

July 28, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation and Utilities Committee
From: Lish Whitson, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120137: Amazon Block 20 Final Street Vacation

On August 4, 2021, the Transportation and Utilities Committee (Committee) will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120137](#), which would grant final approval for the vacation of the alley in the block bounded by 7th and 8th avenues and Blanchard and Lenora streets (Block 20) in the Denny Triangle neighborhood of Downtown Seattle, Council District 7. Council concept approval of the vacation was granted on November 5, 2012 through [Clerk File 312262](#).

The vacation facilitated the development of Amazon re:Invent, a 37-story office tower, and the Amazon Meeting Center, an 8-story conference facility. The Council's decision at this point is to determine whether the project has satisfied the [conditions](#) of CF 312262. If those conditions have been met, the Council should approve CB 120137.

Street Vacation Process

The Street Vacation process, as laid out in the City Council's Street Vacation Policies ([Resolution 31809](#)), includes three Council reviews of a project. Soon after a property owner submits a petition to vacate right-of-way, the Council may choose to hold an early public forum or briefing to learn about the proposal and provide early feedback. After receiving this early feedback, City departments, the City Design Commission and other interested parties review the petition. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) compiles their recommendations and makes a recommendation to the City Council.

Once the Council receives this recommendation, the Council holds a public hearing and reviews the petition. At this point, the Council decides (1) whether to grant the petition, and (2) if the Council determines that the vacation is appropriate, it decides which conditions should be placed on the vacation. This conditional approval allows the petitioner to build in the right-of-way and to complete their project.

Once the project is complete, SDOT confirms that the conditions have been met and transmits a bill to finalize the vacation to Council. At this phase of Council's review, the Council role is to determine that the conditions have been met. Passage of the bill allows for the official transfer of ownership of the right-of-way to the petitioner.

Review of Vacation Conditions

The Council's approval of the vacation on Block 20 was considered alongside two other alley vacations on adjacent blocks. Final vacations have been approved for each of those blocks. The

final vacation of the alley on Block 14 was approved through [Ordinance 125223](#) in 2016. The final vacation of the alley on Block 19 was approved through [Ordinance 125831](#) in 2019.

The vacation conditions related directly to Block 20 included the following public benefits:

Public Benefit Features	Quantity
7th Avenue Cycle Track	
Physically separated cycle track, enhanced pedestrian zone/cycle track buffer with tree wells, contrasting paving surface, furnishings, and stormwater planting areas	7,050 square feet (sf)/ 390 linear feet (lf)
Signalization improvements to accommodate cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.	7 th Ave & Blanchard
Bicycle "daily/annual counter" northbound and southbound	1
Bicycle trash receptacles	2
Lean rails at intersection stops	2
Bicycle wayfinding signage as appropriate	1
Permeable paving or pavers are being considered in collaboration with SDOT between the cycle track and the sidewalk	390 lf
Block 13 (7th Ave between Westlake and Lenora) -Note: Interim upgrades with Block 14 includes restriping and permanent build out to be coordinated with Block 20 construction	180 lf
Shared Use Street / Enhanced Pedestrian Facilities on Lenora Street	
Enhanced pedestrian zone with tree wells, contrasting paving surface, and street furnishings	7,480 sf
Widened or rolled curbs	290 lf
Westlake Avenue Street Improvements (Improved pedestrian crossings at the intersection of 8th Ave., Lenora St., and Westlake Ave.)	
* Re-configuration of traffic signal at Westlake/8th/Lenora intersection	4-7 signals
* Striping of crosswalk	1
Blanchard Street -Enhanced Green Street by 10' Voluntary Setback	
Voluntary 10' building setback to allow for widened sidewalk, additional landscape and use by adjacent retail	2,140 sf
Other Voluntary Building Setbacks	
Voluntary building setbacks within property line allowing for landscape and sidewalk improvements (Excludes Blanchard Street)	2270 sf
Enhanced Right of Way Improvements	
Landscape and sidewalk improvements beyond existing curb line	8,530 sf
Double row of trees (Allee) on 7 th Avenue	4-6 additional trees
Curb bulbs	At corners
Wayfinding & Signage per the Center City Wayfinding Plan (one on-site and one off-site)	2 signs
Reduction in quantity of existing curb cuts	8 existing, 3 proposed
Art	
Signature art pieces	1
Integrated art in Right of Way (manhole covers, furnishings, etc.)	all

Public Benefit Features	Quantity
Contribution to Future Neighborhood Park	
Contribution towards the development of a future neighborhood park at the northwest corner of 8th Avenue, Westlake Avenue and Lenora St. This property is commonly referred to as the Enterprise site.	\$150,000

SDOT has reviewed the project as built and has confirmed that all vacation conditions have been met. SDOT recommends approval of the bill.

Next Steps

If the Committee votes to recommend approval at its August 4, 2021, meeting, the City Council could consider approval as early as August 9. Following adoption of the legislation, ownership of the former alley would transfer to Amazon.

cc: Dan Eder, Interim Director
Aly Pennucci, Policy and Budget Manager