

Swedish First Hill Alley Vacation

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Grant Hromas

Martin Regge

John Savo

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883
seattle.gov/dpd

Commissioners Present

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Grant Hromas
Martin Regge
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Shannon Loew, Chair
Brodie Bain
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson

Project Description

The petitioner proposes to vacate the alley in the block bounded by Boren Ave, Columbia St, Minor Ave, and Cherry St to facilitate development of a central support facility for the Swedish First Hill Campus and medical office tower. The development would include parking, loading, a kitchen, a cafe, a clinical laboratory, material management, ambulatory and support services, medical offices, and diagnostic clinics.

The 15-story and five-story buildings would serve as the primary supply and logistics center for the campus and include:

- A street level café, lobby, and open space on Minor Ave
- Patient drop off and pick up within the building
- Below-grade parking for 700-800 vehicles
- Below-grade loading docks with a service tunnel (separate permit) connection across Minor
- Skybridge from the second level across Minor (separate permit)

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

The Design Commission postponed a vote on the petition and requested further information. They believed it was premature to vote on urban design merit if the SAC had not been formed and begun its review. They also expressed a need for further analysis of vehicular and truck access to the site.

July 16, 2015**9:10 – 10:30 am****Type**

Street Vacation

Phase

Urban Design Merit

Location

Block bounded by Boren Ave, Columbia St, Minor Ave, and Cherry St on First Hill

Previous Reviews

none

Presenters**Brad Hinthorn**

Perkins + Will

Mark Brands

Site Workshop

Attendees**Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

Marjorie Brown

Perkins + Will

Sloan Dawson

Sound Transit

Tami Garrett

DPD

Karen Gordon

DON

Thatcher Imboden

Sound Transit

Eric Oliner

Providence Hospital

Nancy Rogers

Cairncross & Hempelmann

Michele Sarlitto

EA Engineering, Science, Technology

Gavin Smith

Perkins + Will

Daria Supp

Perkins + Will

Darby Watson

SDOT

Aubrey Weeks

Site Workshop

Recusals and Disclosures

Ellen Sollod disclosed that she lives in the vicinity of the Swedish Cherry Hill campus. She indicated that this would not influence her review of this project.

Ross Tilghman disclosed that he is testifying in support of the appeal of Swedish Cherry Hill MIMP but is not involved in the First Hill project. He stated that his involvement with Cherry Hill would not influence his review of the First Hill project.



Figure 1. Vicinity map of Swedish First Hill Campus

Summary of Presentation

The presentation included an evaluation of a vacation and no vacation alternatives. The no vacation alternative illustrated two buildings built to the lot line with a 20-foot-wide alley between. The vacation alternative showed one building sited with increased property line setbacks, pushing the bulk into the middle of the site.

In the no vacation alternative, parking for the development would be located above grade in a nine-story parking structure sited west of the alley and along Boren Ave. The vacation alternative included the same amount of parking, but all of it would be below grade.

Loading and services would occur below grade under the alley vacation alternative. Access would occur at Columbia St and Cherry St. Under the no vacation alternative, loading and access would be provided from the alley. The vacation alternative allows for larger floor plates for both the proposed hospital services; the medical office building portion of the site would likely have similar floor plates and development potential as allowed under the no vacation alternative.

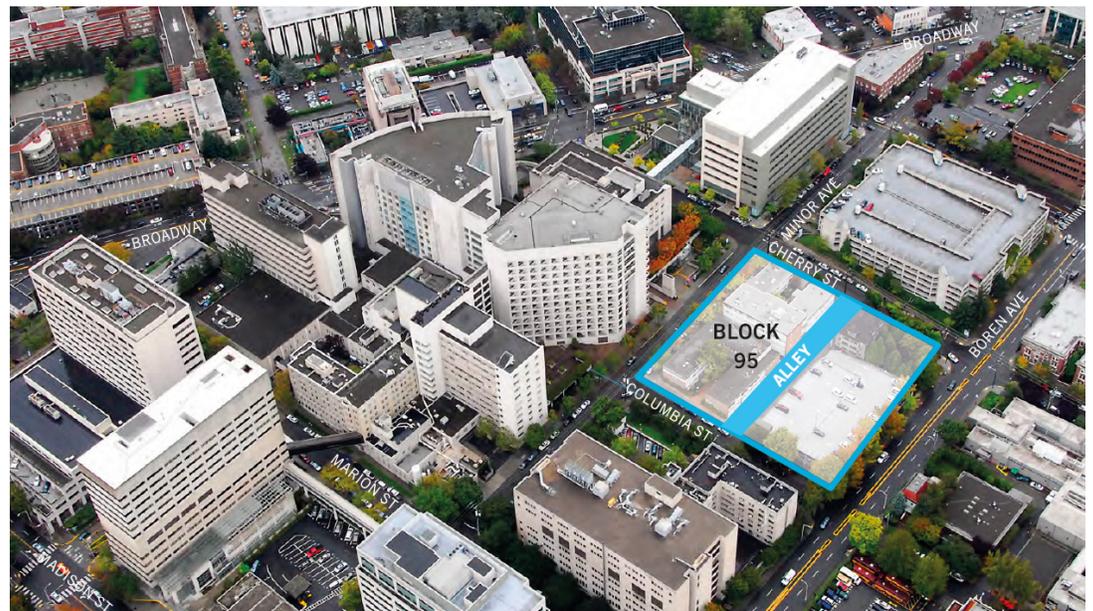


Figure 2. Location of proposed alley vacation in Block 95, i.e. the block bounded by Boren Ave, Columbia St, Minor Ave, and Cherry St on First Hill.

Under both alternatives, the petitioner indicated that it would seek two additional permits from SDOT, both requiring Council approval: a skybridge connecting the second floor of the proposed building to the main portion of the hospital and service tunnel linking the proposed building and the hospital

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett advised the Commission that the identification of the vacation in the MIMP did not prohibit or limit the its review of the petition. She explained that the Commission and other review bodies would be evaluating the vacation on its merits regardless of the fact they are within the MIMP. Ms. Barnett explained that the Council Vacation Policies call for the Commission's action to be guided by the MIMP.¹ They would need to consider how the vacation affects the street system together in addition to individually.

Karen Gordon explained that there had been challenges to setting up the MIMP SAC but said it was in process and would be done soon. She explained that DON had no objection to presentations occurring before the Design Commission while the SAC is assembled.

Darby Watson asked the petitioner to consider truck access for the site via Boren Ave instead of Minor Ave. She said the constraints would need to be analyzed and offered to work with the applicant to find a solution. She explained that a warrant study was needed to decide on a signalized pedestrian crossing for Boren Ave, but that Cherry St was likely a better location than Columbia St.

Public Comments

none



Figure 3. Comparison of no vacation (left) and vacation alternatives

Summary of Discussion

The Commissioners discussed how the petition might affect future decisions about other MIMP components, including the related tunnel and skybridge, which would be reviewed later under a separate application. The petitioner assured the Commission that the proposed development and skybridge were not functionally or structurally related to the alley vacation. The petitioner stated that the tunnel is mission critical to the project with or without the alley vacation and that the skybridge is an important connection between diagnostic clinics and O.R. floors of the hospital. The tunnel will require a term permit from SDOT. The skybridge will require a skybridge ordinance from the City Council.

1 In Guideline 4.5 F, the Council Vacation Policies state: "If a master plan has been adopted, the vacation decision will give substantial weight to the provisions of the individual master plan. Land use, transportation and traffic information contained in the EIS for the master plan will be considered. This information will be updated prior to the vacation decision if conditions in the area have changed or if several years have passed since adoption of the master plan. Identification of intended street vacations in the adopted major institution master plan shall not constitute prior approval of the vacations."

The Commissioners evaluated the proposed vehicular access routes and compared truck circulation via Minor Ave vs. Boren Ave. The Commissioners also considered the proposed access points on Cherry St and Columbia St along with the need for additional traffic and circulation information about access and circulation.

The Commission then discussed the design of the access points as they relates to shifting the impacts of access from an alley to a street. The Commissioners questioned the necessity of a 24-foot-wide entry on Cherry St; the petitioner agreed to explore narrowing this opening as well as the dimensions of the truck access areas. The Commissioners appreciated that the pedestrian entrances were on a separate part of the block from the vehicular access points. They supported the proposed green street improvements on Minor Ave.

The Commissioners compared the no vacation and vacation alternatives. They recognized the added efficiency of kitchen function with the vacation but noted that it would nevertheless be on the lower floor in the no vacation alternative.

One suggestion was for a pedestrian crosswalk on Boren Ave. Darby Watson said SDOT would study whether this was warranted but believed Cherry St was likely the optimal location since it connects under I-5 to downtown. The Commissioners supported the decision to provide open space at Minor Ave and Columbia St and along Cherry St as an extension of the cafe; one Commission questioned whether it would read public given its elevation above sidewalk grade, however. The discussion also centered on the open space along Boren Ave. The Commission recommended particular attention to this frontage given its role the campus edge and across from the carefully designed landscape of the Frye.

The Commission questioned the neighborhood's need for on-street parking and advised the petitioner to consider it as they design the block edge.

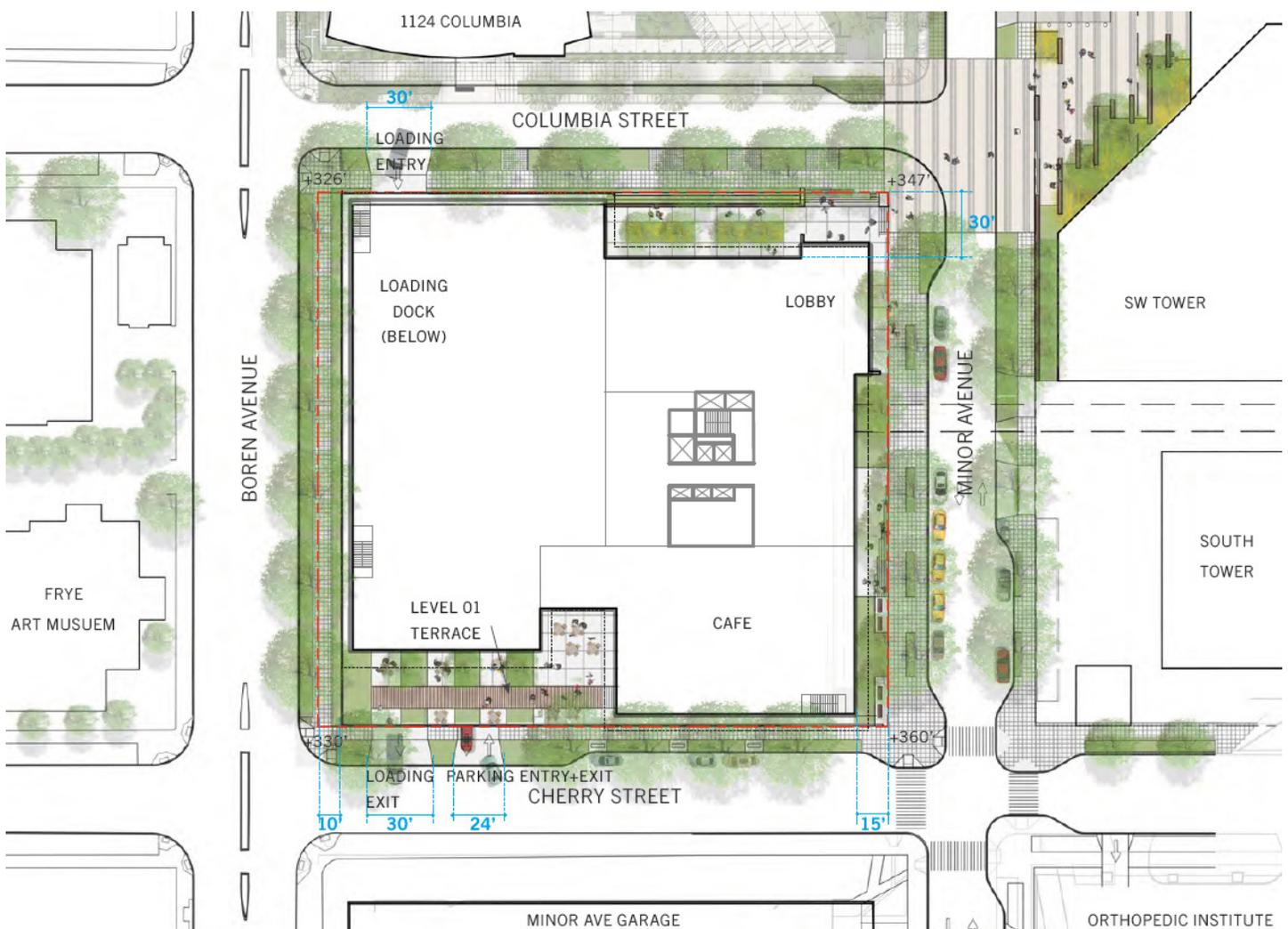


Figure 4. Site plan of vacation alternative

Finally, the Commissioners stated that SAC input was critical before the Commission could make a determination on public benefit. As required under the MIMP, a SAC was required to review proposed designs of the building prior to submitting a MUP application. The Commissioners explained that SAC review may affect the design of the building, including the interaction of the building with the public realm.

Action

The Commission appreciated the project proponents for the effort made to activate Minor Ave with more than just a lobby. They also appreciated that loading for the Swedish campus was being consolidated at this site on the edge of the campus. The provision of an open space buffer along the edges of the campus was also noted positively.

The Commission did not take an action. The Commission adopted the following conditions that the petitioner must meet for the next review.

1. Prior to the next review of urban design merit, provide a transportation and traffic impact analysis so that the Commission can better understand the site access conditions, constraints, possible scenarios, and preferred solution.
2. Prior to a public benefit review, the Standing Advisory Committee shall have convened and begun its review of the project.

The Commission also provided the following recommendations:

1. Provide vehicular access to the site from Cherry St and Columbia St via Boren Ave, not Minor Ave, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary.
2. Clarify the need for on-street parking in the neighborhood and design accordingly.
3. Explore a pedestrian crossing of Boren Ave near the site.
4. Pay special attention to the design of the west side of the project along Boren Ave and across from the Frye Museum. The vegetated buffer is good. Elevate the design quality of this edge where the institution meets the neighborhood.