

Swedish First Hill Alley Vacation

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Rachel Gleeson
Theo Lim
Martin Regge
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

Project Description

Swedish is proposing to vacate the alley in the block bounded by Boren, Minor, Columbia and Cherry. The vacation would allow the development of a new medical office tower and central support facility for Swedish First Hill Campus. The proposed development would include below grade parking, truck loading and kitchens to serve the entire campus, along with medical offices, laboratories and related building functions. Specifics of the proposed development include:

- A 240 ft (15 story) building on the east half of the block, stepping down to 90 ft (5 story) on the west half of the block;
- Street level café, lobby, and open space on Minor Ave;
- Patient drop off and pick up within the building;
- Approximately 700-800 stalls of below grade parking;
- Below grade loading docks with a service tunnel connection across Minor;
- Skybridge from the second level across Minor.

Swedish's Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) identifies this block for a medical office, building, central support services, and parking. Approved by City Council in 2005, the MIMP states that a Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) will advise on the proposal. While projects developed under a MIMP are not subject to the City's Design Review process, City staff review them projects for MIMP compliance.

DPD and SDOT recently completed the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan. Their work built on the 1998 Neighborhood Plan and an in-depth park planning analysis completed in 2005.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of Swedish's proposed public benefit package. On October 1st, 2015, the SDC did not vote on the public benefit package. At that meeting, the commission directed the development team to address several issues before the SDC could make a decision on the public benefit package. At this meeting, the SDC provided further feedback on the proposed public benefit package. While the commission indicated that the proposal had improved since their previous review, the commission did not vote due to lack of information on key elements of their proposed public benefit package.

November 19, 2015

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Type

Vacation

Phase

Public Benefit

Previous Reviews

[7/16/15](#), [9/03/15](#), [10/01/15](#)

Presenters

Brad Hinthorne
Perkins + Will

Mark Brands
Site Workshop

Attendees

- Beverly Barnett** | SDOT
- Lyle Bicknell** | DPD
- Marjorie Brown** | Perkins + Will
- Gordon Clowers** | DPD
- Shane DeWald** | SDOT
- Jim Erickson**
First Hill Improvement Association
- Tami Garrett** | DPD
- Leah Henderson** | Citizen
- Alex Hudson** | FHIA
- Hannah Keyes** | SDOT
- Andrea King** | Swedish
- Kathleen Moles** | Swedish
- Chip Nevins** | SPR
- Eric Oliner**
Providence Health & Services
- Jeff Petterson** | CPL
- Nancy Rogers**
Cairncross & Hempelmann
- Aimee Rozier** | Site Workshop
- Mark Sanders** | Studio SC
- Michele Sarlitto**
EA Engineering, Science, Technology
- Maureen Sheehan** | DON
- Daria Supp** | Perkins + Will
- Mike Swenson** | Tranps Group
- Carl Tully** | NBBJ/SAC
- Darby Watson** | SDOT
- Aubrey Weeks** | Site Workshop
- Gordon Werner** | FHIA
- Sherry Williams** | Swedish

Recusals and Disclosures

Brodie Bain recused herself, as she is an employee of Perkins+Will, the architecture firm designing this project.

Ellen Sollod disclosed that she lives near the Swedish Cherry Hill campus and has opposed effort to expand elements of that campus. However, she indicated that this would not influence her review of this project at this campus.

Summary of Presentation

The public benefit package proposal for the Swedish First Hill Alley Vacation was presented by Mark Brands of Site Workshop and Brad Hinthorne of Perkins + Will. Mr. Brands began the presentation by providing a brief summary of the vacation proposal as it relates to the overall vision for the Swedish First Hill Campus. Mr. Brands also provided information about working with the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC), community groups, and city departments to create a well-rounded public benefit package.

Before addressing the public benefit package, the design team provided an extensive overview of the public realm surrounding the project site along Boren Avenue, Columbia Street, Cherry Street, and Minor Avenue (see figure 1). The team addressed emergency vehicle routes, service access routes for trucks and vehicles, solar studies, building material and landscape material. The design team also highlighted a new proposed wall treatment for the building façade along Boren Ave. that will reflect the character of the neighborhood while using a variety of different textures, colors, and graphics to provide a unique experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. The

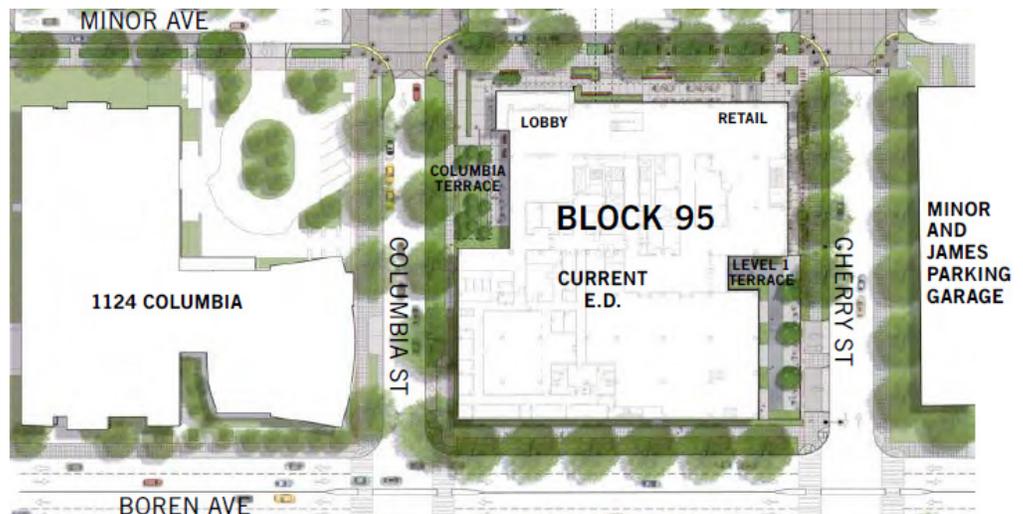


Figure 1: Proposed site plan

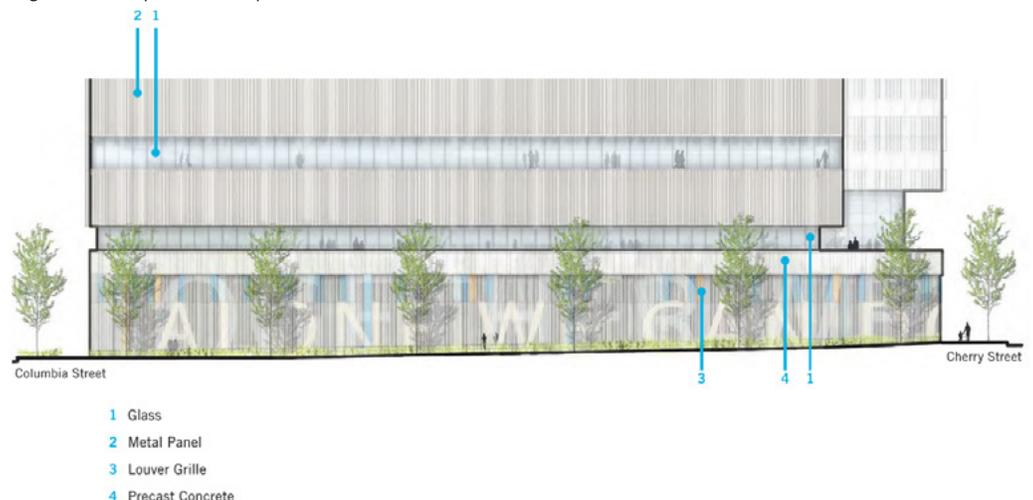


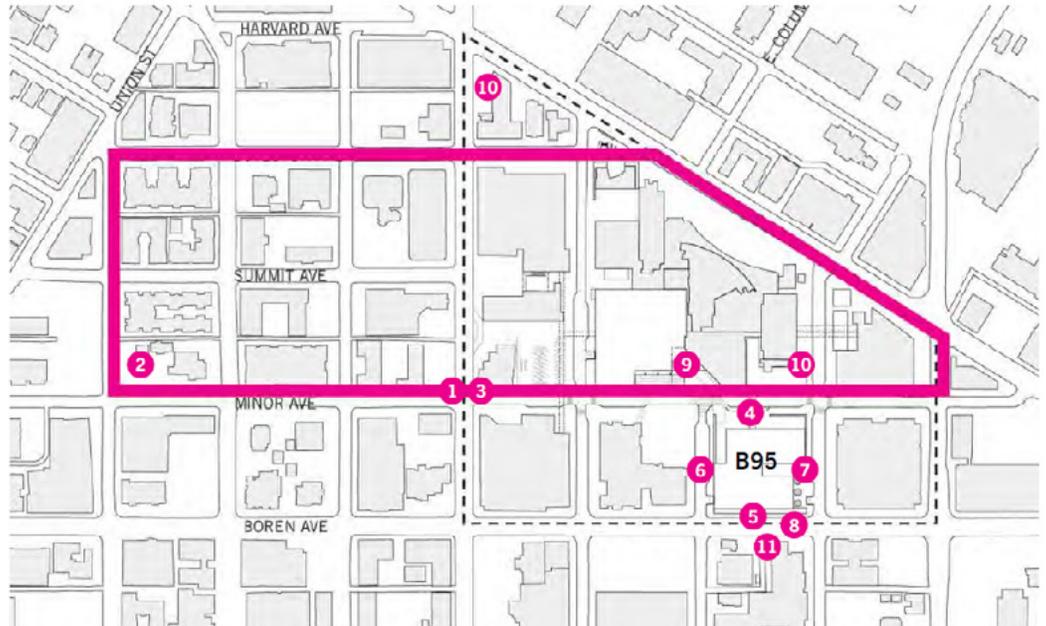
Figure 2: Proposed wall treatment along Boren Ave.

façade treatment will wrap around the northwest and southwest corners of the building onto Columbia and Cherry Streets (see figure 2).

The streetscapes along Boren, Columbia, Cherry, and Minor will include similar paving and landscaping materials to provide a level of continuity throughout the site. The streetscape along Columbia Street will include a 13.5-foot wide

PUBLIC BENEFIT SUMMARY

- 1 The Swedish Mile
- 2 First Hill Park Funding
- 3 Integrated Artwork
- 4 Minor Ave Voluntary Setback
- 5 Boren Voluntary Setback
- 6 Columbia St ROW Enhancements
- 7 Cherry St ROW Enhancements
- 8 Boren & Cherry Ped Crossing
- 9 Pedestrian Lighting @ Minor Ave
- 10 Pronto Bike Share Stations
- 11 Metro Shelter @ Boren Ave



PUBLIC BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	CODE	MIMP
1 - The Swedish Mile	<i>Open space & pedestrian crossing improvements</i>		None	None
	<i>Sidewalk replacement to SDOT standard</i>	10,700 SF		
	<i>Plantings at curb bulbs and planting strips</i>	6,900 SF		
	<i>Curb bulbs / traffic circle (Boylston & Spring)</i>	7		
	<i>Companion curb ramps</i>	4		
	<i>Crosswalks</i>	10		
	<i>Seating</i>	150 LF		
	<i>Bike furnishings (bike rack or fix it station)</i>	5		
	<i>Wayfinding / signage improvements</i>			
	<i>Pavement markers</i>	52		
	<i>Vertical markers</i>	12		
	<i>Wayfinding kiosk</i>	5		
<i>Street tree replacement</i>	38			
2 - First Hill Park Contribution	Contribution toward improvements to First Hill Park	Budget \$500,000	None	None
3 - Swedish Mile Integrated Art	Work with selected artist to identify and implement artwork along the Swedish Mile	Budget \$200,000	None	None
4 - Minor Ave Voluntary Setback	Setback along the Minor Ave	1,700 SF	None	None
5 - Boren Ave Voluntary Setback	Setback along the Boren Ave	1,400 SF	None	None
6 - Columbia St ROW Improvements	Expanded pedestrian streetscape	980 SF	None	None
7 - Cherry St ROW Improvements	Expanded pedestrian streetscape	560 SF	None	None
8 - Pedestrian Controlled Signal	Pedestrian controlled signal at Boren & Cherry as approved by SDOT	1	None	None
9 - Pedestrian Lighting	Pedestrian scale lighting along Minor Ave	16	None	None
10 - Bike Share Stations	Provide bike share stations at coordinated locations with Pronto bike share program	2	None	None
11 - Metro Transit Shelter on Boren	Metro transit shelter on west side of Boren Ave between Marion and Columbia	1	None	None

Figure 3: Proposed public benefit package & matrix

rain garden with a bioretention cell, while the streetscape along Cherry Street will include two separate access points for vehicular parking and loading, with 8-foot wide pedestrian refuge areas located between each access point.

After reviewing the public realm design, Mr. Brands then presented the public benefit package for the project (see figure 3). The design team looked to the First Hill Action plan when creating a strategy for both on-site and off-site public benefit enhancements. The following 11 public benefits are proposed for the project’s alley vacation petition:

- The Swedish Mile
- \$500,000 contribution to upgrade First Hill Park
- \$200,000 for the integration of Art into the Swedish Mile
- Minor Avenue voluntary setbacks
- Boren Avenue voluntary setbacks
- Columbia Street right of way enhancements
- Cherry Street right of way enhancements
- Pedestrian controlled crossing
- Pedestrian lighting
- Bicycle share station expansion
- Bus shelter Improvements

The Swedish Mile

The Swedish Mile is the largest proposal in the public benefit package and will include a combination of right of way (ROW) improvements, publicly accessible open space, pedestrian crossings, wayfinding, and signs throughout the mile. The loop is designed to coincide with the Active Loop, proposed in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan, along University Street, Boylston Avenue, Broadway, and James Street.

The proposed benefit includes improving ten intersections through the installation of curb bulbs, bicycle furnishings, street furniture, and landscaping that includes

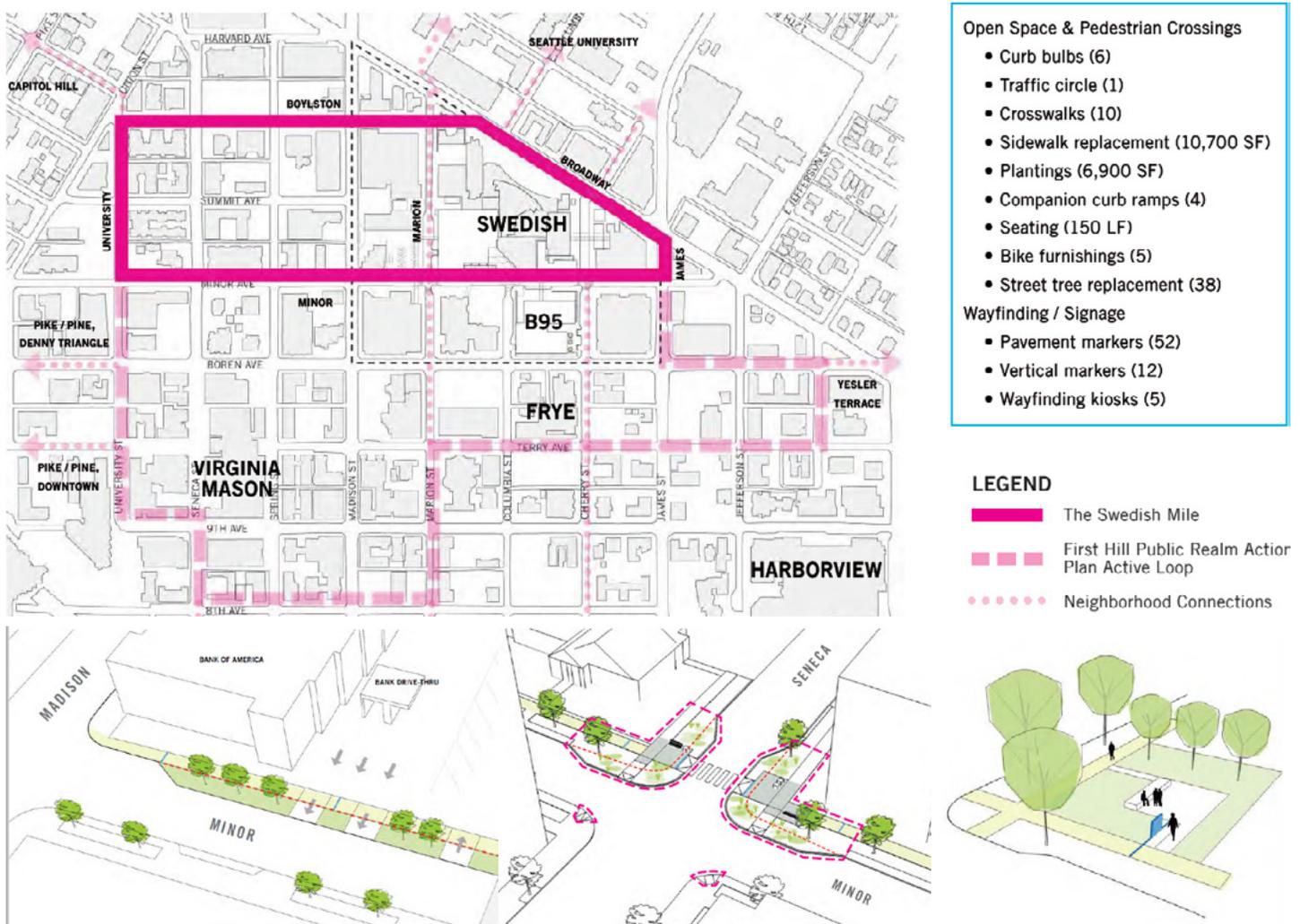


Figure 4: Proposed Swedish Mile (above) and examples of improvements (bottom)

replacing several existing street trees and planting additional tree canopy along the Swedish Mile loop (see figure 4). The proposed benefit will also include wayfinding kiosks, vertical markers, and pavement markers throughout the mile loop.

First Hill Park contribution

The design team is proposing to contribute \$500,000 to First Hill Park for improvements as part of their public benefit package. The First Hill Improvement Association (FHIA) was awarded a small and simple grant from the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and will use the funds to hire a consultant to develop a conceptual park design in early 2016. Funding from Swedish will provide financing for the consultant to complete detailed design documents after approval from Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR).

Integrated artwork

The public benefit package proposal includes a \$200,000 budget for public art along the Swedish Mile loop. 4Culture will manage the public art program development for every public art zone, including the Swedish Mile, and will select multiple artists by early 2016. The Swedish Public Art Advisory Committee (SPAAC) will serve as an advisory committee for the art program throughout the entire process, from artist selection to final design review.

Minor Avenue voluntary setbacks

The proposal includes 1,700 SF of open space that contributes to the Minor Avenue ROW environment rather than the building. This area will serve as a transition zone from the street to the public plaza, which is located below street grade (see figure 5).

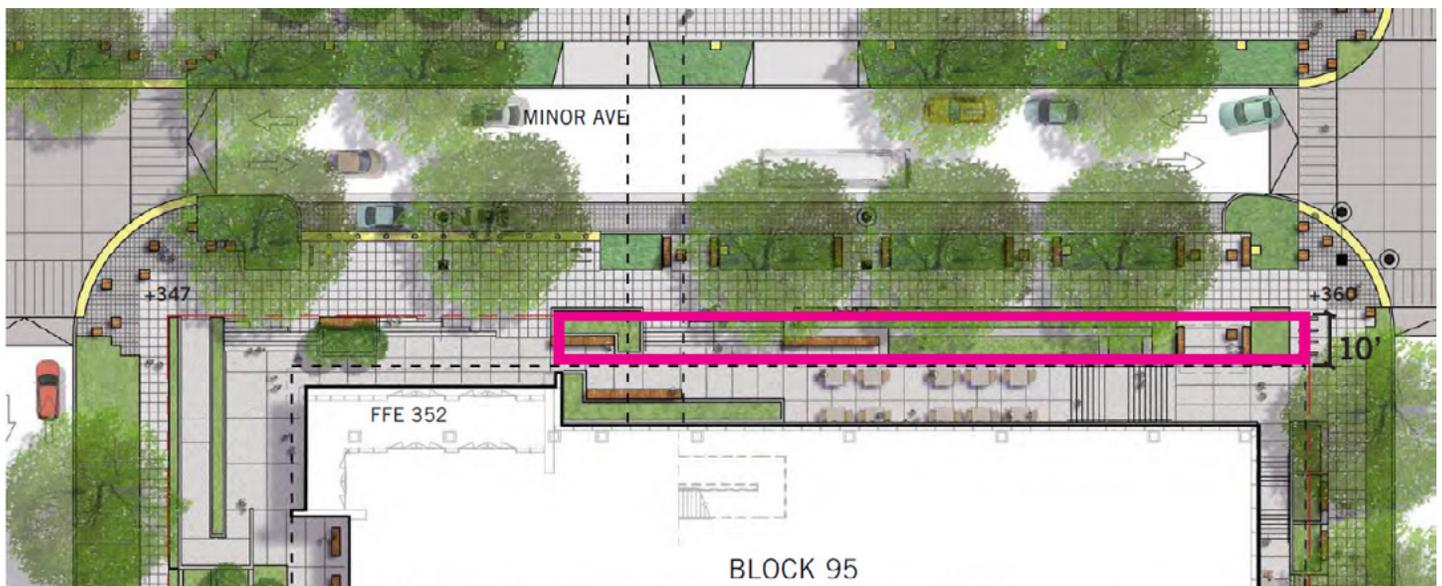


Figure 5: Proposed setbacks along Minor Ave.

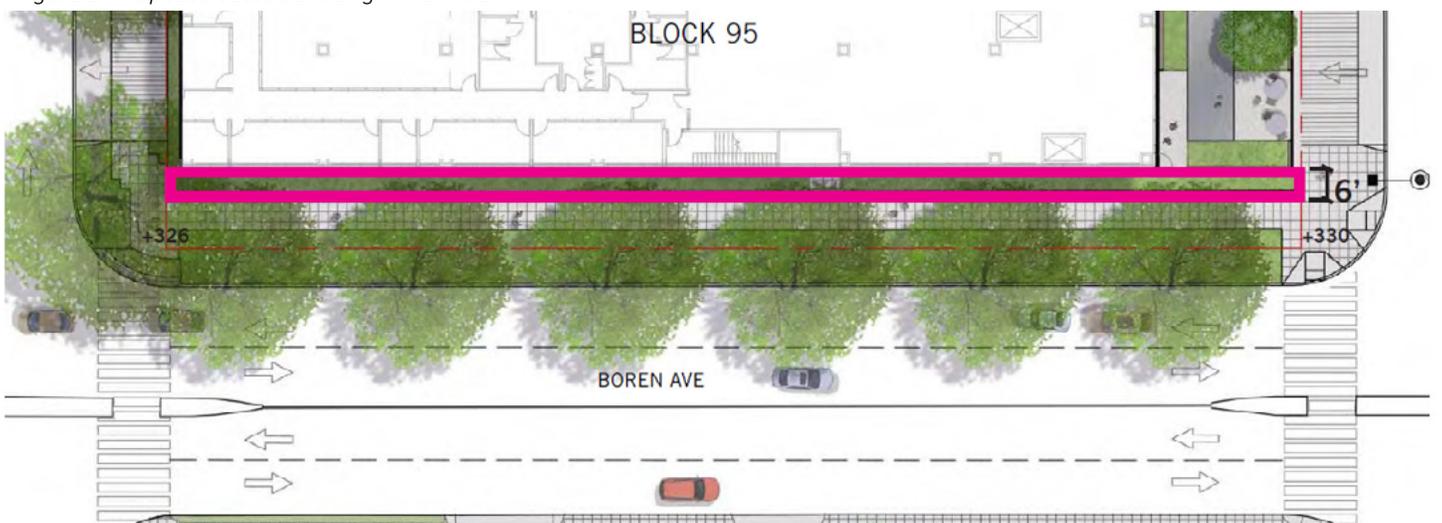


Figure 6: Proposed setbacks along Boren Ave.

Boren Avenue voluntary setbacks

The design team is proposing to provide 1,400 SF of additional open space along Boren Avenue between the sidewalk and building façade. The open space will be a 6-foot wide landscaped planting strip (see figure 6).

Columbia Street ROW enhancements

The ROW enhancements will include a 980 SF linear landscape planting strip along Columbia Street, between the street and pedestrian sidewalk. With the additional 6 feet of open space along the Columbia Street ROW, The design team proposed to install a 13.5-foot wide bioretention system, which will provide treatment for stormwater runoff (see figure 7).

Cherry Street ROW enhancements

Proposed Cherry Street ROW enhancements include a 560 SF linear landscape planting strip between Cherry Street and the sidewalk, which will serve as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles (see figure 8).

Pedestrian controlled crossing

The public benefit package includes a proposal for a pedestrian activated crossing signal at the intersection of Boren Avenue and Cherry Street. The pedestrian signal was chosen because Cherry Street provides access to downtown. The signal will be timed with other crossing signals along Cherry Street.

Pedestrian lighting

The proposal includes sixteen light poles along Minor Avenue between Cherry and Madison Streets. See figure 9 for more detail.

Bicycle share station expansion

The design team has proposed two bike share stations, which will be sponsored by Swedish. Because of its location on First Hill, the design team is thinking about including electric assist bicycles. The specific location of each station has not yet been determined.

Bus shelter improvements

The design team has proposed a new bus shelter at the existing metro bus stop along Boren Avenue. If the existing stop is relocated, the proposed shelter will be relocated as well.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, of SDOT, does not believe the public benefit package is ready for a vote. Ms. Barnett stated that although there are several positive elements of the package, it is difficult for her to say whether the city can approve each individual element. Because SDOT includes several specializations within the department, Ms. Barnett said that she could not approve the individual elements until others within SDOT review them. She then said that because certain elements may or may not work, it is hard



Figure 7: Proposed ROW enhancements along Columbia St.

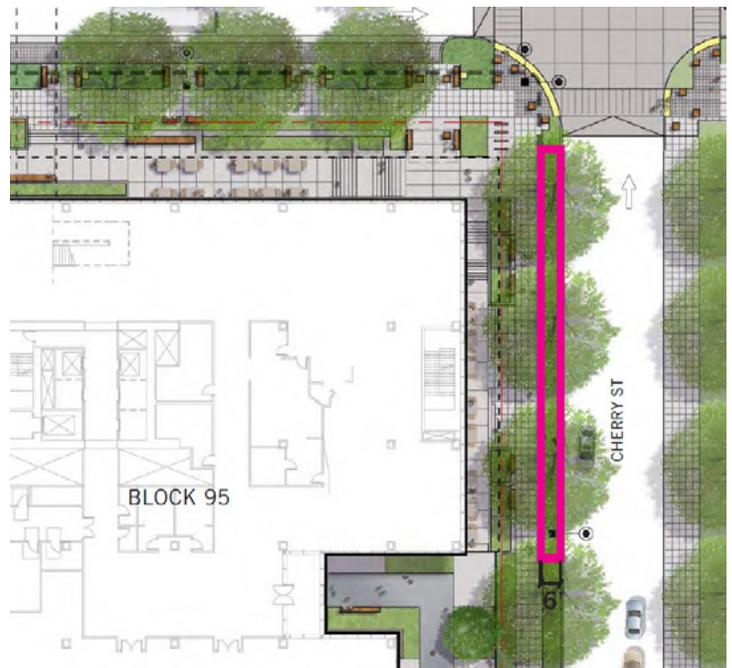


Figure 8: Proposed ROW enhancements along Cherry St.

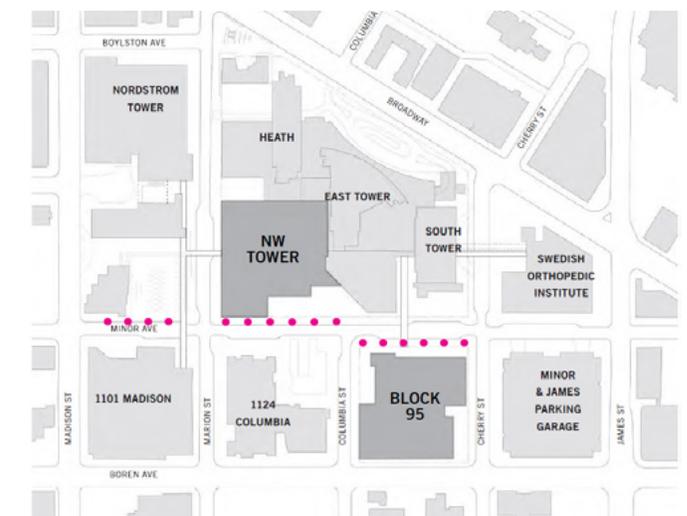


Figure 9: Proposed pedestrian lighting along Minor Ave.

for the department to assess the adequacy of the package as a whole. Ms. Barnett is not convinced Swedish has fully invested in addressing community issues. She does not see, fundamentally, how they are specifically engaging with and providing public benefit for the surrounding community.

Ms. Barnett then stated street vacation policies are clear in that the first priority is to have on site public benefit. She stressed that when the project team talks about doing improvements offsite they should focus on the institution making connections into the community, being porous and transparent within the neighborhood so community members feel like the amenities, open space, building lobbies are available to them. Ms. Barnett is concerned because she feels Swedish understands what the issues are with the current proposal. Ms. Barnett then stated that, although the project has received approval from the SAC, she still believes everything is too conceptual to be approved.

Lyle Bicknell, of DPD, stated the public benefit proposal is very consistent with the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan. Mr. Bicknell said the Swedish Mile creates a lot of high quality open space within the public realm by stitching together private development and institutional development within the ROW, which is what the neighborhood was hoping to achieve in an area where there is a shortage of high quality open space. The Swedish Mile begins to connect important open spaces within the community and makes very thoughtful pedestrian improvements.

Darby Watson, of SDOT, claimed the Swedish Mile concept is heading in the right direction. Ms. Watson is still concerned because SDOT has not reviewed the proposals for signage and wayfinding. She stated that some of the proposed ideas are different from what they talked about during the site visit with the design team. Ms. Watson wants to make sure the design doesn't suffer because the project team is proposing to repair infrastructure that is typically maintained by SDOT. Ms. Watson said the team should focus on designing a place that is not solely dependent on wayfinding in order to identify it as the Swedish mile.

Chip Nevins, of SPR, agrees with Lyle Bicknell about the Swedish Mile promoting work related to the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan. Mr. Nevins also thought the proposal stitches together open spaces within the ROW. Mr. Nevins also voiced his support for the First Hill Park Improvements. He stated that it is almost impossible to purchase new land for park space in First Hill. Mr. Nevins explained that, currently, the park is not used nor well loved by the community. Although the neighborhood is pushing for SPR to improve the park, Mr. Nevins explained that SPR has held back due to a lack of funding. He further explained SPR has 14 parks that are waiting for park funding through the existing parks levy and that any park proposal would be set aside until additional funding is secured. While walking around with Mark and his team, Mr. Nevins thought the First Hill Park redevelopment would serve as a great project for Swedish to fund given that SPR doesn't have a strong plan for funding extra projects. Mr. Nevins stressed that funding from Swedish would ensure a quality design for the redevelopment of the park.

Maureen Sheehan, of DON, stated that the SAC has met four times and is in full support of the program proposal. Ms. Sheehan said the SAC commended the design team for the vision and level of permanence.

Shane DeWald, of SDOT's Urban Forestry division, said the division is not against the proposal to provide additional large canopy trees along the Swedish Mile. She said there are opportunities along the corridor to provide improved growing conditions for existing trees. Ms. DeWald expressed her interest to see a strong health care program for the greening infrastructure along the mile.

Public Comments

Carl Tully, Chairman of the SAC, expressed his appreciation for how the design has progressed in response to comments and concerns from the SAC. Mr. Tully stated that he wanted to know if the neighborhood would really use the Swedish mile. In order to do so, he reached out to the entire committee. There was a consensus that community members would use it. Mr. Tully also said the community wanted to see open space with seating as well as areas for gatherings and respite. He commented that the plan to include exercise equipment along the mile was not well received by community members. Mr. Tully then stated the committee needed to understand the distinction of overlap between open space required by the MIMP and open space that can be considered as public benefit. He felt the SAC couldn't fully understand from the details provided, but trusts the SDC will help in making this distinction.

Alex Hudson, with FHIA and SAC, commented that the First Hill Community has worked with city departments to implement the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan. She said improvements like these, which address pedestrian spaces, are extremely welcome. Ms. Hudson is excited to see the implementation of the First Hill active loop and thinks

collaborating with institutions can help the city achieve goals found in the action plan. She stated that the neighborhood is also very interested in improving First Hill Park. In acknowledging that some pieces of the package are not fully developed, Ms. Hudson is supportive of the public benefits proposed by the design team.

Jim Erickson, with FHIA, reminded everyone of the timeline in which projects within the public realm are being proposed. He stated the community learned about the green loop in mid-2015 and are now learning about the Swedish mile. Mr. Erickson said the neighborhood is relying on money from private development to add more activity loops in that area. He commented that more projects are interested in getting involved with providing publicly accessible active areas. Mr. Erickson stated the community plans to have more projects that will provide publicly accessible active spaces in other areas within the First Hill Community.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Boren Avenue façade
- Streetscape
- Public open space
- Art
- Sustainability & equity
- Adequacy of the proposal

Because of the length of the presentation and discussion, the Commission only addressed the Boren Avenue Façade and Streetscape issues.

Boren Avenue façade

While the Commission appreciates the design team providing an additional building setback along Boren Avenue, they are concerned with the progress of the design for the façade. Commissioners questioned the scale and use of the proposed design along the Boren Avenue façade. The SDC was concerned that the proposal does not adequately address how the façade will be treated within the public realm. Because the proposal lacks a specific design for the façade, the Commission is leery of approving the package without having a specific design in place.

Streetscape

The Commission appreciates the continued work regarding the design of the Swedish Mile within the public ROW as well as the voluntary setbacks along Minor and Boren Avenue. Similar to the façade treatment along Boren Avenue, Commissioners are concerned with the lack of detail in the streetscape improvement proposals for the Swedish Mile. Although the Commission acknowledges the difficulty with developing details on a project at this scale, they are concerned because the proposal does not have enough design details and remains too conceptual to determine if it should be accepted as public benefit. Additional information is needed about the overall project, including how the Swedish Mile design will actually serve users – pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Action

The SDC did not vote on the proposed public benefit package. A decision was postponed so that Swedish could provide additional information on several public benefit items. The commission was very supportive of the approach but the package as presented lacked specific details including concurrence from SDOT and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) that the proposed scope and details were feasible. The following recommendations were provided for the design team to address before their next scheduled meeting:

1. Coordinate with SDOT to ensure the Swedish Mile is feasible and that the concepts for the Swedish Mile can be constructed as envisioned. Provide more design details and clarity on specific features for the Swedish Mile, including how the Swedish Mile will appeal to the broader community and the need that it is meeting for the community
2. Provide more detail regarding how and where Art will be integrated into the Swedish Mile. Provide a clear and well-defined vision of the artwork using the SDC guidelines on art that is included in a public benefit package
3. Provide specific details about the solutions to be included along the Boren Avenue façade that will activate and enhance that streetscape
4. Provide more detailed and specific information on how the proposed \$500,000 expenditure will be used to upgrade First Hill Park, including a specific scope of work based on neighborhood input and support from the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation