaged to do the Heritage Impact Assessment which is attached as Appendix “A” to this report. The conclusion of this study was that “the proposed bridge connection has minimal impact on the heritage value of the building [Allstream Centre] while providing an all season connection between the hotel and the surrounding convention / event spaces”.

The Heritage Impact Assessment was provided on an informal basis to City Planning and a meeting held with NORR Limited, Exhibition Place staff and staff from Community Planning, Urban Design, and Heritage Planning. On June 3, 2014, City Planning communicated with NORR Limited the results of that informal review and indicated that Community Planning, Urban Design, and Heritage Planning staff have looked at and discussed the proposal for the bridge connection at great lengths and while they appreciate why NORR Limited and Exhibition Place think that a connection would be beneficial to the Allstream Centre and empathize with the marketing reasons for the bridge raised by Exhibition Place; from a planning perspective, Community Planning, Urban Design, and Heritage Planning staff could not support the pedestrian bridge due to the impacts to the heritage building as well as the impacts to various view corridors.

While a full Heritage Impact Assessment was not developed on the tunnel option, City Planning did indicate at the same meeting that they had some concerns about the proposed podium located at the north west corner of Allstream Centre which was the for the tunnel / elevator exit.

Given the communication from the City, it would not be beneficial to continue to expend funds on this project at this time. However, Exhibition Place staff are exploring temporary options that can be put into place on an event basis as at this time it is difficult to comment on an alternate connection. In addition, in the short-term there is no funding in the capital program for any permanent connection.

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