

Street and Alley vacations - Design Commission review

Petition to vacate filed with Seattle Department of Transportation

Petition circulated to City departments and Design Commission

Design Commission follows City Council policies on Street and Alley vacations

Design Commission considers two fundamental issues:

- How does the vacation impact the remaining rights of way around the site, and how are those impacts addressed (Urban Design Merit)
- Do the proposed public benefits provide the public with improvements that are commensurate to the gains by the development and the developer (Public Benefit)

1. Urban Design Merit

Design Commission evaluates how the vacation impacts the site, surrounding rights-of-way and adjacent land uses by evaluating how the vacation impacts:

- Pedestrian access and open space
- Vehicular circulation
- Light, air, & views
- Service and utilities
- Building mass and scale

Two actions:

- Recommend approval, including conditions or recommendations
- Recommend denial, with reasons why it negatively impacts public realm

2. Public Benefit

- Public benefit packages are prepared by an applicant
- Designed to offset the loss of the street or alley
- Must exceed project elements required by code or mitigation
- Must be proportional to the benefits gained by an applicant as a result of the vacation including added property value or development potential

What is **NOT** a public benefit

- Mitigation of an adverse impact of a vacation
- Meeting code requirement for development
- Paying the required vacation fee
- Facilitating economic activity
- Providing a public, governmental or educational service, although the project may include such uses

What **IS** a public benefit

- Long-term solutions not short-term gains
- Balance what public loses and gains from vacation
- Public Benefits must exceed code or mitigation requirements
- Must demonstrate that the public gain is proportional to gains by developer and development

- On or offsite amenities can include
 - Publicly accessible plazas or greenspaces
 - Widened sidewalks
 - Additional street trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, street furniture
 - Public Art
 - Enhanced pedestrian or bicycle corridors
 - Upgrades to existing open spaces
 - Improvements to green streets
 - Wayfinding