

REPORT

Planning and Development Engineering Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council **Date:** August 25, 2025

From: Serena Trachta, Acting Director,
Planning and Development **File:** DP000877
#2737040

Kwaku Agyare-Manu, Acting Director,
Engineering Services **Item #:** 2025-244

Subject: **Royal Columbian Hospital Bridge Connection (230 Keary Street) –
Consideration of Land Sale and Bylaw for First, Second and Third
Readings**

RECOMMENDATION

1. *THAT Title to Highway (Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw No. 8533, 2025 be introduced and given first, second, and third readings;*
 2. *THAT the 1,349 cubic meters (47,639 cubic feet) portion of airspace above Keary Street be sold for the nominal cost of \$1 to Wesgroup Properties, with conditions and encumbrances on the airspace parcel as outlined in Attachment 7: Summary of Legal Instruments To Restrict the Use and Sale of the Airspace of the report titled “Royal Columbian Hospital Bridge Connection (230 Keary Street) – Consideration of Land Sale and Bylaw for First, Second and Third Readings” dated August 25, 2025; and*
 3. *THAT, subject to adoption of Bylaw No. 8533, 2025, staff be authorized to take the necessary steps to complete all matters detailed herein, including authorizing the Mayor and Corporate Officer to execute all documentation to effect the transaction.*
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PURPOSE

To consider the proposed bylaw and sale of 1,349 cubic meters (47,639 cubic feet) of airspace above Keary Street to facilitate the construction of an accessible public entry and elevated pedestrian bridge connecting 230 Keary Street and the Royal Columbian Hospital, and facilitate accessible access from the Sapperton SkyTrain station to the hospital.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wesgroup Properties has submitted a proposal to the City to construct a publicly accessible, elevated pedestrian bridge that would span Keary Street, connecting the Royal Columbian Hospital building with the fourth level of Wesgroup's mixed-use building under construction at 230 Keary Street ("Building 8") within the Brewery District. The elevated pedestrian bridge is consistent with the Brewery District Master Plan, and would provide a clear and direct publicly accessible route of travel between the Sapperton SkyTrain Station, Royal Columbian Hospital ("the hospital"), and provide added connectivity and usability for office users needing or benefiting from a direct connection to the hospital in alignment with the City's Special Employment Area in the Official Community Plan and New Westminster Economic Development Plan.

The bridge would span property owned by three different entities: The City of New Westminster, Wesgroup Properties and Fraser Health Authority ("Fraser Health"). The majority of the bridge, approximately 1,349 cubic meters (47,639 cubic feet), would sit above Keary Street. Structural support pillars are required for the bridge, which are proposed to land within the Keary Street right-of-way on the south side and fully within the hospital's property on the north side.

The creation and sale of an airspace parcel would be required to facilitate the construction and long term use of the airspace over Keary Street for a pedestrian bridge. Legal encumbrances would limit the use of the airspace parcel to a public walkway and would require it be returned to the City once the bridge is decommissioned at end-of-life. The south structural support pillar would not be part of the airspace parcel being sold to Wesgroup and would be secured by way of a separate legal agreement prior to sale of the airspace.

In consideration of the sale, the City must demonstrate that it has received fair market value for the City's airspace. The market value appraisal for the airspace is \$215,000; however, assessing the transaction as a whole, staff considered the public benefits generated from the disposition of the City's airspace and the legal limitations that will be placed on the airspace parcel. Staff consider that the proposal has significant public benefits by achieving a universally accessible public connection between the SkyTrain and the hospital, creation of a prominent public entry to the hospital adjacent to the SkyTrain station, and achieving City economic health care cluster objectives.

As such, staff recommend Council consider the airspace parcel be created and offered for sale at a nominal cost of \$1 given the high public value of the public connection outweighs the benefits to the developer.

BACKGROUND

General background on the redevelopment of 230 Keary Street (Building 8), Brewery District Transit Plaza, and Royal Columbian Hospital, as well as additional site context are included in Attachment 2. Related City policies and regulations which includes relevant background information on the Brewery District master plan and the City's economic development initiatives are included in Attachment 3.

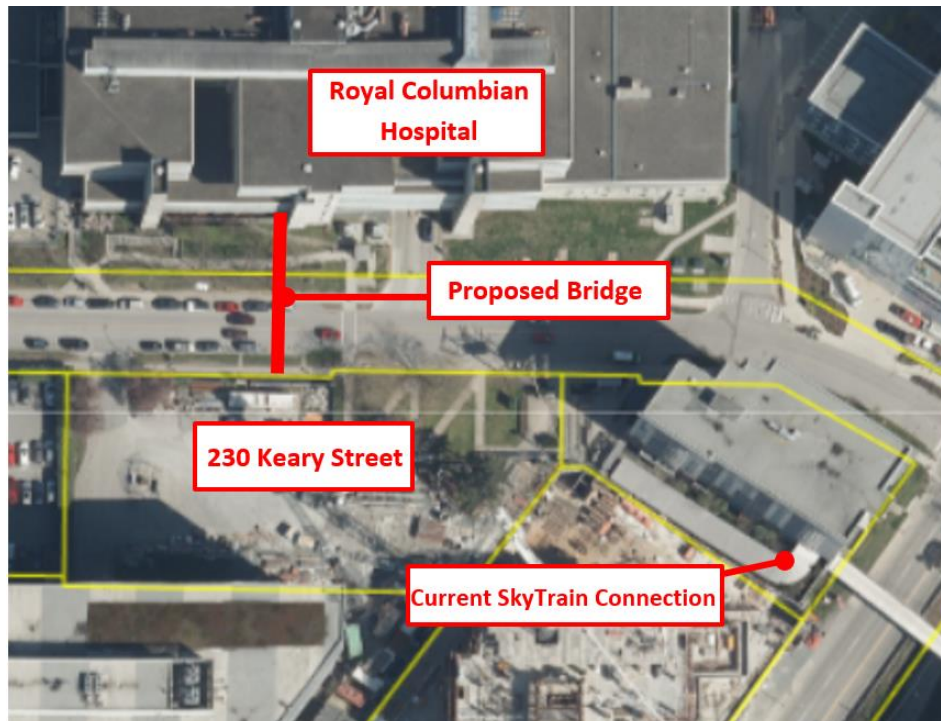


Figure 1: Context Map Showing Proximity of the Proposed Bridge to the Hospital and SkyTrain Connection

Royal Columbian Hospital Redevelopment

The Royal Columbian Hospital is located directly opposite 230 Keary Street, on the north side of Keary Street. A rezoning application was approved in July 2021 to facilitate the development of Phases two and three of the hospital redevelopment. Given that it was uncertain at the time of the hospital rezoning about a pedestrian bridge being delivered via Building 8 to the hospital, Council wanted to ensure that there was a “front door” provided to the hospital on Keary Street by means of an accessible and seamless connection between the SkyTrain and the hospital. Prior to giving the zoning amendment bylaw first and second reading (staff [report](#) and [minutes](#) to Council), Council carried the following resolution at the August 31, 2020 meeting:

*THAT Council direct staff to request that Fraser Health commit to:
A seamless and universally accessible connection to Sapperton SkyTrain
Station, befitting a primary entrance to the hospital as part of the current design.*

The requirement for Fraser Health to create an accessible connection and “front door” to the hospital on Keary Street was secured as a condition of adoption and included as a pre-occupancy condition for Phase three of the hospital renovation project in a legal agreement registered on the hospital property. With this latest proposal, there is an opportunity to once again explore a pedestrian bridge as per the original concept proposed in the Brewery District Master Plan and achieve the universally accessible connection to the hospital that was secured during the hospital rezoning process. The pedestrian bridge and public entry at the ground level of Building 8 are proposed to fulfill Fraser Health’s obligation with the City to construct a “front door” to the hospital.

Land Sale

Consideration of requests for purchase of City-owned land involves review against the City’s Framework for the Disposition of City-Owned Lands. Per the *Community Charter*, the City must not provide assistance to a business, which includes disposing of land for less than market value. Per City practice, an appraisal report was prepared to determine the market value of land, commissioned and paid for by the interested party from a pre-approved list of professionals provided by the City. In addition to the benefits to Wesgroup, staff have also considered the significant public benefits generated by the disposal of land for the construction of the bridge (included as Attachment 5) as part of the assessment of the value to the City generated by the transaction.

PROPOSAL

Accessible Pedestrian Public Access Route, Hospital Entrance & Airspace Parcel

Wesgroup Properties has submitted a proposal to the City to construct a publicly accessible, elevated pedestrian bridge that would span Keary Street, connecting the Royal Columbian Hospital with the fourth level of Wesgroup’s mixed-use building under construction at 230 Keary Street (“Building 8”) within the Brewery District. The elevated pedestrian bridge is consistent with the Brewery District Master Plan, and would provide a clear and direct publicly accessible route of travel between the Sapperton SkyTrain Station, Royal Columbian Hospital (“the hospital”), and provides added connectivity and usability for office users needing or benefiting from a direct connection to the hospital in alignment with the City’s Special Employment Area in the Official Community Plan and New Westminster Economic Development Plan (further information on these plans included in Attachment 3).

The proposed bridge would span property owned by three different entities: The City of New Westminster, Wesgroup Properties and Fraser Health. The bridge extent on 230 Keary Street (owned by Wesgroup) is approximately 161 cubic meters (5,686 cubic feet) and the extent on the hospital property is approximately 743 cubic meters (26, 239 cubic feet) The majority of the bridge, approximately 1,349 cubic meters (47,639 cubic feet) would sit above Keary Street. Drawings indicate that the pedestrian bridge would be accessed from three elevators via the ground level of Building 8 (shown in Figure 2). A public entrance to the hospital via this connection would be provided on the south side of the building fronting the publically accessible transit plaza which will be a central

plaza within the Brewery District providing connectivity to SkyTrain and Keary Street. This entrance would be architecturally prominent and identified with wayfinding and signage to clearly signal the location of the public access point for the hospital. A secondary access would also be provided from Keary Street; wayfinding and signage would be provided to signal its access to the bridge.

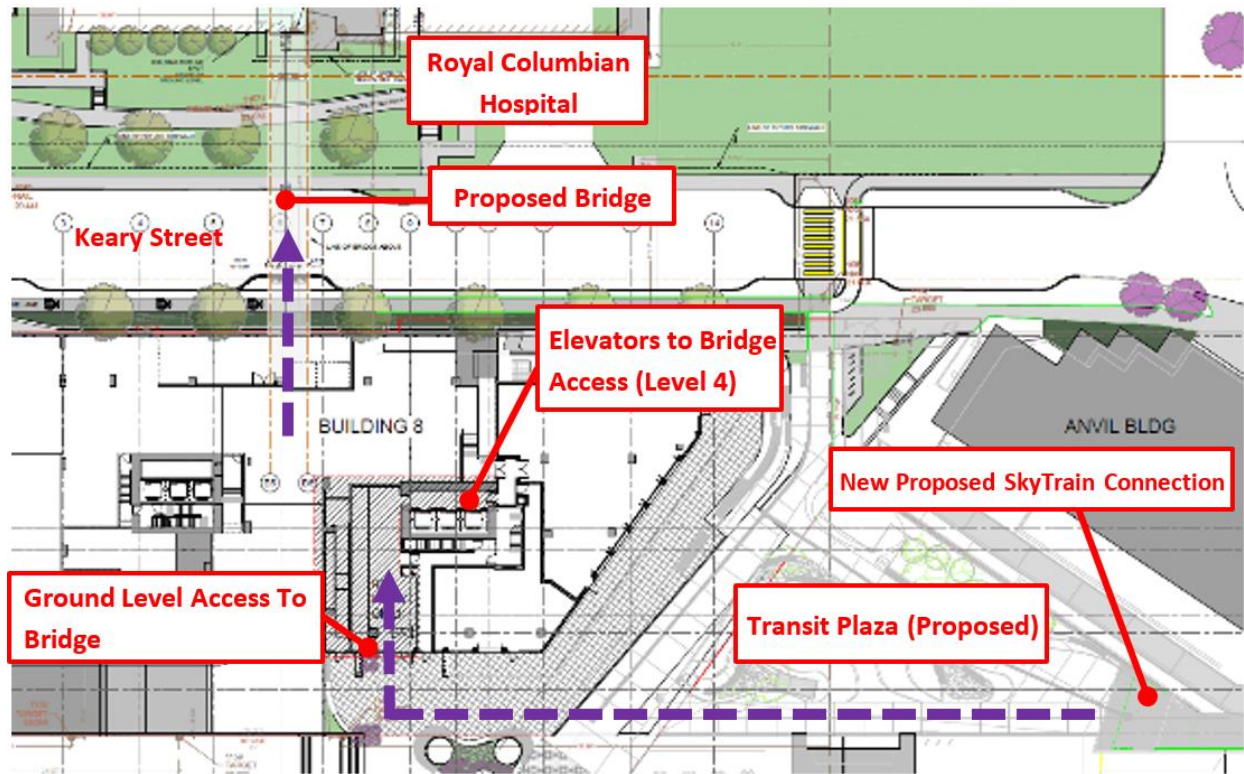


Figure 2: Site plan showing circulation and access to bridge from the SkyTrain in purple

The creation and sale of an airspace parcel would be required to facilitate the construction and long term use of the air space over City owned Keary Street for a pedestrian bridge. The ownership of the underlying land would remain with the City and there would be no impact on the functioning of Keary Street.

Structural support pillars are required for the bridge, which are proposed to land within the Keary Street right-of-way on the south side and fully within the hospital property on the north side. The south structural support pillar would not be part of the airspace parcel being and would be secured by separate legal agreements. Drawings indicate that the bridge clearance above the Keary Street roadway would be 8.24 metres (28.03 feet), which Engineering and Fire Services staff confirm is well above the required height clearance for vehicles per the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC). Select project drawings can be found in Attachment 4.

Staff will continue to work with the applicant on the design of the bridge and overall public access route; approval of the bridge design would be required prior to executing on a purchase and sale agreement, and approval and completion of wayfinding and entrance design would be secured through a covenant on title of the Building 8 property.

DISCUSSION

Sale of Keary Street Airspace

Following an interdepartmental review, the sale of the airspace parcel above Keary Street is supported by staff due to the significant public and City benefits generated as outlined in Attachment 5. There are no conflicts with utilities or services within the roadway or obstruction to the emergency response access. Discussion of this analysis is in the following section, and the City's land disposition assessment for the air space parcel is included as Attachment 6.

Assessment of Fair Market Value

In evaluating the proposal, staff have factored the appraised value of the airspace, the public and City benefits achieved through the transaction, and the legal mechanisms that would restrict use and sale of the airspace. Based on the assessment of the transaction, staff conclude the delivery of a pedestrian bridge that would serve as a clear and direct connection between the SkyTrain and the hospital at no cost is of high public value, consistent with City objectives and sufficiently justifies the transfer of City airspace to a private entity. Information on the legal mechanisms for restricting the use and sale of the airspace are included as Attachment 7 and the land appraisal report is included as Attachment 8.

As such, staff recommends Council consider sale of the airspace for a nominal cost of \$1, as the value of the public benefits represents fair market value for the airspace.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with this application, including the appraisal fee, are reimbursed by the Fraser Health Authority through the applicant so there is no net cost to the City for this transaction. The cost of the appraisal is \$5,250.00 inclusive of GST which will be passed through to the applicant.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This proposal has been reviewed by a project team consisting of staff from various departments, including Planning and Development and Engineering Services. Evaluation of the proposed land sale has been coordinated by Engineering Services (Real Estate) in consultation with other City departments.

PROCESS

1. Report to Council for consideration of First, Second and Third Readings of the Title to Highway (Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw; and authorization of the sale of the Keary Street air space and execution of a purchase and sale agreement, should Council adopt the Title to Highway(Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw **(WE ARE HERE)**
2. Council consideration of adoption of the Title to Highway (Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw.

OPTIONS

1. That Title to Highway (Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw No. 8533, 2025 be introduced and given first, second, and third readings;
2. That the 1,349 cubic meters (47,639 cubic feet) portion of airspace above Keary Street be sold for the nominal cost of \$1 to Wesgroup Properties, with conditions and encumbrances on the airspace parcel as outlined in Attachment 7: Summary of Legal Instruments To Restrict the Use and Sale of the Airspace of the report titled "Royal Columbian Hospital Bridge Connection (230 Keary Street) – Consideration of Land Sale and Bylaw for First, Second and Third Readings" dated August 25, 2025; and
3. That, subject to adoption of Bylaw No. 8533, 2025, staff be authorized to take the necessary steps to complete all matters detailed herein, including authorizing the Mayor and Corporate Officer to execute all documentation to effect the transaction.
4. That staff be provided with alternative direction

Staff recommends Options 1, 2, and 3.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Title to Highway (Portion of Keary Street) Bylaw No. 8533, 2025
Attachment 2: Background
Attachment 3: Summary of City Policies and Regulations
Attachment 4: Proposed Bridge Design (Select Drawings)
Attachment 5: Evaluation of City, Public and Private Benefits
Attachment 6: City's Evaluation for Land Disposition
Attachment 7: Summary of Legal Instruments To Restrict the Use and Sale of the Airspace
Attachment 8: Land Appraisal Report

APPROVALS

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