

May 10, 2022

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities Committee  
**From:** Lish Whitson, Analyst  
**Subject:** Council Bill 120302 – Swedish Cherry Street Skybridge

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On May 17, 2022, the Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities Committee (Committee) will discuss and possibly vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120302](#), which would renew and extend approval to maintain a skybridge across Cherry Street between Broadway and Minor Avenue on First Hill (Council District 3). The skybridge connects [Swedish Orthopedic Institute](#) (SOI) to the rest of the Swedish First Hill Campus. The legislation would extend approval previously granted in 2009 under [Ordinance 123048](#) for a 15-year term.

This memorandum describes the skybridge permit renewal process and the Swedish Cherry Street skybridge.

### **Skybridge Permit Renewals**

Property owners who seek to build a new pedestrian bridge that would encroach over and above a public place<sup>1</sup> must seek skybridge permit approval from the City Council under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 15.64](#). The code allows for renewals of a skybridge permit only if permitted in the original ordinance. [SMC 15.64.083](#) provides authority to the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to recommend amendments at term renewal. Amendments may only be made if consistent with [SMC 15.64.090](#) and are made via ordinance.

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

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

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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](#))

The current practice of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is to recommend longer terms for significant structure term permits and skybridge permits. Instead of a 10-year permit that may be renewed for two additional 10-year terms, SDOT recommends issuing permits for 15-year terms, renewable once. This shift responds to the volume of term permits, the amount of work required to process a permit renewal, and the rarity of significant changes to approvals during term permit renewals.

### **Swedish First Hill Campus**

The [Swedish First Hill Major Institution Master Plan](#) was adopted in 2005. The plan authorized the development of the SOI. SOI provides inpatient and outpatient orthopedic surgery and care. A skybridge connects SOI across Cherry Street to the rest of the Swedish First Hill Campus, allowing for the movement of patients and staff between buildings.

CB 120302 would amend Ordinance 123048, which granted approval to operate the skybridge from 2009 to 2019, with the possibility of renewing this permit for a maximum of two additional 10-year terms. Instead of renewing the permit for 10 years with a second possible 10-year renewal, Swedish has applied for a 15-year renewal of the permit which would end in 2037, after which time Swedish would need to apply to repermit the skybridge.

### **Next Steps**

If the Committee recommends approval of CB 120302 at its May 17 meeting, it could be considered by the City Council as early as May 24.

cc: Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director  
Yolanda Ho, Lead Analyst