



August 4, 2021

Honorable Alex Pedersen, Chair  
Transportation and Utilities Committee  
Seattle City Council  
600 Fourth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104

**Subject: Extension of time for Swedish Health Services to complete an alley vacation, a skybridge, and a tunnel at the First Hill Campus**

Dear Councilmember Pedersen and Honorable Members of the Committee:

We are forwarding three pieces of legislation that together will allow additional time for Swedish Health Services (“Swedish”, “SHS” or “Petitioner”) to complete work on its planned development at the First Hill Campus approved by the City Council in 2016. The work includes an alley vacation at Block 95, in the block bounded by Columbia Street, Minor Avenue, Cherry Street, and Boren Avenue; a pedestrian skybridge over Minor Avenue between Columbia Street and Cherry Street; and a pedestrian tunnel under and across Minor Avenue between Columbia Street and Cherry Street. The alley, skybridge, and tunnel are fully described in the respective legislation. The legislation includes:

1. Clerk File 314477: the clerk file extends the alley vacation approval granted in Clerk File 314304 on August 8, 2016, to an anticipated commencement of development in 2024 and anticipated completion of development in 2029.
2. Skybridge ordinance Council Bill 120134: this ordinance allows Swedish to construct and maintain a skybridge and amends Ordinance 125142 to provide a new 15-year term following the passage of the amending ordinance
3. Tunnel ordinance Council Bill 120133: this ordinance allows Swedish to construct and maintain a pedestrian tunnel for a 15-year term as conceptually approved in Resolution 31700

SDOT supports the extension of time requested by Swedish and recommends the granting of the Clerk File and the passage of the skybridge and tunnel ordinances.

#### **CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT**

The proposed development is within the boundaries of City Council District 3.

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL REVIEW**

In 2016, the Sustainability & Transportation Committee reviewed the proposed expansion at the Swedish First Hill Campus. A public hearing was held on the proposed alley vacation and the

Committee considered the vacation, the skybridge, and the tunnel. The Committee found the development activity to be consistent with the growth anticipated in the adopted Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP). The Committee and the full Council passed the skybridge ordinance, adopted the resolution supporting the tunnel, and granted the alley vacation subject to conditions. No conditions of any approval are proposed to be changed. The only revision is that Swedish will have additional time to meet its obligations.

When the Council grants approval of a vacation or a permit it sets a time frame for when the project work must be done. With this alley vacation the conditions specified that work should commence within 2 years and should be largely completed within 5 years. Developments that request a vacation are generally quite complex and this time frame does not always allow for the time it takes for complex permitting activity. In more recent years the City Council has provided for projects to have a longer time to complete the work, generally 7 to 9 years but sometimes as long as 15 years. Granting this extension of time is consistent with the current Council practice recognizing the complexities of major development and providing for adequate time for the development.

### **REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL TIME**

Following the various approvals in 2016, Swedish continued to work on the permits necessary to move forward with the development of the Block 95 and the North Tower building. In 2017, Swedish began to navigate significant changes to the delivery of health care services. Swedish put its original Master Use Permit (MUP) applications on hold until 2019 in order to review how it should move forward. This delay means the Swedish will not be able to complete its work in the time frame anticipated.

Swedish is ready to move forward and has begun demolition of the existing structures on the Block 95 site. Swedish anticipates excavation of the site in 2022 and construction beginning in summer 2023. Swedish has continually engaged with the City on the schedule and on the development of the public benefit features. Swedish fulfilled its obligation to provide \$500,000 funding to Parks for improvements to First Hill Park in late 2020. In addition, Swedish and the City have been working the design and implementation of the pedestrian enhancements known as the First Hill Mile. In its request for an extension Swedish has indicated that construction of the majority of the public benefit features in 2025. Pedestrian crossings may be completed as early as 2023.

### **BACKGROUND**

Swedish was founded on June 1, 1910. In 1912, Swedish acquired a 40-bed private hospital located at Summit and Columbia. Over the next 50 years, Swedish added new buildings and enhanced facilities every decade. In 1980, Doctors Hospital and Seattle General Hospital

closed, merging with Swedish. Providence Seattle Medical Center, founded by the Sisters of Providence, joined the Swedish system in 2000. In February 2012, Swedish and Providence finalized its affiliation agreement and joined together.

Swedish plans to update its aging facilities at First Hill. During the review in 2016, Swedish stated its goals including:

- To provide care for a rapidly growing older population;
- Respond to unprecedented inpatient growth;
- Meet the most current technology needs in appropriate space;
- Respond to pressures of health care reform; and
- Utilize clinical space effectively.

Swedish is proposing the alley vacation in connection with the development of Swedish's First Hill Campus as approved in the 2005 Compiled Major Institution Master Plan ("MIMP") adopted in 2005 in Ordinance 121965, superseding the MIMP adopted in 1984 in Ordinance 111993.

As described in the 2005 MIMP, the total existing First Hill campus included about 2.3 million square feet. Of this, about 1.3 million is hospital; 800,000 square feet of medical office space; and 200,000 square feet is for other support uses. Parking garages comprise approximately 1.2 million square feet of building area, plus more than 200 surface parking spaces exist on the campus. Following adoption of the 2005 MIMP, construction was completed in 2008 for MIMP project D, the Swedish Orthopedic Institute (SOI), at 601 Broadway. The SOI building replaced the former 75,165 square foot Broadway Annex building with a 208,653 square foot, 8-floor building including 4 floors of underground parking (217 stalls).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Swedish has identified the vacation alternative as the preferred approach to meeting the programmatic and planning needs for the First Hill Campus. Swedish plans to proceed with two buildings identified in the MIMP.

The proposed Block 95 development is located on the block bounded by Boren Avenue on the west, Columbia Street on the north, Minor Avenue on the east, and Cherry Street on the south. The project would include: a four-story podium that occupies the entire block with a 12-story medical office tower located atop the podium on the east half of the block, at approximately 240 feet and a total of 17 stories and then stepping down to 5 stories and 90 feet midblock to the west. The office tower may be developed with only 6-stories, depending on demand. The building is planned to serve as the main logistic and supply center for the entire First Hill campus, providing parking, with a new loading dock, materials management center, and production kitchen. The hospital clinical laboratory is also planned to be included in the

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building. The remaining available space in Block 95 would serve either hospital-based clinics or provide leased office space for physicians. The alley vacation is proposed as part of the project to develop a building consistent with the MIMP.

The Block 95 building is intended to serve as the primary supply and logistics center for the campus, including critical MEP infrastructure that will support the entire First Hill campus. The below grade levels will include approximately 576 parking spaces. The first level below grade will be the loading dock and materials management for the First Hill campus. The dock level will be served by three large freight elevators which permit the movement of incoming deliveries down one level to the primary materials management warehouse facility and the major production kitchen for the campus. This level connects across Minor Avenue through a service tunnel at Level D.

Also proposed are a skybridge and tunnel that would cross Minor Avenue and connect Block 95 to the main hospital. The skybridge, at level 2 of the new Block 95 building would be approximately 13 feet tall, 12 feet wide, and 210 feet long, only 66 feet of which is over the right-of-way. The tunnel, at two-levels below-grade would be approximately 11 feet tall, 20 feet wide, and 36 feet long. The tunnel and skybridge both require term permits from the City. The skybridge proposal was approved by the Council in 2016 under Ordinance 125142. Conceptual approval of the tunnel was granted under Resolution 31700. The bill in front of the Council would grant final approval for the tunnel.

SDOT recommends that the request from Swedish for additional time be supported by granting Clerk File 314477 and the passage of Council Bill 120134 and Council Bill 120133.

Sincerely,



[Sam Zimbabwe \(Jul 27, 2021 10:17 PDT\)](#)

Sam Zimbabwe, Director  
Seattle Department of Transportation

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Enclosures