



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## Transportation Committee

### Agenda

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

9:30 AM

Council Chamber, City Hall  
600 Fourth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

Rob Saka, Chair  
Joy Hollingsworth, Vice-Chair  
Robert Kettle, Member  
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Member  
Dan Strauss, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8801; [Rob.Saka@seattle.gov](mailto:Rob.Saka@seattle.gov)

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**SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**Transportation Committee**  
**Agenda**  
**March 18, 2025 - 9:30 AM**

**Meeting Location:**

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

**Committee Website:**

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/transportation-x154110>

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This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

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Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>

Online registration to speak will begin one hour before the meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting. Speakers must be registered in order to be recognized by the Chair.

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*Please Note: Times listed are estimated*

**A. Call To Order**

**B. Approval of the Agenda**

**C. Public Comment**

**D. Items of Business**

**1. ST3, Seattle Link Light Rail Extensions**

*Supporting  
Documents:*

[Central Staff Memo](#)

[Sound Transit Presentation](#)

[ST3 City Team Presentation](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Jason Hampton and Brad Owen, Sound Transit (ST); Angela Brady, Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects; Sara Maxana, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT); Lindsay King, Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI); Calvin Chow, Council Central Staff

2. [Res 32166](#) A RESOLUTION granting conceptual approval to install, maintain, and operate a pedestrian skybridge over and across 8th Avenue, north of Cherry Street; as proposed by FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline, in the First Hill neighborhood.

*Supporting  
Documents:*

[Summary and Fiscal Note](#)

[Summary Att A – Skyline 8th Ave Skybridge Area Map](#)

[Central Staff Memo](#)

[Presentation](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Amy Gray, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT); Michael Jenkins, Seattle Design Commission; Mark Brands, Site Workshop; Lish Whitson, Council Central Staff

**E. Adjournment**





Legislation Text

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**File #:** Inf 2646, **Version:** 1

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ST3, Seattle Link Light Rail Extensions

February 24, 2025

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Council  
**From:** Calvin Chow, Analyst  
**Subject:** Background and Status of Sound Transit Light Rail Extension Projects

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On February 20, 2025, Mayor Harrel released an [Executive Order](#) describing four initiatives related to Sound Transit's West Seattle and Ballard light rail extension projects. The order announced the expansion of the Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects & Sound Transit, efforts to streamline permits, development of a staffing and resource plan, and efforts to integrate community, public realm, and safety improvements in station design and station area planning.

This memorandum is intended to provide Councilmembers with additional context and background on Sound Transit, Sound Transit's West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and Ballard Link Extension (BLE) projects, the City's involvement in delivering these projects, and the related legislation anticipated for Council's consideration in 2025. Central Staff is available to follow-up with Councilmember offices on any questions or concerns.

### **Sound Transit Background**

Sound Transit (formally known as the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority) was formed in 1993 to provide regional transit service across a three-county service area. Sound Transit is governed by an 18-member Board which is made up of local elected officials (ten from King County, four from Pierce County, and three from Snohomish County) plus the Washington State Secretary of Transportation. Board appointments are at the discretion of the County Executives and are subject to confirmation by the respective County Councils. Historically, the City of Seattle has held two seats on the Board, represented by the Mayor of Seattle and a Seattle Councilmember.

Through a series of voter-approved ballot measures, Sound Transit constructs and operates regional transit services including Sounder heavy commuter rail, Sound Transit Express regional bus service, and Link light rail. Link light rail initially began service in 2009, connecting Downtown Seattle to SeaTac Airport. This initial line has since been extended as the 1 Line and now provides service from Lynnwood to Angle Lake. The 2 Line, an east-west extension of the Link system, is currently operating as a spur line between Redmond and Bellevue and is scheduled to begin connecting service to Seattle (with trains continuing to Lynnwood) in 2025. This memo focuses primarily on Sound Transit's planned Link light rail extensions to West Seattle (WSLE) and Ballard (BLE).

## Sound Transit 3 Ballot Measure

The most recent ballot measure to expand regional transit service was the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) proposal which was approved by voters in November 2016 and included the WSLE and BLE projects as part of the ST3 regional project portfolio. The ST3 ballot measure authorized a 0.5 percent sales tax, a 0.8 percent motor vehicle excise tax, and a \$0.25 per \$1,000 assessed value property tax. During the development of the ST3 proposal, the City Council passed [Resolution 31688](#), which made alignment recommendations for the WSLE and BLE projects to the Sound Transit Board, including a new light rail tunnel through Downtown Seattle. Resolution 31688 also called for in-fill light rail stations at Graham Street and NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street, funding for the Madison Bus Rapid Transit (RapidRide G) project, and improvements to the RapidRide C and RapidRide D lines. These recommendations were part of the successful ballot measure.

Following voter-approval, the City entered into a ST3 Partnership Agreement with Sound Transit ([Resolution 31788](#)) to collaborate on project delivery, streamline permitting, and seek ways to reduce project costs and deliver the project in advance of schedule. The agreement noted that local third-party funding may be considered for project scope changes that go beyond Sound Transit's financial plan.

Since the passage of ST3, Sound Transit has seen significant cost increases for ST3 projects. Recent media reports cited an updated cost estimate for the WSLE project at between \$6.7 billion and \$7.1 billion, significantly higher than the \$4 billion estimate in Sound Transit's current financial plan.<sup>1</sup> Sound Transit is developing updated cost estimates for the rest of the ST3 project portfolio; however, at the time of this writing, Sound Transit does not have an updated cost estimate for the BLE project.

While Sound Transit continues with project development on WSLE and BLE, the Sound Transit Board will ultimately have to update the ST3 financial plan and consider scope and schedule changes to ST3 projects. In the past, Sound Transit has dealt with financial constraints by reducing scope, phasing project delivery, and extending project schedules. As an example, Sound Transit's initial light rail proposal (approved by voters in 1996) was intended to be a 21-mile line from the University of Washington to SeaTac Airport. In response to cost escalation, the initial segment was constructed as a 14-mile line from Downtown Seattle to SeaTac Airport, the First Hill station was removed from the plan, and the Graham and Boeing Access Road stations were deferred.

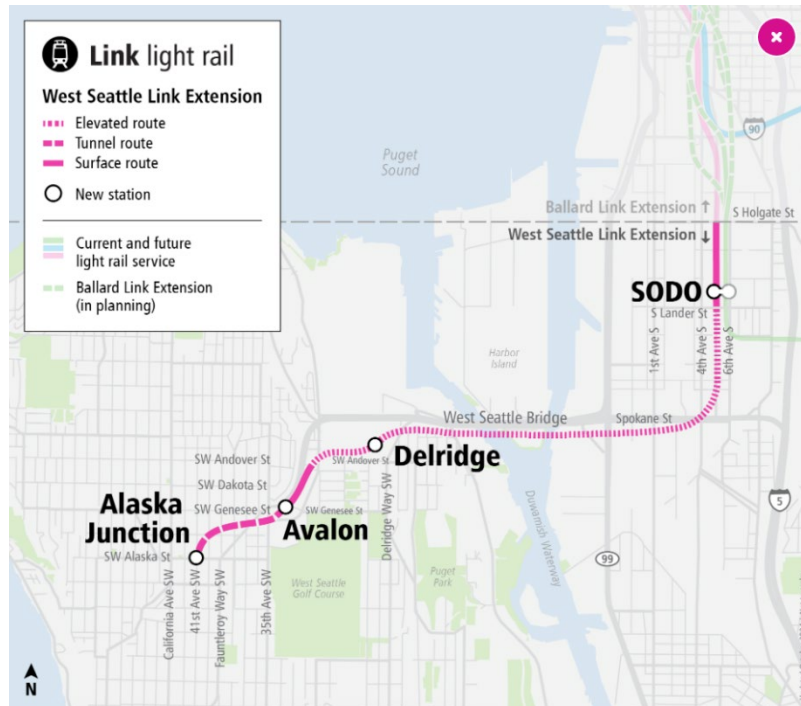
In response to the financial constraints on the ST3 portfolio, the Sound Transit Board will need to consider similar revisions to the WSLE project, the BLE project, and the remaining ST3 projects. The Sound Transit Board will also need to consider potential revenue options which could include third-party funding contributions. Sound Transit's financial plan anticipates significant federal grant funding, which has yet to be awarded. Delay in federal funding would result in additional financial constraints for the ST3 portfolio. At the time of this writing, Sound Transit has not yet announced a formal timeline for the Sound Transit Board to make final ST3 project scope and financial decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Lindblom, M. (2024, September 19). [West Seattle's light rail estimate soars past \\$6 billion](#). *The Seattle Times*.

## Status of West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) Project

The [WSLE preferred alignment](#) includes a 4.1-mile extension of the existing system (beginning south of Stadium Station), a new SODO station, a bridge structure over the Duwamish Waterway, an elevated station at Delridge, a cut-and-cover station at Avalon, and a tunnel station at Alaska Junction. Sound Transit's current schedule calls for construction to begin in 2027 and for start-of-service to West Seattle in 2032.



Source: Sound Transit

Sound Transit completed the [WSLE Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) in September 2024 and has advanced the project into design and permitting. Sound Transit is awaiting the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Record of Decision (ROD), which defines the project scope to be eligible for federal funding under the New Starts grant program. After the ROD is issued, the Sound Transit Board will select the WSLE project to be built, which may include revisions to project scope and schedule. To inform this Board decision, Sound Transit is completing a value engineering exercise and exploring cost-saving options for the project.

The Sound Transit Board has authorized early property acquisitions (with FTA approval) for a number of properties along the WSLE alignment ([Resolution R2024-07](#) and [Resolution R2024-20](#)), and is considering early acquisition of three additional properties (proposed [Resolution R2025-3](#)). This allows Sound Transit real estate staff to work with property owners on property acquisition and with business tenants on relocation in advance of the ROD and WSLE project decisions. These early acquisition properties include business tenants with challenging relocation needs that may take time to resolve, including a childcare facility currently located in Delridge. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) has staffing in place to process permits for business relocation associated with the WSLE and BLE projects.

## Status of Ballard Link Extension (BLE) Project

The [BLE preferred alignment](#) includes a 7.7-mile extension of the existing system, including a new downtown tunnel with stations serving Chinatown/International District (near S Dearborn St), Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, and Seattle Center, an elevated structure along Elliot Ave W and elevated station at Smith Cove, a cut-and-cover station at Interbay, and a tunnel and tunnel station in Ballard (on 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW). Alternative alignments and station locations are also under evaluation through the environmental process. Sound Transit's current schedule calls for construction to begin in 2027 and for start of service to Ballard in 2039.



Source: Sound Transit

Sound Transit anticipates publishing an updated Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the BLE project in 2025. In response to previous Board actions, Sound Transit continues to explore station location options for the Chinatown/International District station and for the Denny station. Following publication of a Final Environmental Impact Statement and an FTA ROD, the Sound Transit Board will select the BLE project to be built. To inform this future decision, Sound Transit is developing updated cost estimates and exploring value engineering and cost-saving strategies for the BLE project.

The Sound Transit Board has authorized early property acquisition for three properties along the BLE alignment ([Resolution R2024-07](#)) and is considering an additional parcel near the Seattle Center station that is at risk of imminent redevelopment (proposed [Resolution R2025-4](#)).

### **Anticipated Legislative Actions**

The following is a brief description of legislation related to the Sound Transit WLSE and BLE projects that is anticipated to be transmitted for Council's consideration in 2025.

#### Project Adoption and Transit Way Agreement

Following the FTA ROD for the WLSE project, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) anticipates transmitting legislation for the City to adopt the WSLE project and to update the existing Transit Way Agreement to record Sound Transit's use of the City's right-of-way. These legislative steps are required for the City to begin processing permit applications from Sound Transit. The legislation is expected to be transmitted before the Sound Transit Board makes final decisions on the WSLE project and will likely reflect the current WSLE preferred alignment to allow for permitting work to proceed. If the Sound Transit Board subsequently modifies the WLSE project scope, additional legislation would be necessary to revise the legislation and Transit Way Agreement accordingly.

Similar legislation for the BLE project is not expected until after 2025, once Sound Transit completes environmental work and receives the FTA ROD for the BLE project. The Transit Way Agreement was last amended in 2022 to reflect the construction of the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St infill station ([Ordinance 126701](#)).

#### Permit Streamlining

As part of the City's commitment to partner with Sound Transit, SDCI will be proposing legislation to streamline the permitting process for the WSLE and BLE projects. The legislation will allow SDCI to coordinate consistent development standards for Sound Transit stations and facilities across the project alignment which are classified as essential public facilities under state law. The legislation will also clarify and streamline various permit processes related to advisory design review, environmental critical areas, tree and vegetation management, construction noise variance, and bicycle parking requirements.

#### City Staffing Plan

The City of Seattle is a partner with Sound Transit in the delivery of the WSLE and BLE projects, and multiple City departments are engaged with environmental review, design, permitting, utility relocations, and other project-related work. The 2025 Adopted Budget included a \$5.2 million reserve in Finance General to support a City-wide staffing increase from 28 positions to 79 positions, in anticipation of a detailed City staffing plan. Legislation will be needed to establish the necessary position authority and to transfer appropriations from Finance General to the affected departments.

The City's ST3 team was reorganized in 2025 and is led by Angela Brady, as the City's Designated Representative and Director of the Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects & Sound Transit. The role of the Designated Representative was established in the ST3 Partnership Agreement and is supported by the Sound Transit Program Manager, Sara Maxana (SDOT), the Sound Transit Deputy Program Manager, C.J. Holt (SDOT), and the ST3 Government and Community Relations Manager, Chris Gregorich (SDOT).

cc: Ben Noble, Director  
Yolanda Ho, Deputy Director



*West Seattle Link  
Extension  
& Ballard Link  
Extension*

*Seattle City Council  
3/18/2025*





# *West Seattle Link Extension*



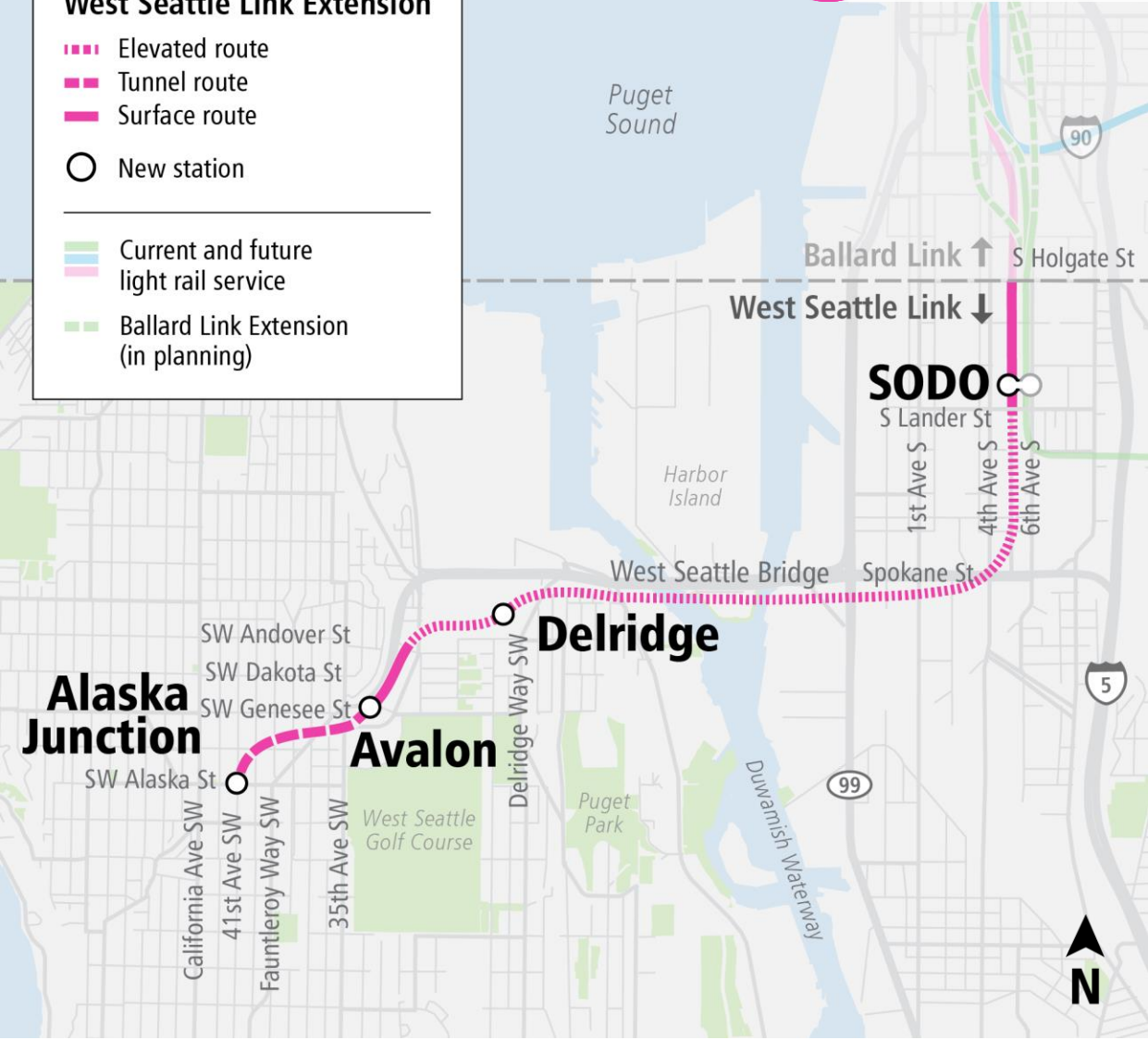
# Link light rail

## West Seattle Link Extension

- Elevated route
- Tunnel route
- Surface route
- New station

- Current and future light rail service
- Ballard Link Extension (in planning)

# 3 Line

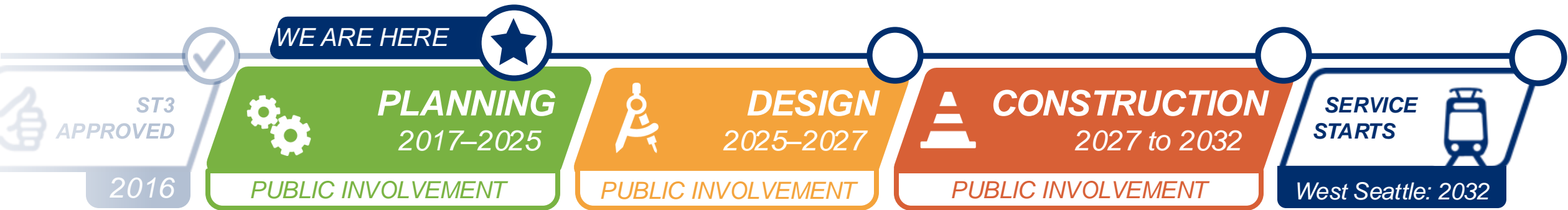


# West Seattle Link Extension

- **Reduces transit travel** time from Alaska Junction to Westlake Station by 50% once Ballard Link Extension is complete.
- **Improves** transit service **frequency, reliability** and **capacity**.
- Facilitates redevelopment near stations, with focus on **affordable housing**.
- **Provides travel alternative** if West Seattle Bridge is congested or closed for repairs.
- **Facilitates future expansion** to south.

# West Seattle Link Extension

## Project timeline



**PLAN**



**DESIGN**



**CON**

**2025–2027**

**Final route and station design**

Station naming

Identify artists for station art

Property acquisition/relocation

Early construction activities

**Construction contract procurement**

**Permitting**

*PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT*

# Motion No. M2024-59

Develop a **workplan on the programmatic, financial, and project level measures and opportunities** the agency will pursue to **improve the agency's financial situation** and move WSLE through design **to inform** a financially sound project to be baselined, including **timelines and scale of potential benefits for each measure, and whether each measure is WSLE-specific or applies broadly to future projects.**

# ***Ballard Link Extension***



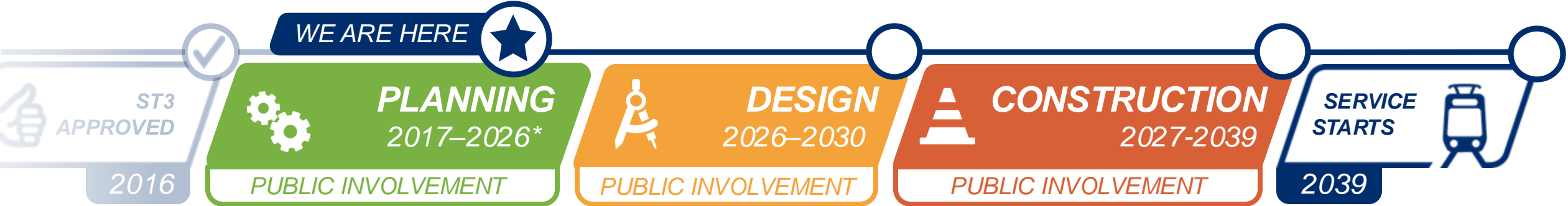


## ***Ballard Link Extension***

- ✓ Included in Sound Transit 3 (ST3) voter approved plan.
- ✓ Adds nearly eight miles of light rail service, including a new light rail-only downtown tunnel.
- ✓ Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.

# Ballard Link Extension (BLE)

## Project timeline







# PLANNING

## 2017–2023

### Alternatives development

- ✓ 2018: Early scoping
- ✓ 2019: Scoping
- ✓ 2019: Board identifies preferred alternatives and other alternatives

### Environmental review

- ✓ 2022: Publish WSBLE Draft EIS
- ✓ 2023: Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives



## 2024–2026

### Environmental review

#### 2024: NEPA Scoping

#### 2025: Publish BLE Draft EIS

Public comment period

Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives

#### 2026: Publish BLE Final EIS

Board selects project to be built

Federal Record of Decision

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

# Ballard Link Extension alternatives

- Preferred alternative
- Other EIS alternatives



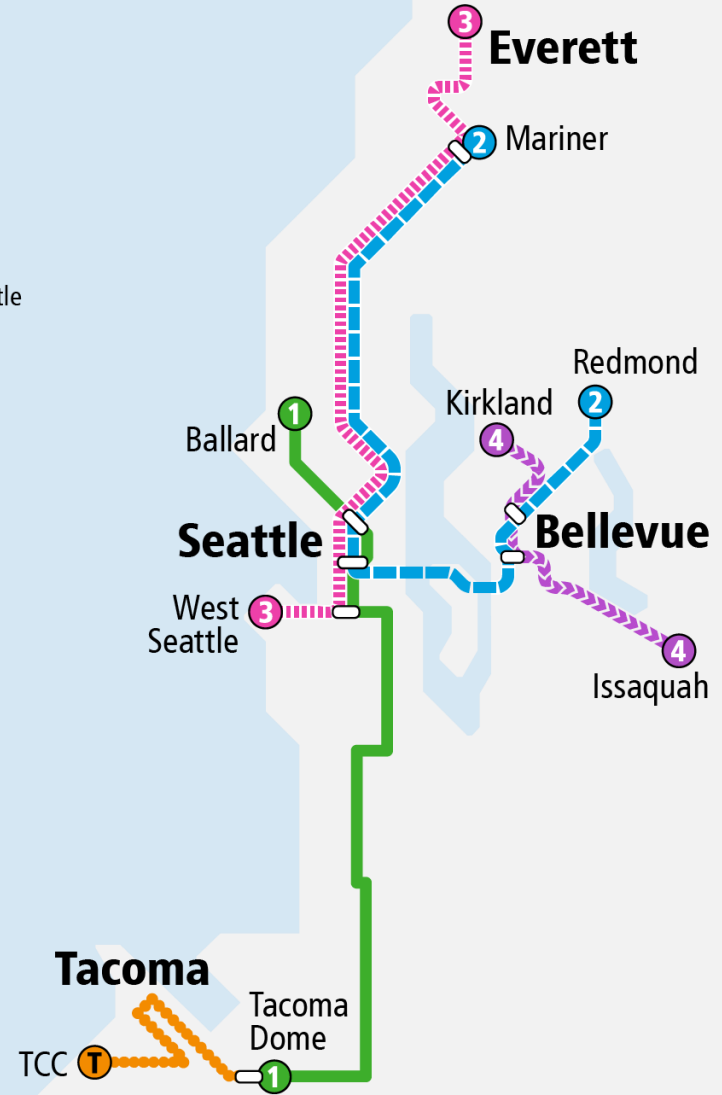
# Operating plan: 2032

- 1 Lynnwood–Tacoma
- 2 Lynnwood–Redmond
- 3 West Seattle–SODO
- T Tacoma Dome–Hilltop
-  Transfer



# Operating plan: 2042

- 1 Ballard–Tacoma
- 2 Mariner–Redmond
- 3 Everett–West Seattle
- 4 Kirkland–Issaquah
- T Tacoma Dome–Tacoma Community College
-  Transfer



*Thank you.*



 *soundtransit.org*





# ST3 City Team | City Council Transportation Committee

March 18, 2025

# Sound Transit 3 in Seattle

In 2016, over 70% of Seattle voters said yes to ST3.

ST3 is the largest infrastructure investment program in Seattle's history. These projects, including the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, bring tremendous opportunity to transform how people reach their homes, jobs, and destinations.

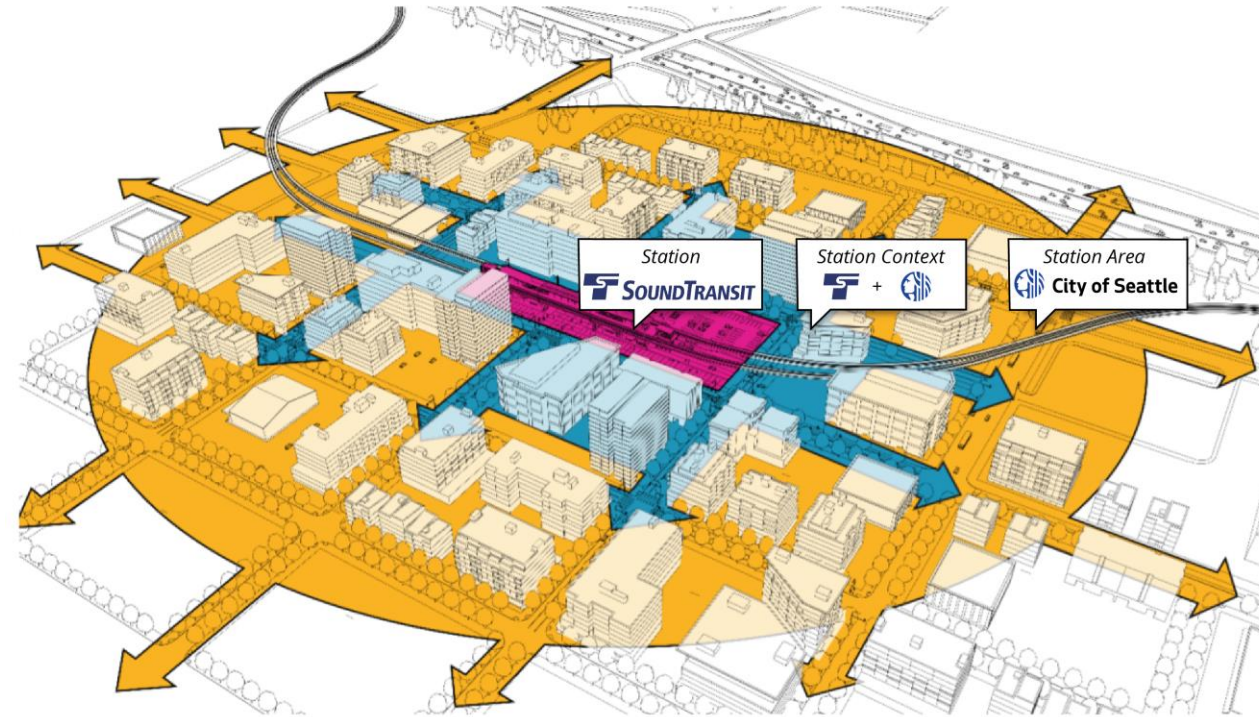
The ST3 City Team is an interdepartmental *One Seattle* effort that partners with Sound Transit to help deliver these investments to Seattle communities.





# How the ST3 City Team supports ST3 projects

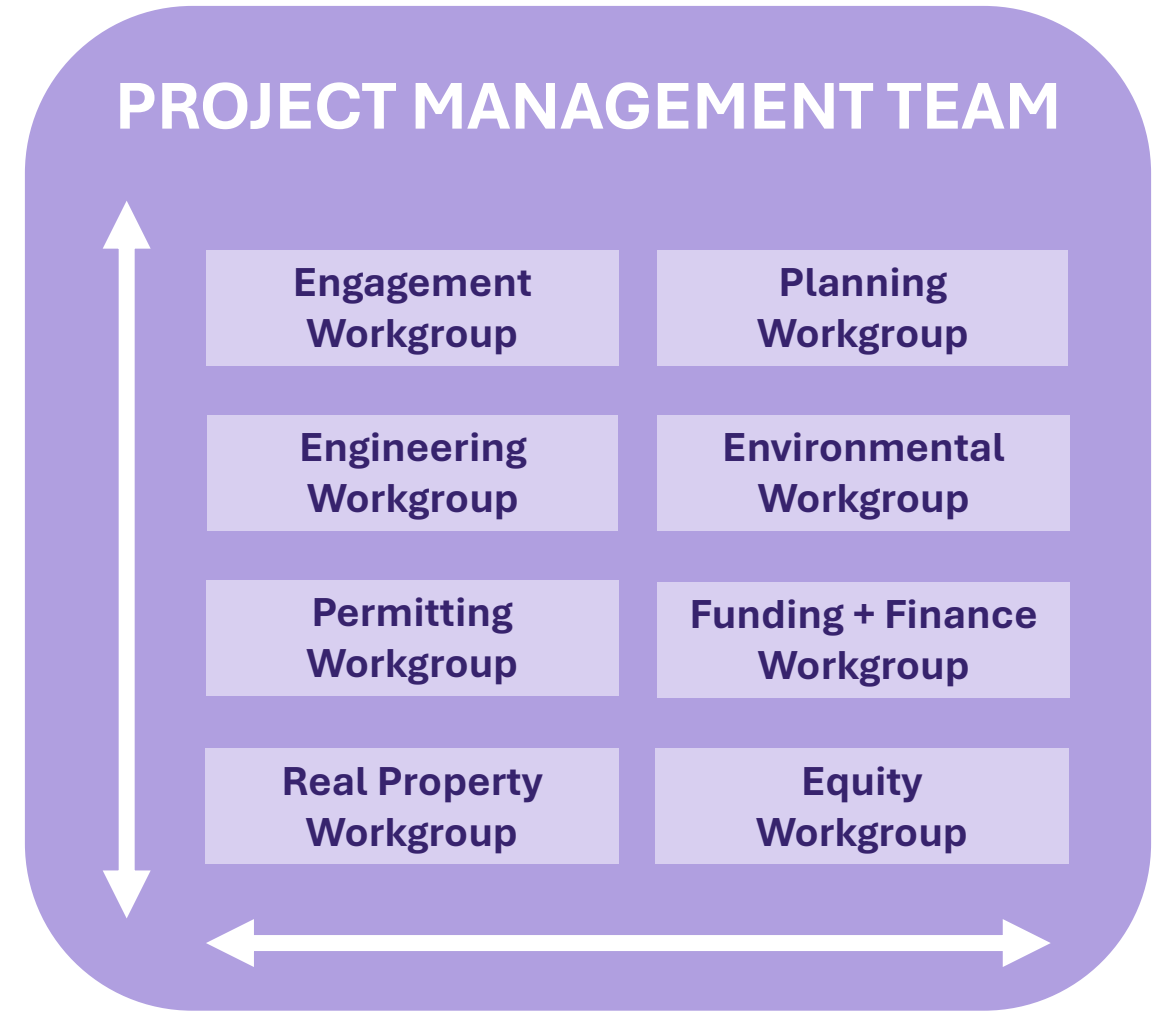
- **Regulatory roles** defined by statute and code, including project review and permitting.
- **Partnering roles** via our 2018 Partnering Agreement with a focus on leadership across departments, intensive staff coordination, and streamlined permitting.
- **Delivery roles** to develop and deliver numerous plans and projects to support ST3, including station area planning and access projects.



# ST3 City Team interdepartmental structures

The **Office of the Waterfront, Civic Projects, and Sound Transit**, leads the ST3 City Team—coordinating efforts of **eight interdepartmental workgroups** with staff spanning over a dozen City departments.

A **project management team** liaises with Sound Transit managers, and coordinates issue elevation and resolution across workgroups and departmental leadership.





# Example: Pigeon Point

**The ST3 City Team and Sound Transit are minimizing and mitigating impacts to Pigeon Point and the West Duwamish Greenbelt through pre-permitting collaboration, including:**

- Develop a restoration plan that prioritizes ecological functioning and habitat preservation. *(Leads: SDCI)*
- Support creation of a Tree and Vegetation Management Plan that describes impacts and tree replacement approach per established City policy. *(Leads: SDCI, SDOT, OSE)*
- Identify new parkland to mitigate the loss of 3+ acres from the WSLE guideway construction, in compliance with Initiative 42. *(Leads: SDOT, SPR, FAS)*



*Image: Sound Transit, Presentation to the Seattle Design Commission, Potential terraced design concept, July 2024*

# Executive Order 2025-02

## A One Seattle Commitment to Expedite Light Rail Expansion

- Organization: Expand of the Office of the Waterfront, Civic Projects, & Sound Transit
- Permitting: Develop legislation to streamline the permit process for these major projects
- Resources: Fund additional staff across City departments to support design, permitting, construction, and station area planning
- Rider experience: Create a four-year work plan to ensure a safe and excellent transit experience, including station design, access improvements, safety enhancements, and equitable transit-oriented development



# City Legislation to Support ST3

The ST3 City Team will transmit several bodies of legislation to support ST3 project delivery in 2025-2027.

## Why is City legislation necessary?

- RCW 36.70A.200 identifies light rail transit as an essential public facility that may be “typically difficult to site” and provides that “no local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.”
- The 2018 City and Seattle and Sound Transit Partnering Agreement (Resolution 31788) establishes our mutual interest of collaboration in advance of permitting to streamline the permit review process.





# Expected City Legislation to Support ST3

## 2025

- Land use code amendments for light rail facilities (*Leads: SDCI, SDOT*)
- Adoption of the West Seattle Link Extension project (*Lead: SDOT*)
- ST3 City Team resourcing plan (*Leads: SDOT, CBO*)

## 2026-2027

- Adoption of the S Graham Street infill station project and the Ballard Link Extension project (*Lead: SDOT*)
- Various agreements for real property/ROW transfers, joint development, other partnership agreements (*Leads: FAS, SPR, OPCD, others*)





**THANK  
YOU!**

Angela Brady, PE, Office of Waterfront, Civic Projects, and Sound Transit Director

Sara Maxana, Sound Transit Program Director, OWCPST

Lindsay King, ST3 Project Manager, SDCI

Chris Gregorich, ST3 Government & Community Relations Manager, OWCPST



Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 32166, **Version:** 1

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**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_**

A RESOLUTION granting conceptual approval to install, maintain, and operate a pedestrian skybridge over and across 8th Avenue, north of Cherry Street; as proposed by FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline, in the First Hill neighborhood.

WHEREAS, FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline (“Skyline”), an organization committed to improving the lives of older adults by integrating housing and community services; and

WHEREAS, Skyline developed its original facility (“Cascade Tower”) providing 275 independent senior residential units, 105 units for residents needing assisted living, memory support, rehabilitative care, or skilled nursing, and other amenities for the residents; and

WHEREAS, Skyline developed its second facility (“Olympic Tower”) providing 77 independent senior residential units and amenities including an auditorium, fitness center, restaurant, and other services; and

WHEREAS, Skyline applied for permission to construct, maintain, and operate an above-grade private pedestrian skybridge over and across 8th Avenue, north of Cherry Street (“Pedestrian Skybridge”); and

WHEREAS, Skyline, at the request of building residents, wishes to connect Cascade Tower and Olympic Tower to support connectivity and resident safety, access to services, and support community and family activities with the Pedestrian Skybridge; and

WHEREAS, Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 15.64 requires public benefits to offset the impact of the Pedestrian Skybridge on the adjacent public realm and Skyline worked with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Seattle Design Commission and is proposing the following public benefits:

- A. Open space improvements and activation on 8th Avenue adjacent to its building, including new plantings, furnishings, and pet relief area;
- B. Integrated public art in the enhanced 8th Avenue landscape area;
- C. Pedestrian improvements at 8th Avenue and Marion Street, including extending the existing curbs and curb ramps; and
- D. Interpretive wayfinding signage for the Park to Park Loop project; and

WHEREAS, Skyline presented the proposal, including public benefits, to the Seattle Design Commission on May 2, 2024, and October 17, 2024, and the Seattle Design Commission recommended approval of the Pedestrian Skybridge and public benefit proposal; and

WHEREAS, Skyline is responsible for obtaining permits, installing and maintaining the public benefits, and any changes to this proposal requires SDOT review and SDOT may request the Seattle Design Commission review; and

WHEREAS, in making a recommendation, the Director of SDOT considered the plans and application materials submitted by Skyline to construct the Pedestrian Skybridge and the Seattle Design Commission's report and recommends that conceptual approval be granted; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:**

Section 1. The City Council finds that the pedestrian skybridge that would run over and across 8th Avenue, north of Cherry Street ("Pedestrian Skybridge"), as proposed by FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline, is in accordance with and in the public interest.

Section 2. As conditions for obtaining permission to construct the Pedestrian Skybridge, which will be reflected in the term permit ordinance described in Section 3 of this resolution, FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline shall:

A. Provide engineering and utility plans for additional review and permitting by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), which the Director of SDOT ("Director") will circulate to other City departments

and any public and private utilities affected by the installation of the Pedestrian Skybridge;

B. Provide a surety bond, covenant agreement, and public liability insurance naming the City as an additional insured or self-insurance, as approved by the City's Risk Manager;

C. Pay all City permit and review fees;

D. Obtain all other necessary permits;

E. Construct and maintain the following public benefits:

1. Open space improvements and activation on 8th Avenue adjacent to its building, including new plantings, furnishings, and pet relief area;

2. Integrated public art in the enhanced 8th Avenue landscape area;

3. Pedestrian improvements at 8th Avenue and Marion Street, including extending the existing curbs and curb ramps; and

4. Interpretive wayfinding signage for the Park to Park Loop project;

F. Maintain and inspect the Pedestrian Skybridge; and

G. Remove the Pedestrian Skybridge and restore the right-of-way to in as good condition for public use as existed prior to construction of the Pedestrian Skybridge and in at least as good condition in all respects as the abutting portions of the public place as required by SDOT right-of-way restoration standards upon expiration of the term permit, or at the direction of the Director or City Council in accordance with the provisions of the term permit ordinance.

Section 3. After this resolution is adopted, SDOT will present to the Council a draft term permit ordinance identifying the conditions under which permission may be granted for the use of the right-of-way for the Pedestrian Skybridge as documented in Section 2 of this resolution. Permission to use the right-of-way is subject to the Council's decision to approve, deny, or modify the draft term permit ordinance presented by the Director.

Section 4. As recommended by the Director and the Mayor, conceptual approval for construction of the



Pedestrian Skybridge is granted.

Adopted by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

## SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Dept. Contact:</b>	<b>CBO Contact:</b>
Seattle Department of Transportation	Amy Gray	Christie Parker

### **1. BILL SUMMARY**

**Legislation Title:**

A RESOLUTION granting conceptual approval to install, maintain, and operate a pedestrian skybridge over and across 8th Avenue, north of Cherry Street; as proposed by FH, LLC d/b/a Skyline, in the First Hill neighborhood.

**Summary and Background of the Legislation:** This resolution grants conceptual approval for construction of a new pedestrian skybridge and outlines certain conditions for obtaining permission to construct the private pedestrian skybridge. The pedestrian skybridge would connect two existing senior residential buildings located at 715 8th Avenue and 725 9th Avenue. The two buildings are a Continuing Care Retirement Community that provides housing for seniors, with access to higher levels of care for residents when necessary, including on-site skilled nursing and rehabilitation services.

The Seattle Design Commission reviewed the proposal and although it is the City’s policy to limit the proliferation of skybridges, they were persuaded by the stated concerns of the residents regarding a protected access to the buildings and were willing to recommend and set conditions for this skybridge. Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 15.64 requires public benefits to offset the impact of skybridges, and the applicant has proposed the following public benefits:

1. Open space improvements and activation on 8th Avenue adjacent to 725 9th Avenue;
2. Integrated public art in the enhanced 8th Avenue landscape area;
3. Pedestrian improvements at the intersection of 8th Avenue and Marion Street, including extending the existing curbs and adding curb ramps; and
4. Interpretative wayfinding signage to the Park to Park Loop project.

SDOT reviewed the proposal against the following criteria: the skybridge provides adequate clearance above-grade; is not on a view corridor; there will not be a significant reduction in natural light; it will not have a significant impact on traffic or pedestrian safety; and it will provide another accessible route for residents of the buildings to move between them to access amenities or visit friends/family. A below-grade pedestrian tunnel was not feasible. SDOT determined that the proposal was sufficiently consistent with Seattle Municipal Code 15.64.050 and recommends approval.

## 2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project?  Yes  No

## 3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?  Yes  No

### 3.d. Other Impacts

**Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.**

If a future term permit ordinance is approved by the City Council, the City will receive permit fees associated with the pedestrian skybridge.

**If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.**

N/A

**Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.**

N/A

## 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

**a. Please describe how this legislation may affect any departments besides the originating department.**

N/A

**b. Does this legislation affect a piece of property? If yes, please attach a map and explain any impacts on the property. Please attach any Environmental Impact Statements, Determinations of Non-Significance, or other reports generated for this property.**

Yes, this legislation would affect properties located at 715 8th Avenue and 725 9th Avenue.

**c. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.**

**i. How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.**

This legislation does not impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities.

- ii. **Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.**

N/A

- iii. **What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?**

N/A

**d. Climate Change Implications**

- i. **Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.**

This legislation is not likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way.

- ii. **Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle’s resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.**

This legislation is not likely to increase or decrease Seattle’s resiliency to climate change in a material way.

- e. **If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program’s desired goal(s)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?**

N/A

**5. CHECKLIST**

- Is a public hearing required?**
- Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required?**
- If this legislation changes spending and/or revenues for a fund, have you reviewed the relevant fund policies and determined that this legislation complies?**
- Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?**

**6. ATTACHMENTS**

**Summary Attachments:**

Summary Attachment A – Skyline 8th Ave Skybridge Area Map

### Skyline 8th Ave Skybridge Map



Map is for informational purposes only and is not intended to modify or supplement the legal description(s) in the Ordinance.

March 10, 2025

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Transportation Committee  
**From:** Lish Whitson, Analyst  
**Subject:** Resolution 32166: Skyline Skybridge

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On March 18, the Transportation Committee will receive a briefing on Resolution 32166, which would grant conditional approval of a new skybridge across 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Columbia and Cherry streets on First Hill (Council District 7).

Skybridges that are placed above the public right-of-way requires a Skybridge Term Permit under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 15.64](#). Skybridges are held to a higher level of review than other types of significant structure term permits. SMC 16.64.010 states:

*It is the intent of the City Council to limit the proliferation and adverse effects of skybridges. Council will consider requests for new skybridges, and the repermitting of existing skybridges upon expiration of the term of the permission, with regard to how well they serve the public interest and their relationship to the cityscape. The provisions of [Chapter 15.64](#) shall be liberally construed in carrying out the intent of the Council.*

For more information about the skybridge approval process, please see Attachment 1.

Resolution 32166 contains standard conditions, including requirements that the skybridge owner file covenants and attain public liability insurance, receive all necessary permits, pay all necessary City fees, and agree to remove the skybridge at the City's discretion.

This memorandum describes the proposed skybridge, the City's review of the skybridge and recommendations, and identifies next steps.

### **Skyline Skybridge**

The Skyline retirement community consists of two towers located on either side of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue on First Hill, together containing 457 units for independent living, assisted living, memory support, rehabilitative care, and skilled nursing. The Cascade Tower is located at 725 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> avenues, and the Olympic Tower is located at 715 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west side of 8<sup>th</sup>. In this area, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a non-arterial street.

The Cascade Tower includes facilities to provide medical services for residents of both towers. The Olympic Tower includes amenities such as a restaurant and fitness center available to residents of both towers. The proposed skybridge would connect the towers, increasing opportunities for the seniors who live at Skyline to move between Skyline's facilities without needing to go outdoors. The proposed skybridge would connect the fourth floors of the towers.

Public benefits proposed to accompany the installation of the tower include:

1. Open space improvements and activation on 8th Avenue adjacent to its building, including new plantings, furnishings, and pet relief area;
2. Integrated public art in the enhanced 8th Avenue landscape area;
3. Pedestrian improvements at 8th Avenue and Marion Street, including extending the existing curbs and curb ramps; and
4. Interpretive wayfinding signage for the Park to Park Loop project.

### **Skybridge Review**

This is the second time that a skybridge has been proposed to connect these facilities. A previous proposal, submitted in 2019 when the Olympic Tower was undergoing permitting, was rejected by the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) and the Skybridge Review Panel, and was withdrawn. A new application was submitted in 2024, informed by residents' experience in living and moving between the two towers. In 2024, the Skybridge Review Panel recommended against approving the skybridge, but the SDC did recommend approval, and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has recommended approval.

On May 2 and October 17, 2024, the Seattle Design Commission recommended approval of the skybridge and the public benefit package respectively. In its minutes from the May 2 meeting, the Commission notes:

*Commissioners were concerned about the precedent that this skybridge will set if it is approved by the City Council. Commissioners support for the skybridge is based on the unique set of circumstances in this proposal – improving mobility beyond ADA for residents of an existing senior living community located in two buildings divided by a right of way. Commissioners expressed that this use should not be considered like other residential uses for the purpose of future policy or precedent. Commissioners look to the City Council to ensure that if the skybridge is approved, that its approval will not establish a precedent that would conflict with Council policies that discourage the proliferation of skybridges.*

In the Summary and Fiscal Note for Resolution 32166, SDOT made the following statement regarding the criteria for new skybridges in Chapter 15.64:

*SDOT reviewed the proposal against the following criteria: the skybridge provides adequate clearance above-grade; is not on a view corridor; there will not be a significant reduction in natural light; it will not have a significant impact on traffic or pedestrian safety; and it will provide another accessible route for residents of the buildings to move between them to access amenities or visit friends/family. A below-grade pedestrian tunnel was not feasible. SDOT determined that the proposal was sufficiently consistent with Seattle Municipal Code 15.64.050 and recommends approval.*



## **Next Steps**

Resolution 32166, if adopted, would grant conditional approval for the Skyline skybridge. It would direct SDOT to develop a term permit ordinance for Council consideration which would respond to the conditions included in the Resolution. Approval of this resolution is a required step in the skybridge approval process and sets the terms of final approval. If the Council votes to adopt this resolution, the Council will be committing to approve future Ordinances that meet the conditions laid out in the Resolution.

If the Committee votes on Resolution 32166 at its April 1 meeting, it could be considered by the City Council as early as April 8.

## **Attachments:**

1. Skybridge Term Permits

cc: Ben Noble, Director  
Yolanda Ho, Deputy Director

## Attachment 1: Skybridge Term Permits

### Skybridge Permits

Property owners who seek to build a pedestrian bridge over a City street, alley, or other public place<sup>1</sup> must seek skybridge permit approval from the City Council under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 15.64](#).

The City's skybridge regulations state that:

*It is the intent of the City Council to limit the proliferation and adverse effects of Skybridges. Council will consider requests for new skybridges, and the repermitting of existing skybridges upon expiration of the term of the permission, with regard to how well they serve the public interest, and their relationship to the cityscape. The provisions of Chapter 15.64 shall be liberally construed in carrying out the intent of the Council.*

Consistent with that intent, in the last ten years, new skybridges have only been approved for hospitals and medical centers, where the need to safely move patients between buildings without exposure to the weather is essential.

After receiving a skybridge application, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) files the application with the City Clerk and circulates it to interested City departments, utilities, and the Seattle Design Commission (SDC). SDOT convenes a Skybridge Review Committee to consider the application and make a recommendation to the SDOT Director who makes a recommendation to the City Council based on the Committee and Commission's recommendations.

SMC 15.64.050.C lays out a series of topics to consider in determining whether to approve a skybridge application:

1. Adequacy of horizontal and vertical clearance;
2. View blockage;
3. Interruption or interference with existing streetscape or other street amenities;
4. Impacts due to reduction of natural light;
5. Reduction of and effect on pedestrian activity at street level;
6. Number of pedestrians projected to use the skybridge;
7. Effect on commerce and enjoyment of neighboring land uses;
8. Availability of reasonable alternatives;
9. Effect on traffic and pedestrian safety;
10. Accessibility for the elderly and handicapped; and
11. The public benefit mitigation elements provided by the proposal.

Skybridges must allow continued use of the street, alley or other public place for travel, utility purposes, and other public purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](#))

When the Director is ready to make a recommendation, SDOT will transmit the recommendation along with background information to Council. A recommendation to approve the skybridge application will take the form of a Resolution.

### **Council Action**

Upon receiving the Director's recommendation, the Council may "approve, deny, or approve with requirements or conditions" the skybridge application by Resolution. The Council's decision must consider the topics listed in SMC 15.64.050.C. According to SMC 15.64.065, the Council may not grant approval for a new skybridge "unless it finds that the skybridge is in the public interest and no reasonable alternative to the skybridge exists." If the Council seeks to approve the application, it will adopt a resolution that provides "conceptual approval." Council denial of an application is the final step in the process for a skybridge that is not approved.

Conceptual approval of the skybridge allows for publication of Master Use Permit decisions for development that includes the skybridge and allows for submission of construction plans for the skybridge. Once SDOT and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) have determined that the construction plans are consistent with the initial plans and meet all applicable codes, SDOT will prepare a final Ordinance for Council consideration. The Ordinance will reflect any conditions for approval. SDOT will typically include conditions responding to [SMC 15.64.090](#) with language developed in consultation with the City's Risk Managers. The conditions will include the following:

- the term of years that permission is granted and renewal periods, if any;
- provision for regular inspection of the skybridge;
- 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 recorded covenant ensuring that obligations and conditions imposed on the permittee run with the land, where applicable;
- public benefit mitigation elements; and
- repeal of approval in the face of untimely acceptance of permission.

Every skybridge permit must allow the City to require that the skybridge be removed for any reason.

The current practice of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is to recommend 15-year permits that can be renewed for an additional 15 years for a total term of approval of 30 years. After 30 years, the skybridge's owner will need a new permit from the Council to continue operating the skybridge. The code provides for two different times when the Council may be called on to review an existing term permit: at the expiration of a term, which requires a new permit, or during the renewal of a term permit if amendments are proposed.



The image is a composite architectural rendering. The top half shows a modern building with a prominent glass skybridge connecting two sections. The skybridge has a dark frame and large glass panels. Below this, a semi-transparent white banner contains the title and meeting information. The bottom half of the image shows a street-level view of the building's entrance area, featuring a paved sidewalk, a parking lot with several cars (including a silver SUV, a red car, and a blue car), and people walking. The scene is set on a bright, sunny day with clear blue skies and lush green trees.

# **FH, LLC (Skyline) Pedestrian Skybridge**

**Council Transportation Committee**  
**Amy Gray, Senior Planning & Development Specialist**  
**March 18, 2025**



# Presentation overview



- Skyline is seeking conceptual approval for a private pedestrian skybridge over 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, north of Cherry St
- The pedestrian skybridge will connect two senior residential buildings located at 715 8<sup>th</sup> (District 7) Ave & 725 9<sup>th</sup> Ave (District 3)
- The pedestrian skybridge will allow residents to accessibly move between the two buildings to access services and amenities
- SDOT recommends conceptual approval for the skybridge permit

# Term Permit Process – New Permits

## Step 1: Resolution for Conceptual Approval

- At 60% design, identifies conditions to be met prior to final approval

## Step 2: Ordinance Passage:

- At 100% design and after all conditions in the resolution are met
- Grants the permit for 15 years, with one renewable 15-year term
- Details the terms and conditions of the permit including public benefits and permit fees





# Review Process

## SDOT Review

- Reviews against the criteria in SMC 15.64.050
- Includes review by the Skybridge Review Committee

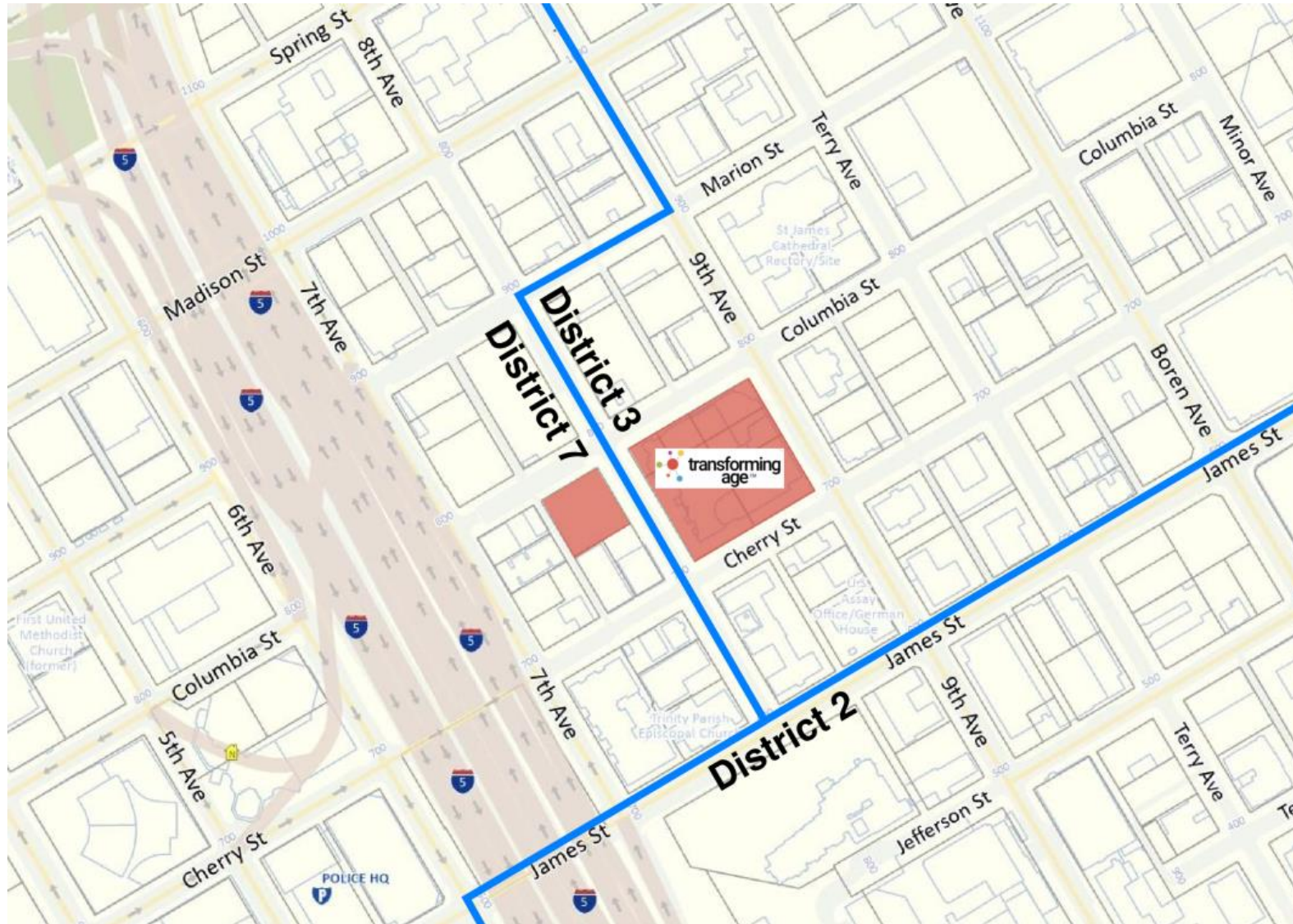
## Seattle Design Commission

- May 2, 2024 – partial approval of urban design phase.
- Sep 18, 2024 – subcommittee approval of urban design phase.
- Oct 17, 2024 – partial approval of public benefits package.
- Dec 5, 2024 – subcommittee approval of wayfinding.

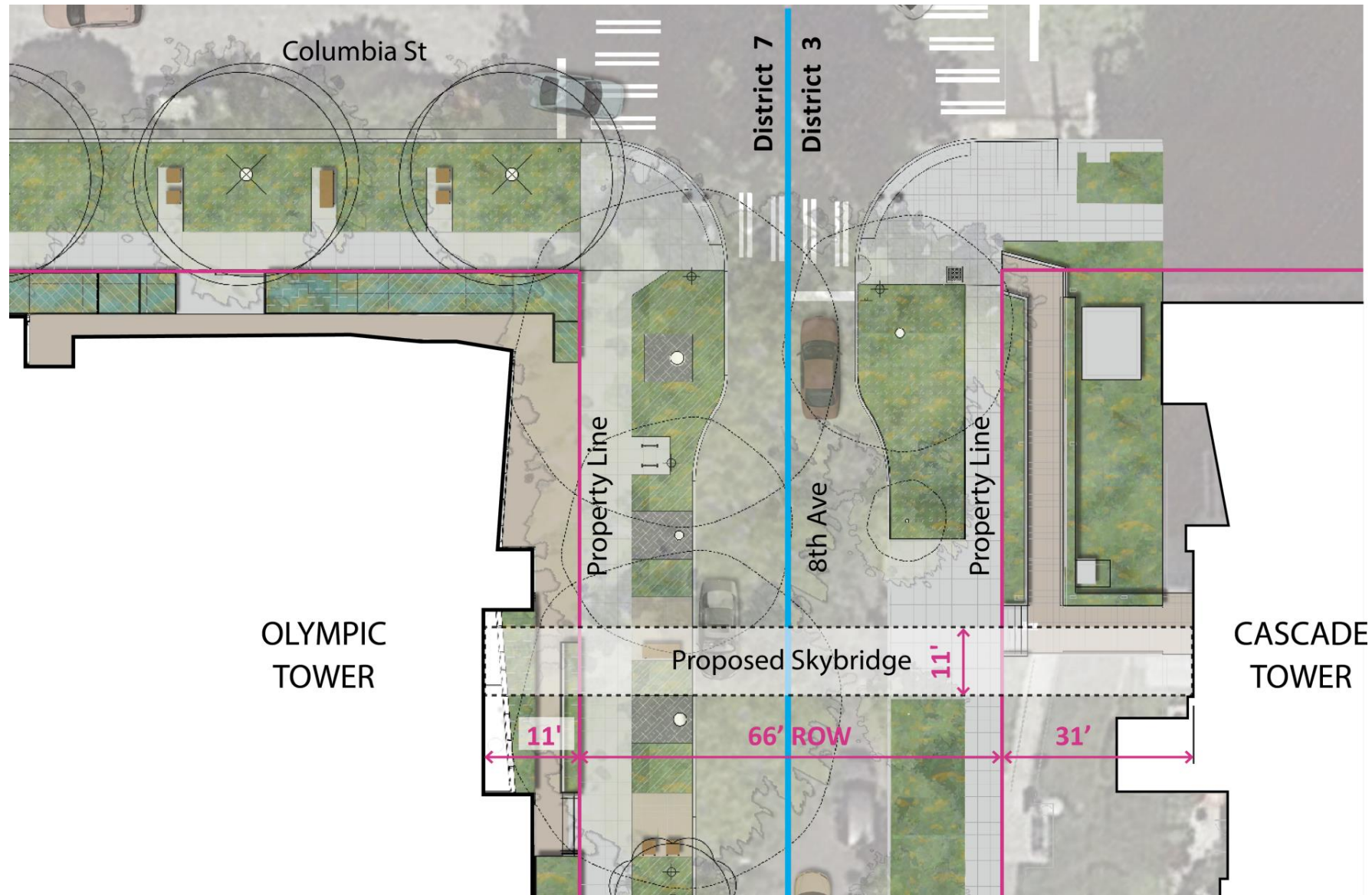




# Area Map w/ Districts 3 & 7



# Skybridge Proposal





# Skybridge Proposal

View looking south along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave (without trees)



View looking south along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave (with trees)



View looking north along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave (without trees)

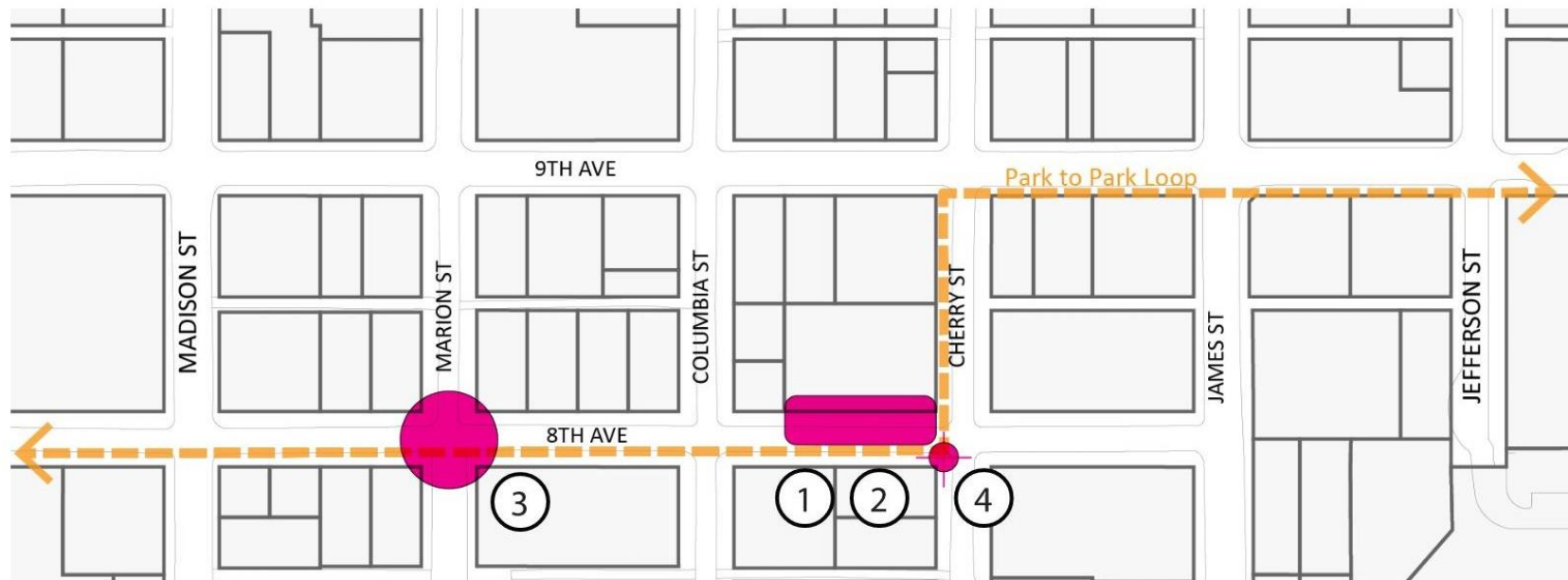


View looking north along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave (with trees)



# Public Benefits

- ① **Open Space Activation:** Improvements to 8th Ave Landscape & ROW
- ② **Public Art:** Integrated Artwork by Norie Sato
- ③ **Pedestrian Enhancements:** 8th Ave & Marion Intersection
- ④ **Interpretive Wayfinding Signage:** Design & Fabrication





# Public Benefits

8th Ave Open Space Activation & Public Art



8th & Marion Pedestrian Enhancements



Interpretive Wayfinding Signage



# Public Benefits

PUBLIC BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED BENEFIT	ESTIMATED COST
1 Open Space Activation: Improvements to 8th Ave Landscape	New garden plantings, furnishings, and pet relief area	4,450 SF	\$100,000
	Planting Area	2,200 SF	
	Paved Area	160 SF	
	Furnishings	20 LF	
	Trash	Quantity: 2	
	Pet Relief Area	175 SF	
2 Public Art: Integrated Artwork by Norie Sato	Publicly accessible artwork within deep setback along 8th Ave		\$250,000
	Screen pieces	Quantity: 3	
	Sculptural pieces with integrated lighting	Quantity: 6-8	
3 Pedestrian Safety: 8th Ave. & Marion	Extension of existing curbs, curb ramps, crosswalks and adjustments to storm drain.		\$100,000
	COS standard curbs	280 LF	
	COS standard curb ramps	Quantity: 4	
	COS standard sidewalk paving	2,100 SF	
	COS standard crosswalk striping	Allowance	
	COS storm drainage inlet	Quantity: 4	
4 Interpretive Wayfinding Signage: Park to Park Loop Signage	Development and documentation of interpretive wayfinding signs for Park to Park Loop project		\$50,000
	Fabrication Documents	Each sign	
	Prototype sign(s)	Each sign	



# Requested action

SDOT recommends Council conceptually approve the proposed pedestrian skybridge

If the resolution is adopted, SDOT will prepare the term permit ordinance for Council consideration in 2025





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