



City of Seattle  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Transportation  
Scott Kubly, Director

November 24, 2015

Honorable Tom Rasmussen, Chair  
Transportation Committee  
Seattle City Council  
600 Fourth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104

**Subject: Petition of Acorn Development LLC for the vacation of the alley in Block 21, Heirs of Sarah A. Bell's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition which is the block between Bell Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Blanchard Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Denny Triangle neighborhood of Seattle  
Clerk File 314278**

Dear Councilmember Rasmussen and Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee:

We are returning the petition from Acorn Development LLC for the vacation of the alley described as:

**The alley in Block 21, Heirs of Sarah A. Bell's Second Addition to the City of Seattle, recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, page 121, Records of King County, Washington, being the block bounded by Bell Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Blanchard Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

The alley proposed for vacation includes approximately 5,756 square feet of right-of-way.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Petitioner is proposing to vacate the alley in Block 21 which is bounded by Bell Street on the north, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, Blanchard Street on the south, and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the east. The alley in the block runs northwest to southeast and the alley is 16 feet wide with a length of 360 feet. The Petitioner owns all the property on the block on both sides of the alley and proposes to develop office towers to be occupied by Amazon.com (Amazon). The block has a change in grade of approximately 20 feet across the site.

The block currently contains surface parking (93 spaces) and three buildings, including: the former Hurricane Café (a one-story, 5,600 sq. ft. masonry building, built in 1940) located in the northwest corner of the block; former Budget Car rental (a 1-story, 16,000 sq. ft. masonry building, built in 1953) located in the southwest corner of the block; and a former motel, (a 3-story, 34,500 sq. ft. masonry building built in 1957) that was leased by Cornish College for

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student housing, located in the northeast corner of the block. The student housing lease terminated at the end of the 2015 academic year.

In 1926, the City widened the numbered avenues in this area by 12 feet on both sides of the street. This resulted in narrower blocks than in some parts of the City and this area has half blocks with a depth of 108 feet, which is further reduced when the alleys are widened to meet current standards, from 16 feet to 20 feet. Redevelopment on the half blocks would result in long and narrow buildings that the Petitioner has identified as inefficient both above ground for office use and below grade for parking.

Block 21 is located within Seattle's Downtown Urban Center, which is an Urban Center Overlay that is comprised of 5 neighborhoods for planning and growth monitoring purposes. Specifically, Block 21 is located within the Denny Triangle Neighborhood of the Downtown Urban Center. Block 21 is zoned Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) 340/290-400 feet allowed in height. The DMC 340/290-400 allows buildings with a maximum height of 340 feet for portions of the project containing non-residential uses. A base height of 290 feet applies to portions of a project that are in residential use and a maximum residential height of 400 applies in this zone.

## **REASON FOR VACATION**

The existing alley bisects the parcels owned by the Petitioner, making it more difficult to develop the site with a consolidated proposal. Without the vacation, the block would be developed with a 1/2 block rectangular building on each side of the existing alley. While development without a vacation would likely allow buildings with adequate office space, it does not provide any flexibility to move the buildings around the site to create open space, to orient the buildings to maximize light, or to allow increased flexibility of floor plate configuration to address tenant needs. Combining the two halves of the block with the proposed vacation will allow for a single development on the site and a more efficient shared below-grade parking structure. The consolidated development of the combined parcels allows for the various elements of the project to share some utilities and services such as common areas for tenant services such as bike storage, loading, elevators, stairs, and mechanical, electrical, and fire suppression systems that would need to be duplicated in separate structures.

The Petitioner proposes the vacations to increase its flexibility in the development of the site and to improve the urban form of the project. Specifically, the Petitioner proposes the vacations to improve the projects in the following ways:

- Allows the tower to be rotated 90 degrees, providing more light and air at-grade to benefit street level uses;
- The rotation of the building continues the alternating rhythm of massing two buildings on a block initiated by Blocks 14, 19, and 20;
- The configuration provides better public circulation functions by reinforcing the importance of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a key boulevard to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists;
- Providing for a diagonal public through-block connection;

- Greater ability to control solar heat with an east-west building orientation resulting in more energy efficient heating and cooling of the buildings;
- Improved vehicular access by allowing driveways to be located along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue which has the lowest pedestrian function of the adjacent roadways and is at the low end of the site;
- Eliminating a 20' vehicular access on Blanchard Street, a designated Green Street.
- Reducing the vehicular access on Bell Street, a designated Green Street, from a 20' entrance and exit to a 12' exit only;
- More efficient underground parking; and
- The vacations provide opportunities for enhanced public amenities such as on-site open space and public benefits.

### **DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD OCCUR WITH A NO VACATION ALTERNATIVE**

Under a no-vacation alternative scenario, based on current zoning, two office buildings could be built on Block 21. The buildings would be aligned parallel to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, one on each side of the alley. The buildings would be separated from each other by the 16-foot wide alley, which would be widened to 20 feet to meet current Land Use Code requirements. The location of the tallest building would likely restrict westerly territorial views from the area east of Westlake Avenue. No public benefits would be required for the no-vacation alternative.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Development proposed for the block includes two office towers; all of the office space is anticipated to be occupied by Amazon. A 23-story (340-foot tall) tower with street-level retail space will be located in the northern portion of the project site and an 8-story office building with street-level retail space will be located in the southeast portion of the project site. A consolidated below-grade parking garage will provide space for approximately 879 vehicles and 383 bicycles on four-levels. In total, approximately 835,000 sq. ft. of office space is proposed with approximately 26,000 sq. ft. of commercial retail space. The two office buildings are proposed to be connected with a two-story above-grade pedestrian link internal to the block. A total of 27,000 sq. ft. of street-level open, pedestrian amenities, and a diagonal pedestrian through-block connection are also proposed.

The public benefit proposal includes:

- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Hillclimb on site;
- Blanchard Street setback;
- Bell Street setback;
- 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Improvements and cycle track;
- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Improvements;
- Blanchard Street Improvements;
- Bell Street Improvements;
- 8<sup>th</sup> and Bell intersection enhancements;
- Bell Street cycle track; and

- Bell Street Concept Plan from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Denny Way.

### **CIRCULATION/ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (NOT ISSUE RESOLUTION)**

The proposed vacations were circulated to various City departments, outside agencies and community groups for comment. The vacation review process also includes review by the Seattle Design Commission. In addition to the vacation review the project is subject to:

- Design Review Board review as required by DPD,
- Master Use Permit (MUP) review,
- Preparation of a Transportation Technical Report required to support the project's Addendum to the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the Downtown EIS,
- Street Improvement Plan (SIP) review, the SDOT process to review street design and utility issues, and
- Department of Neighborhood (DON) determination that the existing buildings on the site were identified as part of the 2007 Downtown Survey as structures that were too altered and would not qualify as Seattle landmarks.

The purpose of the broad review of the vacation petition is to identify issues that need to be addressed through the vacation process by changes to the project or vacation conditions. The comments, closely reproduced below, reflect the statements made by the reviewers and any issues identified during the initial portion of the review process. The comments reflect a "snapshot in time" when the comments were received and do not reflect any project revisions, updates or responses to comments. All the comments received are a part of the record and are not revised or amended by Seattle Department of Transportation.

The comment section does not reflect the resolution of the issue or subsequent design changes or mitigation. The analysis section will focus on the resolution of any issues, recommended project changes, or conditions to address any issues or concerns. The Petitioner has responded to some of the comments received and the *response provided by the Petitioner is included in italics*.

The following comments were received:

#### **City Departments:**

**SDOT Roadway Structures:** The vacation of the alley in the block is not of concern to us. We do not have roadway structures asset in the subject alley and I do not have comments to make. Thanks for checking with us.

**SDOT Street Improvement Permitting:** The Street Improvement Group does not have any comments on this one. We have been working closely with DPD on access issues and are fine with the proposed vacation.

**Seattle City Light (SCL):** On behalf of SCL, we have no objection to the vacation of the Block 21 alley. We are already in separate negotiations with the abutting property owners to relocate and replace SCL's facilities within the alley; consequently, there would be no need to reserve an easement in the vacation. Thank you for the opportunity to review this.

**Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks):** The Parks Department does not have any issues with the vacation of the alley in Block 21 given the proposed public benefits.

**Seattle Public Utilities (SPU):** Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) has reviewed the proposed vacation, and has identified there are no concerns and has the following comments:

**SPU Sewer & Drainage:** SPU has no sewer or drainage infrastructure in the proposed alley vacation. The existing SPU catch basin(s) for the alley drainage and the pipe connection to the sewer main shall become the petitioner's once the alley is vacated.

**SPU Water:** No objections to vacating the alley from an existing water infrastructure point of view.

**Recommendations:** SPU recommends the Proposed Vacation of the alley in Block 21, Heirs of Sarah A. Bell's Second Addition; Clerk File 314278, be granted.

**Department of Planning and Development (DPD):** Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed vacation of the alley in Block 21 in the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village.

The Downtown Urban Center Neighborhood Plan generally discourages street and alley vacations, however, among the Key Integrated Strategies of the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan (plan approved by the City Council but not the adopted policies in the Comprehensive Plan), alley vacations are specifically addressed in **Key Strategy #1.I: Simplify and create a means to expedite the alley vacation process to encourage residential and commercial development.** The proposed alley vacations are intended to accommodate a high density commercial development, which is consistent with the zoning and vision for the area in the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan and Downtown Urban Center Plan.

The requested alley vacation should be considered in light of the following potential benefits that could be achieved:

- The potential for the improved massing of highrise structures than would otherwise occur to promote better urban form in the area and an improved physical relationship between the new structures on the block and surrounding development.
- Enhanced pedestrian circulation in the area, with through-block connections running perpendicular to the avenues to bisect blocks on their longer north-south dimension, increasing the "permeability" of the area for pedestrians. Consider actions that would promote better integration with the evolving pedestrian circulation and open space network that includes through-block connections, green street improvements, and public plazas related to the Amazon development on the three blocks to the south of Block 21.

- Benefits identified in the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, including development of designated green streets (both Bell and Blanchard Streets abutting Block 21 on the north and south are designated as green streets) and creating “gateways” and additional pocket parks and civic spaces.
- Providing vehicular and service access locations to the site generally in the area of existing alleys, unless other locations are determined to promote better conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

***Petitioner Response: The alley vacation would enable both buildings to be rotated 90 degrees on the block, minimizing the long facades along the avenues and creating better access to light, views and open space than would otherwise occur without an alley vacation.***

***The pedestrian circulation in the area is enhanced with the orientation of 15,000 square feet of open space at the south west corner of the parcel adjacent to the cycle track and the expanded pedestrian amenities in the right of way along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, this 15,000 square feet of open space merges with another 12,000 square feet of open space connecting to the north east corner of the parcel. This 27,000 square feet of contiguous open space provides pedestrians increased permeability in the Denny Triangle neighborhood and a diagonal connection to and from Denny Park for visitors, residents and employees of the area.***

***Both Bell and Blanchard Street will be developed as designated green streets along the frontage. Along Bell Street additional improvements will occur at the intersection of Bell and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, a Street Concept Plan for Bell Street has been developed in conjunction with SDOT and DPD to guide future development along this corridor.***

***The applicant has worked with DPD, SDOT and the Seattle Design Commission to locate vehicular and service access in the optimum areas. DPD issued a Type 1 decision on February 5, 2015 granting approval for vehicular and service access on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a one lane exit only on Bell just to the east of the existing alley on Bell Street. There will be no access point on Blanchard. The approved access points allow uninterrupted cycle track along both 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bell Street.***

***The Design Commission granted Urban Design Merit approval on February 5, 2015. Additional detail refinements in the design to further improve pedestrian circulation at the drive access points were made for and approved by the Design Commission at the meeting on June 4, 2015.***

***On September 8, 2015, the Downtown Design Review Board granted unanimous recommendation for the DPD director to approve.***

**Seattle Design Commission (SDC):**

**The SDC reviewed the project on March 5, 2015 and took the following action:**

The Design Commission thanked the project team for the presentation of the urban design merit for the Block 21 alley vacation petition. The Commission greatly appreciated the clear and comprehensive comparison between the no alley vacation and full alley vacation proposals and commended the level of detail in the analysis.

In particular, the Commission recognized the through-block pedestrian connection as an important gesture toward improving the urban fabric at a point where several neighborhoods coalesce. The Commission acknowledged the effort to improve connections to and from Denny Park.

The Commission also recognized that the building placement under the alley vacation alternative creates more open and inviting spaces specifically at the northern and southern corners of the site. Providing open spaces along the street edges enhances the public realm, though the design of these spaces along 8th Avenue and the Green Streets warrants further attention. The Commission supported the 10-foot setback on Bell and Blanchard Streets and believed a larger setback could limit opportunities for successful retail.

With a vote of 6 to 2, the Design Commission approved the urban design merit for the petition to vacate the alley in block bounded by Bell St, 7th Ave, Blanchard St, and 8th Ave with the following condition:

1. Prior to a review of public benefit, the petitioner shall return for a detailed examination of the characteristics of the public realm on 8th Ave, Bell St, and Blanchard St, independent of any public benefit discussion.

The Commission made the following recommendations to guide the design of the public realm:

1. Continue to develop all edges of the site within the public realm with an eye to creating a usable and inviting experience for pedestrians. The diagonal connection through the site and towards Denny Park is an improvement to the urban fabric provided it does not come at the detriment of the street-facing edges of the project.
2. Given their Green Street designation, look particularly closely at the pedestrian experience on Bell and Blanchard Streets, grade challenges notwithstanding. Examine how transparency requirements create opportunities to engage pedestrians on these streets.
3. More clearly define the quality and vocabulary of the public spaces created, especially at the corner of 8th Ave and Bell St. The Commission struggled to understand its relationship to the public and private portions of the site. Continue to include ADA accessibility as part of the solution to the grade change.
4. Given the grade change from north to south, ensure that sightlines make it obvious to a pedestrian that the diagonal through-block connection is a continuous and publicly accessible connection through the site.

The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

Ross Tilghman: While I appreciate the scope of the proposed condition, I nevertheless feel there are consequences to the decisions we make as a Commission and issues we need to understand more fully as we make those decisions. I'm concerned that 8<sup>th</sup> Ave becomes the de facto service side of this project, and throughout Downtown we generally have service from Streets, not Avenues. I don't want to further the practice of service occurring along an Avenue.

Ellen Sollod: I agree with Ross.

The SDC reviewed the project on May 7, 2015 and took the following action:

The Design Commission thanked the petitioner for the presentation. The Commission particularly appreciated additional detail about the proposed treatment of Bell St and Blanchard St, the proposed open spaces, the plaza space at the corner of 8th Ave and Blanchard St, and the accessible route through the 8th Ave Hillclimb.

With a vote of 2 to 3, the Design Commission determined that the petitioner had not met the condition from the March 5, 2015, review. As a result, the Commission requested that the petitioner return to the Design Commission prior to a review of public benefit to fulfill the condition as part of the urban design merit phase of review.

The Commission provided the following comments to guide the design of the public realm:

1. The Commission remains concerned about the impact on the pedestrian environment of the two 24-foot-wide curb cuts on 8th Ave. The Commission requests further exploration of options to consolidate, narrow, reduce the height of, and/or otherwise minimize the impact of the curb cuts on the public realm. The Commission also requests additional information on how a unified or reduced access point on 8th Ave would affect traffic operations in relation to the secondary egress on Bell St.

The Commission also requested that the petitioner address the following issues related to Bell and Blanchard streets:

2. Further develop the Bell St design, including how reducing the travel lanes from two to one would result in green street design improvements.
3. Interpret and incorporate attributes of Bell Street Park that occur west of 5th Ave onto this portion of the Bell St Green Street, including open space, seating, landscape, lighting, and the relationship between retail frontage and the public realm.
4. Incorporate additional landscape and seating and reduce the quantity of on-street parking on Blanchard St.



The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

**Thaddeus Egging:** I'm not comfortable with how the garage entrances have been resolved. Before we consider public benefit, there needs to be additional information and evaluation of this aspect of the project.

**Grant Hromas:** I share Thaddeus's concerns. I also believe that the designs of Bell St and Blanchard St warrant further attention given their role as important Green Streets.

**Ellen Sollod:** I concur with Thaddeus and Grant. I am also concerned that, if the condition before us today were approved and subsequently Bell St is not included as a public benefit item, the approach we saw today is what would go forward.

**Director's note:** Following this meeting, the petitioner provided staff a copy of a DPD permit decision from February 2015 that authorizes two curb cuts on 8th Ave. The details regarding this decision were not discussed as part of the presentation. When the petitioner returns for the next meeting, the focus will be 1) resolution of items 2-4 above and 2) a briefing and potential vote on public benefit. While the permitting decision approving two curb cuts was issued prior to the Commission's recommendations and direction on the issue, the Commission may still make recommendations to the Council on the advisability of a two-curb-cut solution on 8th Ave.

The SDC reviewed the project on June 4, 2015 and took the following action:

**Urban Design Merit:** The Design Commission thanked the petitioner for addressing the condition of its March 5, 2015, approval of urban design merit. The Commission saw substantial improvement to the public realm design.

**Petitioner response:** *The table below outlines how the Petitioner addressed the Commission's issues outlined in the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.*

<i>May 7, 2015</i>	<i>June 5, 2015</i>
<i>Design Commission Comments</i>	<i>Applicant Response</i>
<p><b>1. Minimize Impacts of Curb Cuts</b></p> <p>Further exploration of options to consolidate, narrow, reduce the height of, and/or otherwise minimize the impact of the curb cuts on the public realm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reduced curb cut on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue for vehicles from 24' to 20'</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduced curb cut on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue for loading from 24' to 18'</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduced the number of street parking stalls from 10 to 6</i></li> <li>• <i>Extended the sidewalk width from 17' to 23', except where the parking stalls remain</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduced the impact of the entries to parking and loading by adding canopies consistent with the adjacent retail, and recessing and reducing the height of the parking entrance.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Develop the Bell Street Design</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reduced the number of street parking stalls</i></li> </ul>

<p>Further develop the Bell St design, including how reducing the travel lanes from two to one would result in green street design improvements.</p>	<p><i>from 6 to 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Extended the width of the sidewalk area from 17' to 20', except where the parking stalls remain</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Extend Bell Street Park Character</b></p> <p>Interpret and incorporate attributes of Bell Street Park that occur west of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave onto this portion of the Bell St Green Street, including open space, seating, landscape, lighting, and the relationship between retail frontage and the public realm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Incorporate design vocabulary from the Bell Street Park, including pavement details, combination of fixed, and movable seating independent of the retail areas, and additional planted area where the sidewalk area has been widened</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Add Seating, Reduce Parking on Blanchard Street</b></p> <p>Incorporate additional landscape and seating and reduce the quantity of on-street parking on Blanchard Street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reduced the number of street parking stalls from 10 to 5</i></li> <li>• <i>Extended the width of the sidewalk area from 12' to 17' except where the parking stalls remain</i></li> <li>• <i>Added seating and additional planting where the sidewalk area has been widened</i></li> </ul>

With a vote of 8 to 0, the Design Commission determined that the petitioner had fulfilled the outstanding condition. This constitutes the final approval of the urban design merit phase of the Commission's review of the petition to vacate the alley in the block bounded by 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Bell St, 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, and Blanchard St.

The Commission emphasized its support of the proposed curb line on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, and encouraged SDOT to follow through with permitting this design.

Public Benefit: The Design Commission thanked the petitioner again for presenting the public benefit package for the Block 21 alley vacation petition. The Commission commended the petitioner for working closely with DPD and SDOT on the Bell Street Concept Plan. The Commission also appreciated the petitioner's consistent responsiveness to previous recommendations regarding the public spaces throughout the project site.

With a vote of 8 to 0, the Design Commission approved the following public benefit package for the petitioner to vacate the alley in the block bounded by 8th Ave, Bell St, 7th Ave, and Blanchard St.

Public Benefit Item	Description	Area (sq ft)
8 <sup>th</sup> Ave Hillclimb	Provide accessible ramp from corner of 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave and Bell St to mid-block plaza, native landscape, seating elements, lighting and overhead soffit element.	12,000

Blanchard St Setback	Provide 10-foot-wide building setback along Green Street for landscaping and seating elements.	1,162
Bell St Setback	Provide 10-foot-wide building setback along Green Street for landscaping and seating elements.	1,090
7 <sup>th</sup> Ave improvements and protected bike lane	Provide expanded pedestrian streetscape, including landscaping, lighting, elevated two-way protected bike lane, double allée of street trees, seating elements, bus stop, and enhanced curb bulbs at corners of Bell St and Blanchard St.	4,750
8 <sup>th</sup> Ave improvements	Provide expanded pedestrian streetscape through curb alignment and bulbouts at intersections, enhanced landscaping, lighting, and seating elements.	4,060
Blanchard improvements	Provide expanded pedestrian streetscape through curb alignment and bulbouts at intersections, enhanced landscaping, lighting, and seating elements.	755
Bell St improvements	Provide expanded pedestrian streetscape through curb alignment and bulbouts at intersections, enhanced landscaping, lighting, and seating elements.	1,829
8 <sup>th</sup> Ave & Bell St intersection	Provide raised intersection and crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety. Improve curb bulbs on adjacent lots.	5,372
Bell St protected bike lane	Provide in-street, separated two-way protected bike lane from 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave to Denny Way.	4,503
Bell Street Concept Plan	Develop conceptual street plan from 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave to Denny Way to continue Bell Street Park design character east of its current terminus at 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	n/a

The Commission offered the following comments concerning the public benefit package:

1. The Commission encourages SDOT and King County Metro to eliminate the bus layovers on Bell St. The commission recommends the City explore storing buses on City land, not on public right-of-way.
2. The Commission recommends that the DRB consider and encourage the integration and continuation of the landscape plan throughout the site, particularly as a way to welcome the public into and through the internalized public spaces and mid-block connections.
3. The Commission asks that the petitioner and SDOT explore ways to retain the proposed curb line on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
4. The Commission encourages the petitioner to be as forward-thinking as possible with the Bell Street Concept Plan so that it integrates the frontages of future development projects towards a facility as successful for pedestrians and bicycles as Bell Street Park. Consider opportunities to include raised intersections beyond 7<sup>th</sup> Ave and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, narrow the roadway to one travel lane, and use the topography of the street to integrate stormwater into the proposed plantings.

This is the final time the Commission expects to review the Block 21 alley vacation petition. Approval of both urban design merit and public benefit constitutes the Commission's recommendation to SDOT that the vacation be granted. Ultimately the City Council makes the final decision whether to vacate the right-of-way.

***Petitioner response to Design Commission comments:***

***The petitioner received 4-0 unanimous approval from the Design Review Board on September 8, 2015. The landscape palette at the perimeter will continue throughout the public open spaces on the property.***

***The petitioner is working closely with SDOT to accommodate vehicular including transit traffic with the proposed curb line. As part of the Street Improvement Permit process, there have been modest adjustments to the curb line to accommodate SDOT's vehicular demands.***

**Outside Agencies:**

**King County Wastewater Treatment Division:** King County WTD does not have any existing property rights or interests that maybe impacted by this proposed alley vacation.

**King County Metro:** King County Metro Transit has conducted a review of the above referenced street vacation. We've concluded that this vacation will have no effect on our facilities or operations in the vicinity of the subject alley right of way. Thank you for providing Metro with the opportunity to comment.

**CenturyLink:** This letter is in response to the notice for all of the above referenced proposals. Please be advised that Qwest Corporation (d/b/a CenturyLink) currently has facilities in the area(s) addressed by these actions and wishes to retain any and all rights to remain in said area(s) and to add facilities in the future as needed. At this time, Qwest (d/b/a CenturyLink) has no issues with the proposed vacations so long as provisions are made to retain our rights by either PUE or private easement to cover our existing & future facilities.

***Petitioner response: The Applicant team has been coordinating with Centurylink to re-route infrastructure from the alley to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue since Spring 2014. Infrastructure includes duct banks and vaults necessary to support Centurylink's system. The proposed reroute has been coordinated with Centurylink representatives and will be permitted through Seattle Department of Transportation.***

**Puget Sound Energy:** I performed a review of the Block 21 Alley Vacation Petition area (Clerk file number 314278). There are no PSE gas facilities located in the alley between Bell Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Blanchard Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., which is the subject of this vacation petition.

**Community Comments:**

**Jane Lewis, Pine Street Group LLC:** I am writing in support of Amazon's proposal to vacate the alley for its full-block project on Block 21. From an urban design standpoint, the proposal with the vacation is superior to the non-vacation proposal, particularly considering the significant

open space the vacated proposal enables. Density close to mass transit is our friend and is even more welcome when the project significantly improves the pedestrian experience. Alleys themselves are not important if the project can otherwise maintain adequate service to the block, which the Block 21 proposal does. Block 21 will be a fine addition to the neighborhood Amazon is creating at the intersection of the Denny Triangle, Belltown and Downtown; the pedestrian experience will be improved by smart urban design, open space, transparency and lively retail, all enabled by the City wisely trading alleys for significant public benefit. Thank you.

**AP Hurd:** I support an alley vacation for this project since it will lead to a better project with better design. Not to mention that it's a good thing to be encouraging of a major employer that wants to put more jobs in a place where they can be reached by bus.

If giving up an alley is the price to pay to keep good jobs in Seattle in a transit oriented location that cuts down our carbon footprint as a city, then I say "let's do it!"

## **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Street vacation decisions are City Council decisions as provided by State statute and have not been delegated to any City department. There is no right under the zoning code or elsewhere to vacate or to develop public right-of-way. Vacation of public right-of-way requires discretionary legislative approval that must be obtained from the City Council, and the Council may not vacate public right-of-way unless it determines that to do so is in the public interest. The decisions must assure that potential development and use of the vacated right-of-way is in the public interest. The Council may be guided by adopted land use policies, but the Council is not limited by land use policies and codes in making street vacation decisions and may condition or deny vacation as necessary to protect the public interest.

Rights-of-way are dedicated in perpetuity for use by the residents of Seattle for purposes of public travel and transportation of goods. The dedication carries with it certain public rights to circulation, access, utilities, light, air, open space, and views. City government acts as the public's trustee in administering streets and alleys. The City Council first adopted Street Vacation Policies in 1986 in Resolution 27527. A few sections of the policies were revised in 1991 in Resolution 28387, 1993 in Resolution 28605 and again in 2001 in Resolution 30297. Significant revisions were made to the Vacation Policies in 2004 in Resolution 30702.

The Policies were again amended in 2009 in Resolution 31142 and the Policies are currently contained in Clerk File 310078.

## **ANALYSIS**

The City's Street Vacation Policies provide that vacation requests may be approved only when they significantly serve the public interest. The Street Vacation Policies provide for a three-step review of any vacation petition in order to determine if the vacation is in the public interest.

The Policies define the components of public interest as:

1. Protection of the public trust;
2. Protection from adverse land use impacts; and
3. Provision of public benefit.

The Street Vacation Policies provide that during the review of the petition, the public trust and land use effects of a vacation should be weighed against the mitigating measures and the public benefits provided by the vacation to determine whether the vacation is in the public interest. In balancing these elements of the public interest, primary importance should be placed upon protecting the public trust in rights-of-way.

**Protection of Public Trust:** The Policies define the public trust functions of rights-of-way as being circulation, access, utilities, light, air, open space, and views. Policy 1 of the Street Vacation Policies addresses the basic purpose of streets. Streets are created to provide for the free movement of people and goods throughout the City, to provide access to individual properties, and to provide space for utility services.

Through the vacation process, an adjacent property owner acquires public street right-of-way for private use or development purposes. Since the vacation is generally about the loss of some portion of a street, the review process must evaluate the loss of that street segment. The review normally looks at the impact on the grid pattern in the area, the impact on the provision of utility services, how the circulation pattern is altered and how that affects pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicular movements, emergency services, and commercial activity.

**Transportation Impacts:** Alleys are intended to provide for access to adjacent properties, to provide for service functions such as loading bays and access to parking and to provide space for utility infrastructure. In reviewing alley vacations the critical question is whether the vacation pushes traditional alley functions out onto the street or otherwise impairs the function of the adjacent streets. The project is being designed so that typical transportation functions of the alley will continue to be provided internal to the site and not on the public street. The project will have an internal loading dock and three vehicular access points. The access to the site is proposed to include two driveways on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue; one will function as an in/out driveway to the parking and one will function as an in/out driveway to the loading dock. One exit-only driveway is proposed on Bell Street which will be for vehicles exiting the parking garage.

While services and loading will occur within the project, the proposed access to the project has been a subject of much discussion. The Land Use Code would prioritize the alley as the preferred access point. If the project was developed without an alley vacation the service and loading functions would be expected to be provided from the alley. However, on this block the alley at both ends leads to a designated Green Street and maintaining the alley access has the greatest impact on the adjacent Green Streets by directing all of the project traffic, both parking garage and truck loading, onto the Green Streets.

In meetings on the project there was community concern expressed about adding vehicles to the Green Streets and particularly to Bell Street. Vacating the alley and accommodating access to the site from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue reduces the vehicle use of the adjacent Green Streets.

Project traffic will not enter or exit from Blanchard Street. There will be exit-only traffic exiting the parking garage at Bell Street and this exit-only driveway was allowed as it will reduce the potential for pedestrian-vehicle conflict at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bell Street.

The previous Amazon vacations included both planning and development for portions of a grade-separated cycle track on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Since part of the project design for Block 21 includes continuation of the grade separated cycle track on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, no vehicular access is proposed from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This is intended to reduce the potential for conflicts between the many cyclists who will use the new cycle track and vehicles and service vehicles which need to access the new building.

With the goals of minimizing vehicular impacts to the Green Streets and of keeping vehicles from crossing the cycle track, the only remaining street to provide for access is 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. DPD, in consultation with SDOT, issued a Type 1 decision in February 2015, consistent with SMC 23.49.010, that the three access points proposed would be accepted. The criteria considered include pedestrian safety and comfort, facilitating transit operations, facilitating the movement of vehicles, enhancing vehicular safety, and minimizing hazards.

Providing for access on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, even though it is an arterial, is a feasible alternative and supports the continuation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue cycle track and minimizes the traffic impacts on adjacent Green Streets. The Design Commission worked with the Petitioner to narrow the driveway openings as much as possible and pushed the Petitioner to work to make the pedestrian environment adjacent to the driveways interesting and inviting. Access on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue seems the best solution for the project and limits the impacts to the adjacent public realm as much as possible.

The project includes a below-grade parking garage that will include spaces for 879 vehicles and 383 bicycle spaces. The Land Use Code does not require a specific amount of parking in much of Downtown including the DMC zone, rather the Code sets a maximum of parking that may be provided. The parking proposed for Block 21 is compliant with the Land Use Code and is consistent with the amount of parking other developers are building on the edges of DOC-1.

SDOT does note that this is a significant amount of parking being provided in an increasingly dense neighborhood with good access to transit options and bicycle facilities. The City's Comprehensive Plan last amended in 2015 provides that the City should manage the parking supply with the goal of increasing other modes of transportation such as walking, biking, or taking the bus. The City acted to specifically limit the amount of parking required for new development in the area recognizing that the amount of growth could overwhelm the street grid if alternatives to the car were not utilized.

However, Amazon has indicated that access to transit options is not as convenient or as readily available as in the center of DOC-1. In the future as transit options are further developed it is expected that the use of parking could reduce and the garage configuration could change.

As a part of the analysis of the impacts of the proposed alley vacation SDOT questioned whether the vacation accommodated a significant increase in the parking on the site. The Transportation Technical Report prepared for this project determined that the garage is similar in size for both the vacation and no-vacation alternative. The vacation does allow for a larger scale project but the vacation mainly allows site flexibility rather than an increase in size. As the following data indicates, it does not appear that the vacation allows a significant increasing in the scale of the project or the size of the parking garage.

The Transportation Technical Report concluded:

Without Alley vacation:

- 777,600 sf of Office,
- 20,760 sf of retail,
- 814 vehicle spaces, and
- 365 bicycle spaces.

With Alley vacation:

- 834,600 sf of Office,
- 23,000 sf of retail,
- 875 vehicle spaces, and
- 383 bicycle spaces.

In addition, this Petitioner has developed an aggressive Transportation Demand Management Plan for all of its new downtown sites that will be continued at Block 21. All employees are provided with an ORCA card and it is expected that the Block 21 project will generate a lower percentage of drive alone trips than occurs in the South Lake Union neighborhood. The parking provided at the downtown buildings is lower than in South Lake Union at 1.0 space per 1,000 square feet in the new buildings versus 1.4 spaces per 1,000 square feet in the existing South Lake Union neighborhood buildings. The Transportation Technical Report summarizes the mode-of-travel rates assumed for this project's site-specific analysis in the following list.

Mode of Travel for Employee Commute:

- 18% walk or bicycle,
- 51% transit,
- 21% drive alone,
- 8% carpool, and
- 2% vanpool.

The vacation alternative has similar transportation impacts to the no-vacation alternative and SDOT does not find adverse transportation impacts associated with the vacation petition. SDOT supports Amazon in its Transportation Demand Management Plan and supports continued work to encourage walking, biking, and transit for Amazon employees.



Utility Impacts: In addition to the transportation purposes, street rights-of-way provide space for utility lines and facilities. The vacation review must consider the impact on any public utilities; both current and future impacts must be assessed. If any utilities are located in the right-of-way, it must be possible for the utility to relocate or terminate those facilities or the vacation is not feasible. The utility should not be negatively impacted in its ability to deliver services, now or in the future, to access its facilities for repair or maintenance, or to update or expand services. Any proposal to relocate or alter utility services must be satisfactory to the utility provider and the costs to accommodate the utility needs are the obligation of the Petitioner.

An important element of the review of downtown alley vacations is making sure that there is adequate space for the relocation of utility infrastructure from the alley to the adjacent street. While it is possible to relocate utilities, finding space for them is becoming more of a challenge. Relocating utilities to the street edge means that the utilities will now compete with other public elements that are located at the street edge such as planting strips, street trees, parking or loading areas, bus stops or the cycle track. Competition for space or changes in materials can have a major impact. For example, street trees do not thrive over drainages systems that keep tree roots wet. Newer requirements to develop natural drainage facilities to meet Green Stormwater Infrastructure requirements also require a lot of space. The street trees, drainage and City Light vaults all compete for space and all these needs must be kept separate.

This alley contains fewer utilities than identified with other recent downtown projects and the review is far less complicated. SPU, Metro, and Puget Sound Energy do not have any facilities in the alley. The only Agencies identifying issues include Seattle City Light and CenturyLink. However, the Petitioner and development team have been meeting regularly with City staff and outside agencies and have addressed all the concerns that have been identified.

The vacations should be conditioned to require that this work continue and the final plans address issues to the satisfaction of the City or other agency impacted by the vacation. SDOT does not identify any adverse utility impacts.

Light, air, open space and views: Because street right-of-way is open and undeveloped, streets and alleys can have value as open space and can be important view corridors. Streets can provide important breathing space in dense urban areas. This alley runs northwest-southeast and is 16 feet in width and approximately 360 feet in length. The alley in the block to the south was previously vacated as Block 20 for the earlier Amazon vacations. The alley does continue to the north for one block before the grid intersects with Denny Way. The acute angle at which the alley intersects Denny Way reduces further the utility of this alley. While the alley is open and improved so that the public can access the alley and use the alley for any alley purpose, the alley does not provide for important public views or open space on the block.

Following the vacation, the block will include a total of 27,000 square feet of street-level open space, pedestrian amenities, and a diagonal pedestrian through-block connection. The block will have significantly more open space after the vacation than if the block was developed around the existing alley. SDOT does not identify any adverse light, air, open space and view impacts.

**Protection from adverse land use impacts:** The second step in the review process is to evaluate the land use impacts of the proposed vacation and subsequent development. The land use portion of the Policies, Policy 4, is concerned primarily with ensuring that post-vacation development is consistent with the land use pattern in the area and with City policies and codes. The Policies specifically state that proposed vacations may be approved only when the development potential that is attributable to the vacation would be consistent with the land use policies adopted by the City Council. The vacation decision will be based on the policies applicable for the type of area where the development is proposed.

It is also important to assess whether the loss of the alleys creates building sites that allow for projects that are out of scale with the area. Block 21 is zoned Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) 340/290-400 feet allowed in height. The DMC 340/290-400 allows buildings with a maximum height of 340 feet for portions of the project containing non-residential and live-work uses. A base height of 290 feet applies to portions of a project that are in residential use and a maximum residential height of 400 applies in this zone.

The Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) provides in Chapter 23.34 that the designation of the DMC zone is appropriate in areas that are characterized by lower scale office, retail and commercial uses related to activity in the office core, retail core or other moderate-scale commercial cores in the Downtown Urban Center, and with use patterns that may include housing. The scale and character of DMC areas includes areas where buildings of moderate scale exist or are appropriate to provide a physical transition between more intensive commercial areas and surrounding lower scale commercial, mixed-use or residential districts.

The vacation review looks at the neighborhood context for each proposal and this neighborhood is changing rapidly. This area of the City is experiencing rapid growth that includes both housing and office development. In looking at the emerging neighborhood to determine if this project is consistent it is interesting to note that the previous projects for Amazon are a part of the changing landscape and helped to set the tone for the scale of dynamic growth in the area. This project, while only across the street from the previously approved vacation at Block 20, is in a different zone.

The three previous Amazon vacations are all zoned Downtown Office Core 2 (DOC 2) which allows non-residential buildings up to a height of 500 feet. That zoning designation is intended to allow for high density office and residential development and it is applied where large scale office buildings are appropriate. This adjacent zoning for Block 21 provides for buildings that are lower in height to provide a transition between zones.

This area is also one of the City's five designated Urban Centers, which are anticipated to be employment centers. This proposal from Amazon, one of the largest employers located in Downtown Seattle, provides a mix of office, retail and restaurant and is consistent with the intent of the zoning designation as an Urban Center.

The DMC zoning designation allows buildings with a maximum height limit of 340 feet for portions of the project containing non-residential uses. The other major development standard

that applies in this Downtown zone which regulates the bulk and scale of development in the DMC 340/290-400 zone is floor area ratio (FAR). The base FAR that is allowed in this zone is 5 and the maximum FAR is 10. The area of the Block 21 site is approximately 77,700 square feet (excluding the alley); therefore the amount of development that is allowed outright on the site is 388,500 square feet (FAR 5); a maximum FAR of 10 would allow 777,000 square feet of development on-site.

In order to achieve the maximum building height in this zone, seventy-five percent of the additional FAR beyond the base FAR of 5 must include low-income housing, child care or a payment-in-lieu to the City. Twenty-five percent of additional FAR is allowed if public benefit features can also be incorporated into the project. These public benefit elements are separate from and in addition to the public benefits required by the alley vacations. DPD administers the process of acquiring additional FAR.

In addition to the public benefit required for the alley vacation, the Petitioner has used the bonus provisions in the Land Use Code (SMC 23.49) to acquire additional development rights by providing certain public benefits. The public benefits provided for additional FAR include:

1. Purchase of Regional Development Credits (\$918,000);
2. Contribution to Affordable Housing and Child Care (\$8,300,000);
3. Purchase of 18,900 square feet of Landmark TDRs (Transfer of Development Rights);  
and
4. 15,000 square feet of Urban Plaza, on-site on the west side of the project.

These benefits are separate from and in addition to the vacation public benefit. No Planned Community Development is proposed at this site.

The Petitioner has indicated that the goal of seeking an alley vacation was to increase the flexibility in its design and development of the block. Without the intervening alley the Petitioner can move the development around to allow flexibility in building placement, building orientation and design. While the vacation does allow an increase in scale, the increase from the vacation is modest and the project overall is consistent with the current zoning and with the myriad new developments planned and in construction.

SDOT does not find adverse land use impacts associated with the proposed vacation.

**Provision of Public Benefit:** The Street Vacation Policies note that vacations must provide a long-term public benefit. Vacations will not be approved to achieve short-term public benefits or for the sole benefit of individuals. It is anticipated that the public benefit will include specific and tangible physical elements as the Policies provide that facilitating economic development, meeting code requirements for development or mitigating defined impacts is not a sufficient public benefit.

The Policies provide that there should be a balance between what the public gives up and what the Petitioner acquires through the vacation process. The review should consider the scale of the

vacation, the scale of the project, and the identified impacts. If a project is significant in scale, if the vacation is large in size or if the project has significant impacts, then the Policies anticipate that the public benefit proposal must also be significant. By eliminating the alley, the Petitioner can develop the entire block in a way that best suits its programmatic needs and can consolidate below-grade functions such as parking and loading. Since the vacations make an important contribution to a project that is significant in scale, the Policies require that a significant public benefit be provided.

In addition to addressing the scale or amount of public benefit that must be provided, the Policies are also clear that the public benefit elements proposed must clearly benefit the general public and not merely the tenants of the project. The Policies are also clear that the public benefit proposed for a vacation must be separate and above amenities provided to meet code or other requirements. The amenities listed on the public benefit chart below are not required for any other purpose.

Amazon began its development downtown with alley vacations and projects on Block 14, Block 19, and Block 20. The project area was Westlake Avenue, Virginia Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Blanchard Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Together these three projects, totaling approximately 3,000,000 sf of office space, provided a very strong public benefit package. The previous proposal included some public benefit amenities provided for additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR), mainly low income housing and child care and on-site open space, and public benefits required for the Planned Community Development (PCD) which included improvements to transit facilities and sustainable features. The vacation public benefit for Blocks 14, 19, and 20 provided elements that were separate and distinct from PCD obligations. The vacation public benefits for Blocks 14, 19, and 20 included:

1. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue cycle track;
2. Shared-Use street/enhanced pedestrian facilities;
3. Westlake Avenue Street improvements;
4. Blanchard Street, 10 foot setback;
5. Other voluntary setbacks;
6. Enhanced right-of-way improvements;
7. Art program;
8. Additional overhead weather protection;
9. Fourth streetcar; and
10. Contribution to future neighborhood park.

The goal of the Block 21 public benefit proposal has been to provide complementary public benefits that continue the focus on the public environment around the block (rather than interior on the block) and on making strong connections between the project and its surrounding neighborhood, including the previously approved Amazon vacations. The public benefits were designed to continue some elements of the previous work such as the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue cycle track, and some elements are unique to the block such as the setbacks and the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Hillclimb, and some provide for connections beyond the block such as the raised intersection at 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bell Street, the Bell Street cycle track between 7<sup>th</sup> and Denny, and the Bell Street Concept plan.

All of the elements focus on creating a vibrant environment for community members whether pedestrian or bicyclists to have engaging spaces to move through or to take some time to sit or lunch.

The chart below outlines the public benefit package.

Public Benefit		Description
<b>On Site</b>		
1	8 <sup>th</sup> Ave Hillclimb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12,000 sf publically accessible open space including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accessible ramp from corner of 8<sup>th</sup> &amp; Bell to mid-block plaza</li> <li>○ 2854 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 10 trees</li> <li>○ 132 lf seating elements</li> <li>○ Overhead soffit element</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2	Blanchard Street Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,100 sf setback along the Blanchard Green Street including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 935 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 5 trees</li> <li>○ 59 lf seating elements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	Bell Street Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,000 sf setback along the Bell Green Street including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 877 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 4 trees</li> <li>○ 20 lf seating elements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Adjacent Public R.O.W.</b>		
4	7 <sup>th</sup> Ave Improvements and Cycle Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,700 sf expanded pedestrian streetscape including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1,366 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 7' wide elevated cycle track running the length of the block</li> <li>○ 6 street trees (11 total new trees)</li> <li>○ Bus stop</li> <li>○ 5 pedestrian light fixtures</li> <li>○ Enhanced curb bulbs at each corner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	8 <sup>th</sup> Ave Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,300 sf expanded pedestrian streetscape including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 663 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 5 street trees (7 total new trees)</li> <li>○ 4 pedestrian light fixtures</li> <li>○ 74 lf seating elements</li> <li>○ Enhanced curb bulbs at each corner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6	Blanchard Street Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 750 sf expanded pedestrian streetscape including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 258 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 4 Street Trees (7 total new trees)</li> <li>○ 4 pedestrian light fixtures</li> <li>○ 74 lf seating elements</li> <li>○ Enhanced curb bulbs at each corner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7	Bell Street Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,800 sf expanded pedestrian streetscape including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 441 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 4 Street Trees (5 total new trees)</li> <li>○ 4 pedestrian light fixtures</li> <li>○ 10 lf seating elements</li> <li>○ Enhanced curb bulbs at each corner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Off-Site Benefits</b>		
8	8 <sup>th</sup> & Bell Intersection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,350 sf raised intersection and sidewalk to enhance pedestrian safety</li> </ul>

9	Bell Street Cycle Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,500 sf buffered bike lane on the north side of Bell Street from Denny to 7<sup>th</sup> consistent with the Center City Bike Network including:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buffered element to be planter or similar element approved by SDOT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10	Bell Street Concept Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of conceptual street plan from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave to Denny Way to be adopted by Joint Director's Rule by SDOT and DPD.</li> <li>Purpose of this Street Concept Plan is to inform future development to reinforce the Bell Street Park design character</li> </ul>

The Policies require that the Petitioner provide some factual information about the project site to assist in the review of the public benefit proposal. The goal of including this information is to help in determining if there is an appropriate balance between what the developer achieves from the vacation and what is provided to the general public.

**Public Benefit Matrix**

Zoning designation	DMC 340/290-400 in the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village
Street classification	Alley
Assessed value of adjacent property	The land is assessed at approximately \$600.00 per square foot
Lease rates in the vicinity for similar projects	Retail rates vary but average NET Class A Average Asking Rental Rate: \$30.45/SF/Yr.
Size of project, in square feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>853,000sq. ft. office</li> <li>26,000sq. ft. retail</li> <li>27,000sq. ft. open space</li> <li>879 parking spaces</li> <li>383 bicycle parking stalls</li> </ul>
Size of area to be vacated, in square feet	Approximately 5, 757 square feet
Contribution of vacated area to development potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>777,000 sq.ft. proposed development without alley vacation</li> <li>834,600 sq. ft. proposed development with alley vacation</li> </ul>

The public benefit package was designed to complement the public benefit elements being provided at the three previous projects being developed by Amazon at Block 14, Block 19, and Block 20. The focus on the public street environment and character matches priorities that the City Council has established with other vacations, including the three previous vacations for Amazon. The public benefit elements focus on the exterior of the block and connections to the site rather than having an inward focus than can feel more like tenant amenities than public benefits. The elements proposed in the public benefit package will enhance the pedestrian environment around the development and encourage use by the general public, those accessing South Lake Union or the future Westlake & Lenora Park site, as well tenants of the new project.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the vacation be granted upon the Petitioner meeting the following conditions. The Petitioner shall demonstrate that all conditions imposed by the City Council have been satisfied and all fees paid, prior to the passage of the street vacation ordinance.

1. The vacation is granted to allow the Petitioner to build a project substantially in conformity with the project presented to the City Council and for no other purpose. The project must be substantially in conformity with the proposal reviewed by the Transportation Committee in November of 2015.
2. All street improvements shall be designed to City standards, as modified by these conditions to implement the Public Benefit requirements, and be reviewed and approved by the Seattle Department of Transportation; elements of the street improvement plan and required street improvements to be reviewed include:

Street improvement plan showing sidewalks, street trees, bike racks, street furniture, lighting, art or artist-made elements, and landscaping around the site and the specific elements;

- 8th Avenue Hillclimb on site;
- Blanchard Street setback;
- Bell Street setback;
- 7th Avenue Improvements and cycle track;
- 8th Avenue Improvements;
- Blanchard Street Improvements;
- Bell Street Improvements;
- 8th and Bell intersection enhancements;
- Bell Street cycle track; and

3. The utility issues shall be resolved to the full satisfaction of the affected utility prior to the approval of the final vacation ordinance. Prior to the commencement of any development activity on the site, the Petitioner shall work with the affected utilities and provide for the protection of the utility facilities. This may include easements, restrictive covenants, relocation agreements, or acquisition of the utilities, which shall be at the sole expense of the Petitioner. Utilities impacted may include:

- Seattle City Light; and
- CenturyLink Communications.

4. It is expected that development activity will commence within approximately 24 to 30 months of this approval and that development activity will be completed within 7 years. In order to insure timely compliance with the conditions imposed by the City Council, the

Petitioner shall provide the Seattle Department of Transportation with Quarterly Reports, following Council approval of the vacation, providing an update on the development activity, schedule, and progress on meeting the conditions. The Petitioner shall not request or be issued a Final Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) until SDOT has determined that all conditions have been satisfied and all fees have been paid as applicable.

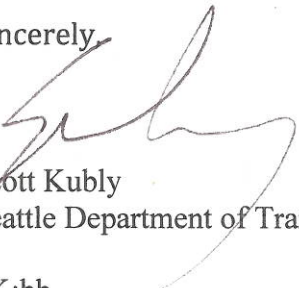
5. Access to the buildings for vehicle parking, services, bicycles, and pedestrian and retail entries shall be provided as follows, changes to this proposal shall require the review of SDOT and DPD: three access points will be allowed; two driveways on 8th Avenue with one providing an in/out driveway to the parking garage and one providing an in/out driveway to the truck loading dock; one exit-only driveway on Bell Street will be allowed for vehicles exiting the parking garage.
6. In addition to the conditions imposed through the vacation process, the project, as it proceeds through the permitting process, is subject to SEPA review and to conditioning pursuant to various City codes and through regulatory review processes including SEPA.
7. The Petitioner shall develop and maintain the public benefit elements as defined by the City Council. A Property Use and Development Agreement (PUDA) or other binding mechanism shall be required to ensure that the public benefit elements remain open and accessible to the public and to outline future maintenance obligations of the improvements. Signage clearly identifying public access is required at the public open space elements and shall require the review of SDOT Street vacations. The final design of the public benefit elements shall require the review and approval of SDOT Street Vacations. SDOT may request additional review by the Design Commission of the implementation of the public benefit elements or the pedestrian enhancements, as necessary. Public benefit elements in the right-of-way require additional street use permits and indemnification, public and private areas must be distinguished and markers in the sidewalk shall be required. The public benefit requirements include the following features as well as corresponding development standards, including approximate square footage dimensions, which shall be outlined in the PUDA:

Public Benefit		Description
On Site		
1	8 <sup>th</sup> Ave Hillclimb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12,000 sf publically accessible open space including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accessible ramp from corner of 8<sup>th</sup> &amp; Bell to mid-block plaza</li> <li>○ 2854 sf of planting</li> <li>○ 10 trees</li> <li>○ 132 lf seating elements</li> <li>○ Overhead soffit element</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 20 lf seating elements</li> </ul>
<b>Adjacent Public R.O.W.</b>		
4	7 <sup>th</sup> Ave Improvements and Cycle Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,700 sf expanded pedestrian streetscape including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 1,366 sf of planting</li> <li>o 7' wide elevated cycle track running the length of the block</li> <li>o 6 street trees (11 total new trees)</li> <li>o Bus stop</li> <li>o 5 pedestrian light fixtures</li> <li>o Enhanced curb bulbs at each corner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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8	8 <sup>th</sup> & Bell Intersection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,350 sf raised intersection and sidewalk to enhance pedestrian safety</li> </ul>
9	Bell Street Cycle Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,500 sf buffered bike lane on the north side of Bell Street from Denny to 7<sup>th</sup> consistent with the Center City Bike Network including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Buffered element to be planter or similar element approved by SDOT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10	Bell Street Concept Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of conceptual street plan from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave to Denny Way to be adopted by Joint Director's Rule by SDOT and DPD.</li> <li>• Purpose of this Street Concept Plan is to inform future development to reinforce the Bell Street Park design character</li> </ul>

Sincerely,



Scott Kubly  
 Seattle Department of Transportation

SK:bb

Enclosures