

## Swedish First Hill Alley Vacation

**Edward B. Murray**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Shannon Loew**, Chair

**Ellen Sollod**, Vice Chair

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Theo Lim**

**Martin Regge**

**John Savo**

**Ross Tilghman**

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### Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair  
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair  
Lee Copeland  
Thaddeus Egging  
Rachel Gleeson

Theo Lim  
Martin Regge  
John Savo  
Ross Tilghman

### Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain

### 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<sup>1</sup>;
- Skybridge from the second level across Minor<sup>2</sup>.

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) first review of Swedish's proposed public benefit package. On September 3, 2015, the SDC voted 5 -2 to approve the urban design merit phase of the vacation, with several recommendations for the project team. At this meeting, the SDC provided initial feedback on the proposed public benefit package. The SDC did not vote at this meeting as they requested that Swedish provide additional information and details of the proposal.

<sup>1</sup>The below grade tunnel approval will not involve the Seattle Design Commission

<sup>2</sup>A separate skybridge permit has been submitted to SDOT for review (submitted on August 26); the SDC will review this proposal at a later date.

**October 1, 2015****9:00 - 10:30 am****Type**

Street Vacation

**Phase**

Public Benefit

**Previous Reviews**[7/16/15](#), [9/3/15](#)**Presenters****Brad Hinthorne**  
Perkins + Will**Mark Brands**  
Site Workshop**Attendees****Beverly Barnett**  
SDOT**Marjorie Brown**  
Perkins + Will**Jim Erickson**  
First Hill Improvement Association**Karen Gordon**  
DON**Christian Gunter**  
Skanska**Stefanie Herzstein**  
Transpo Group**Vincent Kuefer**  
SEIU 1199 NW**Chris Lampkin**  
SEIU 1199 NW**Xochitl Maykovich**  
Washington CAN!**Troy Meyers**  
Citizen**Nancy Rogers**  
Cairncross & Hempelmann**Michele Sarlitto**  
EA Engineering, Science,  
Technology**Maureen Sheehan**  
DON**Daria Supp**  
Perkins + Will**Mike Swenson**  
Transpo Group**Darby Watson**  
SDOT

October 1, 2015

**Recusals and Disclosures****Brodie Bain** recused herself. She stayed for the presentation as a member of the public.**Ellen Sollod** disclosed that she lives near the Swedish Cherry Hill campus. She indicated that this would not influence her review of this project.**Summary of Presentation**

The proposed public benefit package was presented by Brad Hinthorne of Perkins + Will and Mark Brands of Site Workshop. Mr. Hinthorne began the presentation by informing the Commission that the proposal was presented at a Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on September 17th, 2015. The SAC unanimously approved the project with the condition that the frontage along Broadway be counted as existing open space, as stated in the MIMP<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Hinthorne said that the project team will meet again with the SAC on October 8th, 2015.

Mark Brands provided a brief overview of the project as well as a summary of SDC recommendations from the previous commission meeting. Mr. Brands then presented 10 features that are a part of the proposed public benefit package (see *figures 1 & 2*). He clarified that all proposed features are off-site and focus on streets connecting through Swedish into the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed public benefit features are:

1. Minor Ave. Street Improvements
2. Columbia Street Improvements
3. Cherry Street Improvements
4. Marion Street Greenway Improvements
5. Boylston Ave. Concept Plan
6. Publicly Accessible Open Space
7. Voluntary Setbacks
8. Boren Façade
9. Bike Share Stations
10. Bus Shelter

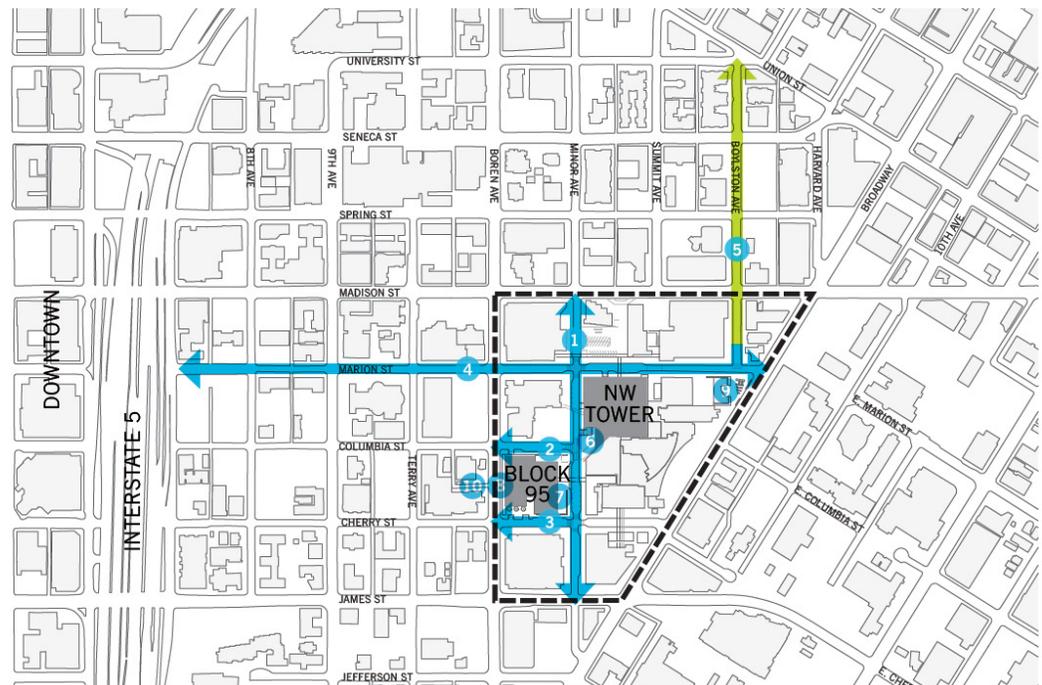


Figure 1: Proposed public benefit plan

<sup>1</sup>While the proposed open space on Broadway is not included in the public benefit package, information about it was relevant to the commission's overall consideration about public benefit.

PROPOSED PUBLIC BENEFITS	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY (APPROX)	CODE / MIMP REQ'D
1 Minor Ave Improvements - Offsite	Provide sidewalk and planting/raingarden improvements outside of project frontages	6,150 SF	Provide frontage improvements
	Provide pedestrian pole lights along Minor Ave between Madison & James	22 (qty)	Include street-level design features that contribute to quality pedestrian experience and human scale.
	Provide raised intersections @ Marion, Columbia and Cherry for improved pedestrian crossings	3	Enhance street life quality and human scale amenities
	Provide new vehicular paving at non-frontage areas	800 SF	Improve Marion and Minor as safe, landscaped corridors with amenities
	Provide new seating outside of project frontages	300+ LF	Use sidewalk area landscaping, street trees, and other street level plantings to separate and protect pedestrians from traffic lanes Provide lighting for safety and navigation, considering illumination levels, color, quality, scale and performance
2 Columbia Street Improvements	Provide new sidewalks and planting / rain gardens where on-street parking has been removed	980 SF	Provide frontage improvements
	New pedestrian controlled signal at Boren Ave to improve safety	1	
3 Cherry Street Improvements	Provide new sidewalks and planting / rain gardens where on-street parking has been removed	565 SF	Provide frontage improvements
	New pedestrian controlled signal at Boren Ave to improve safety	1	
4 Marion Street Improvements	Implement Greenway and Green Street improvements from 7th Ave to Broadway including 4 blocks outside of Swedish	7 blocks	Improve Marion and Minor as safe, landscaped corridors with amenities
5 Boylston Ave Concept Plan	Prepare Street Concept Plan for adoption by SDOT between Marion St And University Street	4 blocks	None
6 Publicly Accessible Open Space	Provide publicly accessible open space plaza and garden	3,200 SF	Provide open space to fulfill Council Condition #7
	Garden / planting area	1,800 SF	Make visual connections between buildings and the landscape
	Hardscape area	1,400 SF	Orient public plazas and open spaces to capture the sun
	Seating	100 LF	Develop a balance between publicly accessible open space that is welcoming to all citizens with Swedish patron oriented open space.
	Pedestrian pole lights	2 (qty)	Provide certain spaces that encourage public interaction. Combine and orient open space towards seasonal sunlight, and away from prevailing winds and traffic noise Provide certain spaces for meditation and reflection
7 Voluntary Setbacks	Provide 14-20' building setback along Minor Ave for landscaping and seating elements	4,400 SF	Provide landscape setback buffers along Boren frontage
	Provide 0-10' building setback along Cherry St for landscaping and seating elements	1,130 SF	
8 Boren Ave Façade Treatment	Engage artist to collaborate on Boren Ave façade		None
9 Bike Share Stations	Provide bike share station(s) at coordinated locations with Pronto program.	1 - 2 Stations	None
10 Transit Shelter	Provide custom designed transit shelter on west side of Boren Ave.	1	None

Figure 2: Proposed public benefit matrix

### Minor Ave. Street Improvements

The proposed public benefit package includes raised intersections at Marion St. and Columbia St. as well as improved sidewalks, street trees, and rain garden strips, all of which are located outside of project boundary. Improvements will also include pedestrian pole lighting and street furniture along Minor Ave. as well as on street parking, which will include a pervious paving material. The design team is also proposing a pedestrian controlled crossing signal at the

intersection of Minor Ave. and James Street (see figure 3).

#### *Columbia Street Improvements*

Improvements along Columbia Street include wider sidewalks, rain garden strips to collect water runoff, and pedestrian controlled crossing signals on the north and south edge of the Columbia Street and Boren Ave. intersection, as shown in figure 4. Some on street parking will remain along Columbia Street.

#### *Cherry Street Improvements*

Improvements along Cherry Street include wider sidewalks, planting strips, and rain gardens. On street parking will be eliminated to accommodate the aforementioned improvements as well as a larger turning radius for vehicles, as shown in figure 5. The design team is also proposing a pedestrian controlled crossing signal at the intersection of Cherry Street and Boren Avenue.

#### *Marion Street Greenway Improvements*

The public benefit package includes implementing green street improvements along Marion St., which is identified as a neighborhood green street in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan, between 7th Avenue and Broadway (see figure 6). Improvements include additional speed humps, wayfinding measures, and reducing the speed limit for vehicular traffic.

#### *Boylston Ave. Concept Plan*

The design team has proposed to prepare a street concept plan for adoption by SDOT. The concept plan would extend along Boylston Ave. from Marion to University St. University St. is identified as a neighborhood greenway and Marion St. is identified as a proposed green street in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan (see figure 7).

#### *Publicly Accessible Open Space*

As shown in figure 8, accessible open space is proposed along Minor Ave. at the NW Tower entry, which is adjacent to the northeast corner of the project site. The proposed space will include landscaped areas, gardens, hardscapes, plaza furniture, and pedestrian scale lighting.

#### *Voluntary Setbacks*

Voluntary setbacks of the building frontage along Minor Ave. will allow for the increased improvement of landscaped and seating areas as well as the inclusion of a publicly accessible café and gathering space along the sidewalk (see figure 9). The public space is set below street level due

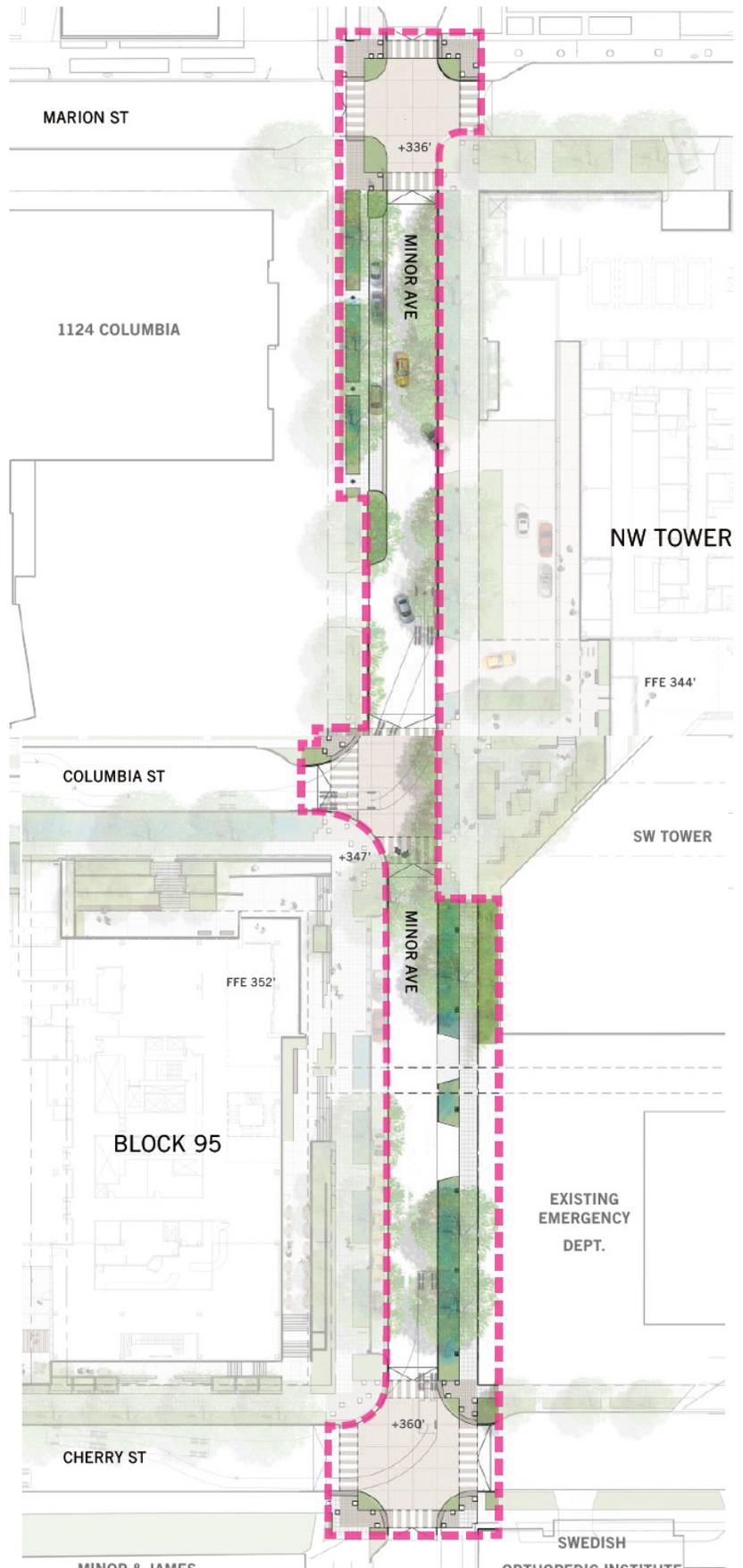


Figure 3: Proposed street improvements - Minor Ave.



Figure 4: Proposed Street Improvements - Columbia St.

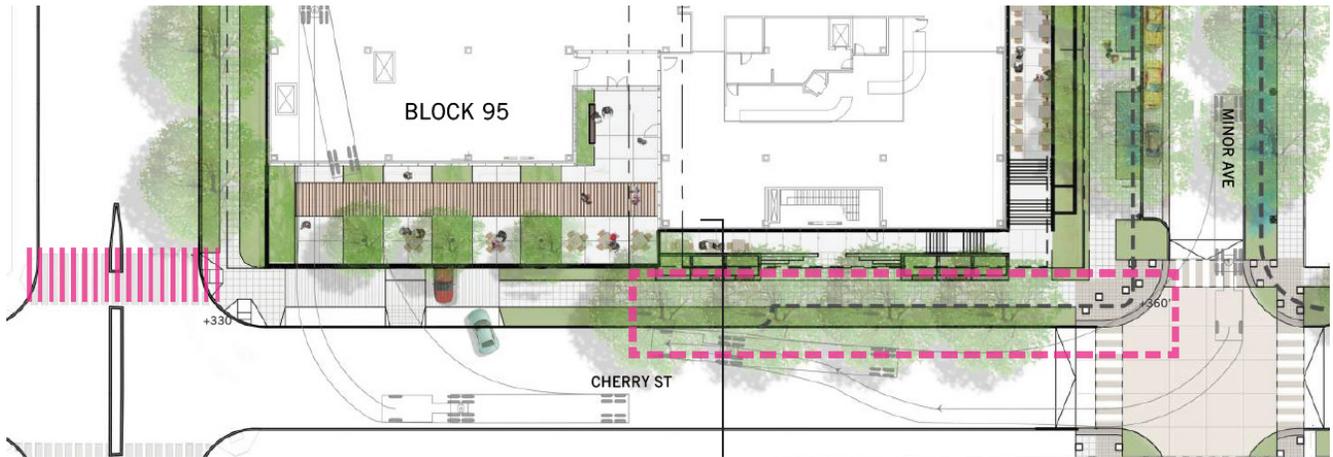


Figure 5: Proposed street improvements - Cherry St.

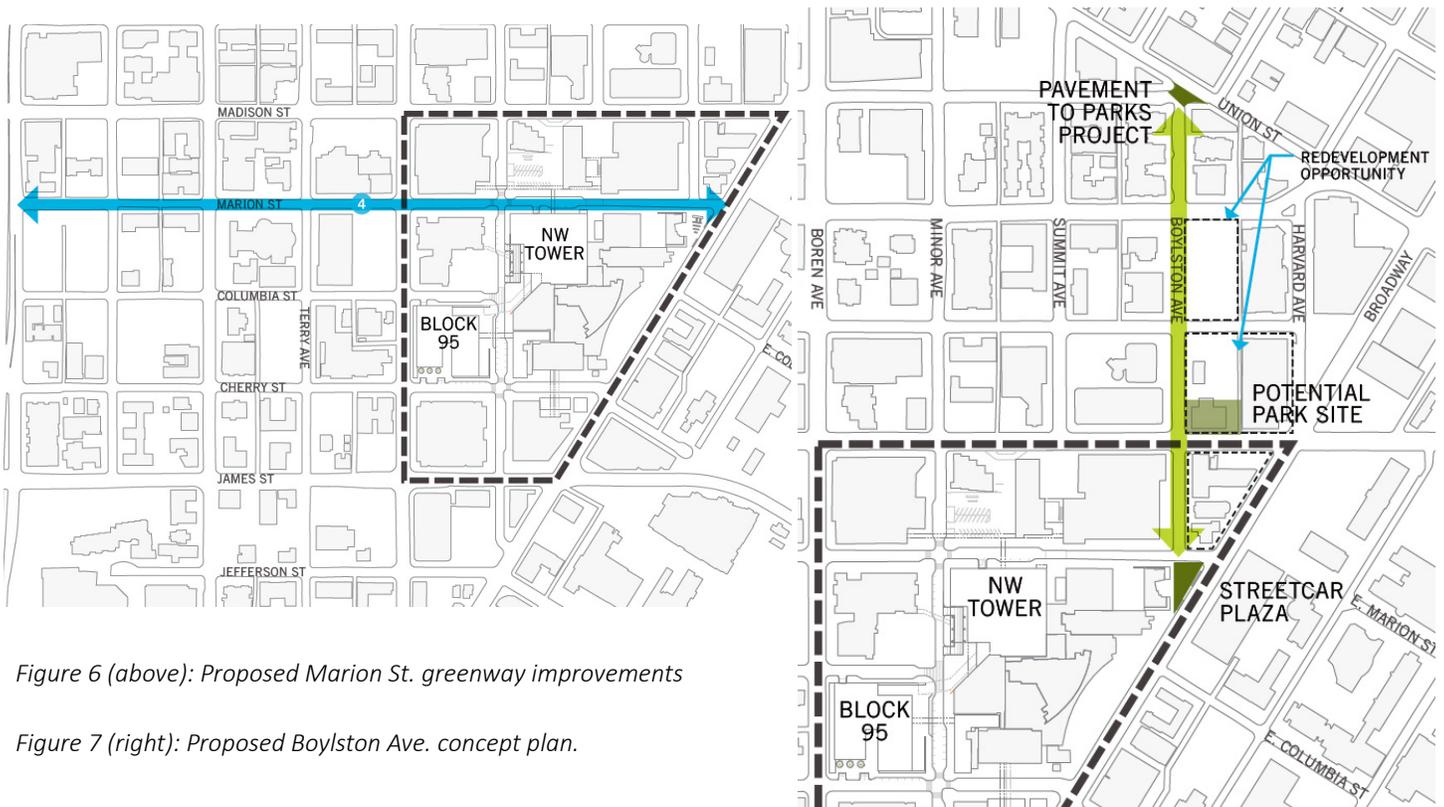


Figure 6 (above): Proposed Marion St. greenway improvements

Figure 7 (right): Proposed Boylston Ave. concept plan.

to constraints with the grade change as it meets the building façade.

### Boren Façade

The design team expressed their interest in engaging with an artist to activate the building façade along Boren Ave (see figure 10). The blank façade will serve as a space for the artist to display publicly accessible artwork, which will be a part of the project's greater public artwork program. The project team is working with the Swedish foundation on selecting an artist committee.

### Bike Share Stations

The design team has proposed to sponsor 1-2 Pronto bikeshare stations on the Swedish First Hill Campus, as shown in figure 11. Proposed locations for the bikeshare station include the intersection of Minor Ave. and Cherry St. and the intersection of Marion St. and Broadway.

### Bus Shelter

The public benefit package includes improving the southbound bus stop along Boren Ave. between Columbia and Cherry St. with a new bus shelter.

## Agency Comments

**Beverly Barnett**, of SDOT, agrees that the project is not ready for a vote. She feels that the commission has not had proper engagement from the SAC, which is critical for reviewing the project as well as creating and prioritizing public benefit. Ms. Barnett stated that although she saw many positive things, there are still major gaps in the regarding how the project will address public benefit. She does not understand how Swedish is fulfilling the MIMP while meeting their own programmatic needs, how they are engaging with the community, and what they are doing for public benefit for the vacations as well as the skybridges, which are major concerns. While those projects have not yet been reviewed, Ms. Barnett feels that it will be difficult for the commission to look at the proposed public benefit for the alley vacation without have a good sense of Swedish's overall vision regarding public benefit. Without this, the commission will not be able to understand how all of the projects piece together. Ms. Barnett does not believe there is enough detail to understand what Swedish is trying to accomplish. One example includes the installation of a bike-share station. Although the bike-share program is a great idea, Ms. Barnett is concerned as to whether this will actually be used by the public.

Ms. Barnett is also concerned that several elements being proposed constitute mitigation, such as repairing the street. She also feels as if some things regarding pedestrian safety should be considered project obligations under the master use permit (MUP). Without having reviewed a MUP or traffic analysis it is hard to the commission and SDOT to look at the proposed package and say this rises to the level of public benefit.

**Darby Watson**, of SDOT, appreciates that Swedish focused on the First hill public action plan, which is a great initial guide for



Figure 8: Proposed public space

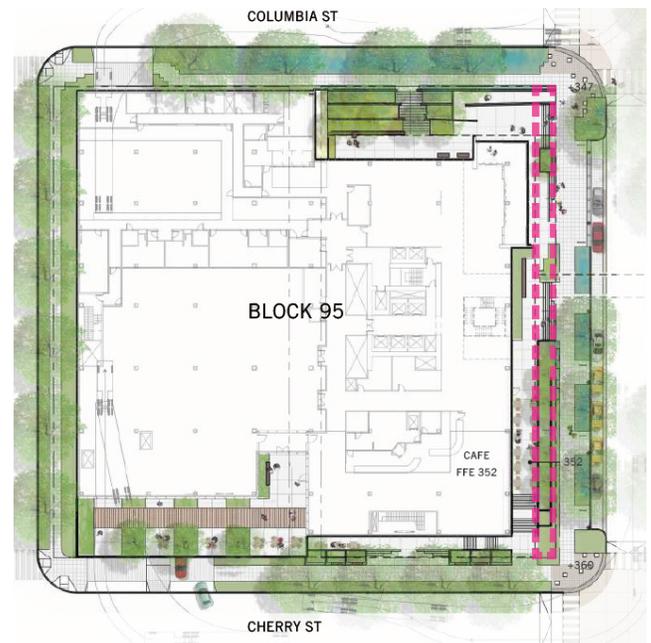


Figure 9: Proposed building setback on Minor St.

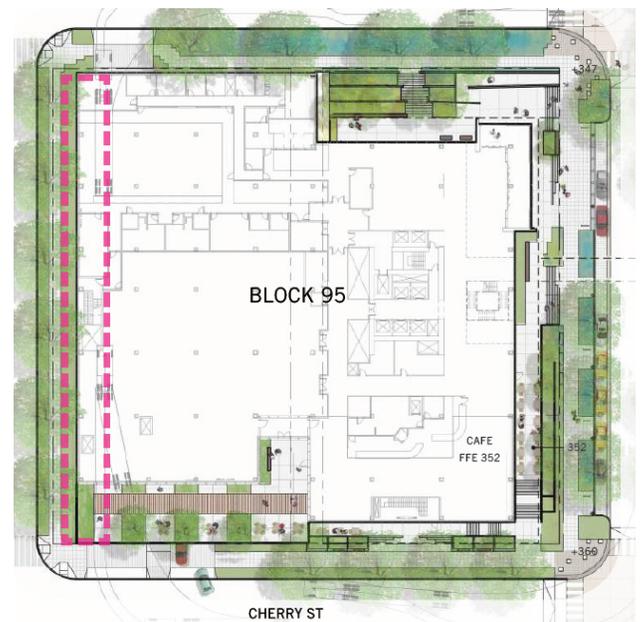


Figure 10: Proposed treatment of Boren Ave. Façade

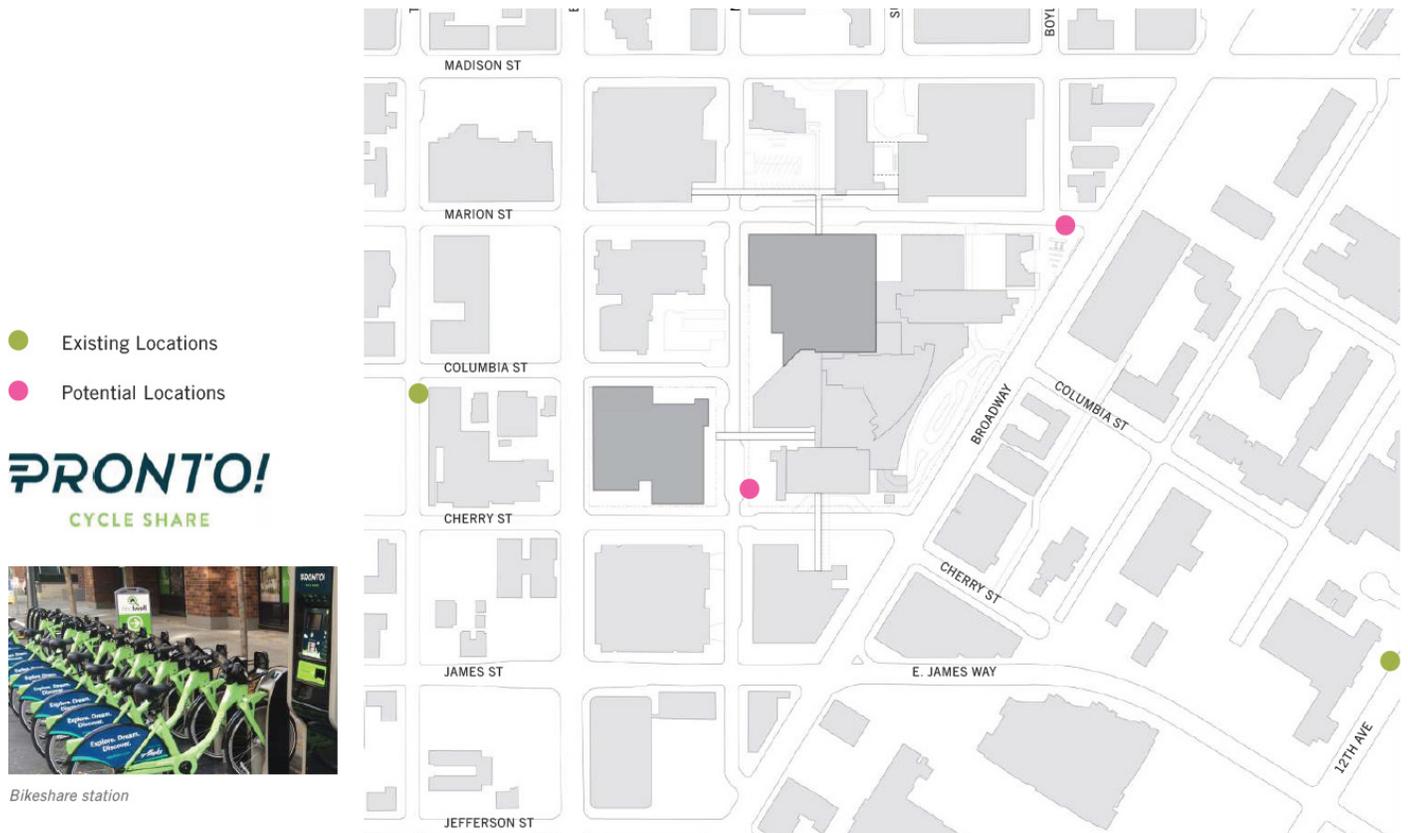


Figure 11: Proposed bike share stations

providing public benefit within the surrounding first hill community. Ms. Watson is concerned with the fact that project team is proposing pedestrian crossings, specifically at the Boren Ave. and James St. intersection, without conducting a traffic study. Before the commission can approve this as public benefit, the applicant must conduct a study and then bring it to SDOT for review. Ms. Watson believes it is important for the city agencies involved to do its due diligence so that anything being recommended for public benefit has already gone through the proper analysis, and we know that it can be implemented safely.

### Public Comments

**Jim Erickson**, of the First Hill Improvement Association, is concerned with the sequence of what you are doing here. We feel the SAC should have the opportunity to review these public benefits. Mr. Erickson is very concerned with façade along Boren Ave. I know the SAC has not seen plans for the facade and I feel that the SAC should have an opportunity to review and make any necessary changes. I hope you respect the role the SAC plays in the review process. The committee is very interested in the outcome.

**Troy Myers**, with east precinct advisory committee, fully supports the comments of the first hill improvement. Boren Ave. and Minor Ave. need a lot of detail. Minor is very hostile to pedestrians right now and Swedish policies aggravate the situation in accessing open space. I also want to stress emphasis on adding controlled crossing at Columbia St. and Boren Ave. and Minor Ave. and James St. Intersections.

### Summary of Discussion

The Commission is concerned with the level of detail provided in the public benefit package. Although the design team presented several proposed benefits, the Commission was concerned that there was a lack of detail demonstrating how the public will actually benefit from the proposed improvements or how they relate to other programs and organizations within the surrounding neighborhood. Before the Commission can review specific elements of the public benefit package, they must first understand what the environmental impact statement (EIS) and MIMP will require as mitigation measures. The Commission did not discuss each individual public benefit. Rather, they discussed major concerns with the package as a whole.

The Commission is concerned with the scope of the public benefit package in relation to the size of the project. While improvements within the campus area should not be overlooked, Commissioners encouraged the design team to think beyond the border between the Swedish First Hill Campus and the surrounding First Hill neighborhood when

addressing public benefit. Commissioners also encourage the design team to think about how the public benefit package for the alley vacation fit in with Swedish's overall vision.

The Commission expressed concern with the public benefit package overall, including the lack of detail associated with the proposed rain gardens, façade treatments along Boren Ave., and improvements along Minor Ave. In order to approve rain gardens in areas with steep slopes and poor soils, the design team must show how they will perform and exceed code requirements. The Commission also agrees that the proposed public benefit along Boren Ave. does not include a detailed plan for implementing artwork along the façade. The current proposal is very vague in addressing how it will treat the long façade, which includes no visual breaks or areas for seating.

The Commission also questioned how the public benefit package would address the issue of equity. They are specifically concerned with proposed improvements that will eliminate on street parking along Cherry, Columbia and Minor. Although the design team is proposing a large parking garage to replace on street parking in several areas, the Commission is concerned the parking stalls will be less accessible to the public. The Commission encouraged the design team to think about who will benefit from the proposed public improvements.

### Action

The SDC did not vote on the public benefit package at this meeting. Further development of the package is necessary before the Commission can ascertain whether sufficient public benefit is provided. The commission provided the following recommendations to guide further development of the public benefit. These items must be addressed before the commission can make a decision on the public benefit:

1. Provide information on how and to what extent the proposed public benefits implement the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan.
2. Develop and present a larger strategy for the proposed open space and streetscape improvements for this alley vacation, any public benefit features that will be included with your skybridge permit, and what public benefit items will be proposed to meet any MIMP requirements. While there must be a clear set of public benefits specific to the vacation, the SDC needs to understand how all of the proposed public benefits result in a comprehensive approach for the campus and the surrounding areas.
3. Present the streetscape and open space designs in their architectural context, not only in plan view. The vertical building edges and their programming greatly influence the quality of the open space.
4. Look beyond the boundaries of the campus to provide public benefit features .
5. Consider and explain how ambulances and trucks will maneuver and circulate in streets designed as public space amenities, and how any requirements in the EIS addendum affect right of way designs.
6. Continue to explore designs for the proposed storm water improvements that result in designs that exceed any code requirements, enhance the streetscape and address any site challenges including slopes.
7. Before approval of the public benefit package, City staff must have determined that none of the public benefit items are required as mitigation in the EIS addendum. DPD staff must have also determined that none of the public benefit items would have otherwise been required to fulfill the intent of the MIMP.
8. Consult with the Swedish MIMP Standing Advisory Committee and the Frye Museum prior to the next SDC review.
9. Optimize and provide information on the solar exposure of the landscape improvements that are proposed as public benefit.
10. Develop the proposed public art elements to show how it will enhance the Boren Ave streetscape for the public to offset the lack of transparency and programming along this façade. Particular attention should be paid to addressing the potential for driver distraction resulting from the inclusion of art on the west façade..
11. Explain how and the extent to which you will implement the Boylston Streetscape Plan.
12. Address walkability and equity as it relates to the proposed development and public benefits.
13. Design the public benefit spaces to be welcoming and inclusive. Explain how the general public, especially those who are underserved, will be drawn to and served by these spaces.
14. The proposed crosswalks, including those crossing Boren and James, must be approved by SDOT and not be required mitigation. They must fill an identified need for pedestrian circulation through Swedish and provide connections to the surrounding area.
15. As stated in the approval of Urban Design Merit, continue to explore limiting loading times of the very large trucks.