

July 11, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities Committee
From: Lish Whitson, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120613 – 300 Pine Street skybridge

On July 18, 2023, the Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities Committee (Committee) will discuss and possibly vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120613](#), which would renew and extend approval to maintain a skybridge across 3rd Avenue between Pine Street and Stewart Street in the Downtown retail core. The skybridge connects the historic [Bon Marché](#) building at 300 Pine Street with a parking garage across the street.

This memorandum describes the skybridge permit renewal process and the 300 Pine Street skybridge.

Skybridge Permit Renewals

Property owners who seek to build a new pedestrian bridge that would encroach over and above a public place¹ must seek skybridge permit approval from the City Council under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 15.64](#). The code allows for renewals of a skybridge permit only if permitted in the original ordinance. [SMC 15.64.083](#) provides authority to the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to recommend amendments at term renewal. Amendments may only be made if consistent with [SMC 15.64.090](#) and are made via ordinance.

[SMC 15.64.090](#) provides the terms and conditions that may be included in a term permit ordinance. These include, but are not limited to:

- the term of years that permission is granted and renewal periods, if any;
- provision for regular inspection of and procedures for closure or removal of the skybridge;
- requirements for performance bonds, public liability insurance, indemnification, conformance with other laws, and annual fees;
- prohibition against assignment without City consent;
- a requirement for execution and recording of a covenant ensuring that obligations and conditions imposed on the permittee run with the land, where applicable;
- public benefit mitigation elements; and
- timely acceptance of permission.

¹ A “public place” is defined as: “public right-of-way and the space above or beneath its surface, whether or not opened or improved, including streets, avenues, ways, boulevards, drives, places, alleys, sidewalks, planting strips, squares, triangles, and plazas that are not privately owned.” ([SMC 16.02.046](#))

300 Pine Street Skybridge

The skybridge that joins the historic Bon Marché/300 Pine Street building to the parking garage on the west side of 3rd Avenue was originally permitted in 1960 under [Ordinance 88991](#). The Bon Marché building was originally built in 1929, as the first full-block retail development in Seattle. The parking garage was built in the late 1950s in reaction to the suburbanization of retail businesses. The skybridge provided direct access from the garage to the Bon Marché department store, later Macy's. Currently, the skybridge provides access between the parking garage and the offices located in the former department store building, as well as ground floor retail businesses.

Approval of the skybridge has continued, and was most recently granted to Macy's West Stores, Inc. under [Ordinance 124985](#), in 2016. That approval was for a term ending in 2023, which is renewable for two additional ten-year terms, ending in 2043. Instead, 300 Pine Street Condominium Association, the current owners of the building and operators of the skybridge have asked for a single 20-year renewal, which would provide for a single renewal during the 30-year period covered by Ordinance 124985. Consequently, approval of CB 120613 would allow the current owner of the Bon Marché building, 300 Pine Street Condominium Association, permission to maintain the skybridge over 3rd Avenue for 20 years, ending in 2043.

Next Steps

If the Committee recommends approval of CB 120613 at its July 18 meeting, it could be considered by the City Council as early as July 25.

cc: Esther Handy, Director
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Supervising Analyst