

The “Community Package” for Convention Center Addition Street and Alley Vacation Public Benefits

To: Washington State Convention Center Board of Directors - Frank K. Finneran, Chairman
From: The Community Package Coalition

The Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) expansion will reshape a large part of Seattle’s urban core. We, a coalition of community organizations serving adjacent neighborhoods, believe the project’s size, central location, public ownership, and extensive request for public right-of-way compels the WSCC to offer an accordingly large-scale public benefit package for our community.

Neighborhoods adjacent to the WSCC – including Downtown, South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, and First Hill - face shortages of public open space, active transportation facilities, and affordable housing. Needs for these facilities will grow acutely with the WSCC Addition project, and the WSCC leadership has an opportunity to make significant investments in our community. The WSCC can grow its legacy as a steward for central Seattle by balancing the need for growth and the impacts of that growth by contributing to a more attractive, safe, livable, and affordable city center.

The WSCC has petitioned the City of Seattle for a full vacation of three public alleys in Blocks 33, 43, and 44 totaling 7,665 square feet, and subterranean vacations of Terry Avenue and Olive Way, totaling 47,985 square feet.¹ Seattle City Council Resolution 31142 enables the provision of off-site and in-lieu public benefits in exchange for street and alley vacations which are independent of the development project. The Seattle Design Commission poses the key question: “Has the petitioner proposed a public benefit package that provides the public with amenities that adequately offset the loss of the street or alley being vacated and that are commensurate with the benefits of the scale of development resulting from the vacation?”

The WSCC Addition preferred alternative cost estimate is \$1.6 billion and the largest real estate development in Seattle history - more costly than Safeco and CenturyLink Fields combined.² It is also approximately triple the cost of the SoDo arena, which has offered \$21-25 million worth of public benefits for a single street vacation. Accordingly, we anticipate the WSCC must offer a public benefits package valued in the range of at least \$63-75 million.

We propose full adoption of a **Community Package** which is comparable in scale to the vacation petition. Together, the Community Package components are bold investments in Seattle’s public spaces, transportation network, and affordable housing. These investments are interrelated and are critical to ensuring the area proximate to the Addition remains livable as we welcome the many new visitors, staff, and traffic the project will bring. The Community Package aligns with the Design Commission’s desire for a wide array of benefits which are fully integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Community Package is summarized as follows. See Appendix A for the complete description of each component, sponsoring and endorsing organizations, and estimated values. See Appendix B for a map.

Public Parks and Open Spaces

- **Freeway Park Improvements** - Improve Freeway Park to be more safe, accessible, and enjoyable for local residents, employees, and Convention Center visitors.
- **Interstate 5 Lid Feasibility Study** - Fund a City-led technical study of extending Freeway Park and lidding Interstate 5 in the Center City and beyond for parks, affordable housing, new streets, and other civic uses.
- **Melrose Promenade** – Implement walking and bicycling improvements, public space, and public art along Melrose Avenue in Capitol Hill.
- **Pine-Boren Lid Park** - Expand Plymouth Pillars Park by building a 14,000 square foot lid park over Interstate 5 at the east corner of Pine Street and Boren Avenue.

¹ Seattle Clerk File 314338. Updated petition information provided in e-mail from Moira Gray, January 11, 2017.

² “Price tag of Seattle convention-center expansion hits \$1.6 billion”, *The Seattle Times*, June 9, 2016.

- **Terry Avenue Promenade** - Build a pedestrian-oriented woonerf on Terry Avenue between Cherry Street and Marion Street.
- **Virginia Street Woonerf** - Build a pedestrian-oriented woonerf on Virginia Street between Boren Avenue and Minor Avenue.

Active Transportation

- **8th Avenue Bicycling Improvements** - Build a northbound protected bike lane between Pike Street and Bell Street.
- **Interstate 5 Overpasses “Kit of Parts”** – Implement a suite of pedestrian improvements for I-5 overpasses, such as landscaping and sound buffers, between Olive Way and Madison Street.
- **Olive Way Interstate 5 Overpass Walking Improvements** - Implement a roadway reconfiguration on the Olive Way I-5 overpass and I-5 interchange to increase pedestrian safety and reduce traffic conflicts.
- **Pike-Pine Corridor Bicycling Improvements** - Build protected bike lanes on Pike Street and/or Pine Street between Downtown and Capitol Hill.

Affordable Housing

- **Affordable Housing** – Contribute funding to create 300 affordable homes for workers earning hospitality industry wages (50-60 percent of area median income) within one mile of the Convention Center Addition.

We wish to work collaboratively with the Washington State Convention Center, the Seattle Design Commission, the City departments involved, the City Council, and the Mayor on further refinement and advancement of the Community Package. We look forward to the progression of the WSCC Addition project as it moves through the approval process. Thank you for your efforts to build a better city for all.

Sincerely,

Blake Trask, Senior Policy Director, Cascade Bicycle Club
 Joel Sisolak, Sustainability and Planning Director, Capitol Hill Housing
 Brie Gyncild, Chair, Central Seattle Greenways
 Alex Hudson, Executive Director, First Hill Improvement Association
 Kelly Rider, Director of Government Relations and Policy, Housing Development Consortium
 Riisa Conklin, Executive Director, Jim Ellis Freeway Park Association
 John Feit, Chair, Lid I-5 Steering Committee
 Mike Kent, Chair, Melrose Promenade
 Gordon Padelford, Policy Director, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

CC: Beverly Barnett, Councilmembers Sally Bagshaw, Mike O’Brien, Lisa Herbold, Kshama Sawant, and Rob Johnson

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Appendix A - Summary Table of Community Package Investments

This table describes each component of the Community Package. Community co-sponsors for City projects are noted in parentheses, and components with additional endorsements are summarized at the end of the table. Estimated value ranges are for planning purposes only and do not reflect detailed designs or formal cost appraisals, and parenthetical information shows matching fund or leveraging opportunities.

Name	Type of Benefit and Description	Sponsor	Estimated Value
Public Parks and Open Spaces			
Freeway Park Improvements	Off-site: Fund park improvements, to be determined by a design process funded by the Department of Neighborhoods in 2017, to make Freeway Park more safe, accessible, and enjoyable for local residents, employees, and Convention Center visitors.	Freeway Park Association ¹	\$5-10 million (leverages recent \$0.5 million in grant funding for improving some park entries)
Interstate 5 Lid Feasibility Study	In-lieu: Consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies T 3.12 and P 1.17, fund a City-led technical study of extending Freeway Park and lidding Interstate 5 in the Center City and beyond for parks, affordable housing, new streets, other civic uses. The study will estimate lid costs, identify funding sources, analyze potential land uses, identify complementary I-5 traffic improvements, involve public input, and provide for staff time at public agencies involved.	Lid I-5 Steering Committee ²	\$1-1.5 million
Melrose Promenade	Off-site: Consistent with the Melrose Promenade Visioning Project, implement public space, walking and bicycling improvements, and public art along Melrose Avenue in Capitol Hill.	Melrose Promenade	\$1.5-5 million (leverages recent \$3 million PSRC grant for early phase design and construction)
Pine-Boren Lid Park	Off-site and/or in-lieu: Consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies T 3.12 and P 1.17, expand Plymouth Pillars Park by designing and building a 14,000 square foot lid park over Interstate 5 at the east corner of Pine Street and Boren Avenue, adding critical public open space in the rapidly redeveloping Capitol Hill neighborhood.	Lid I-5 Steering Committee ³	\$8-10 million (may leverage potential matching funds from the City or State)
Terry Avenue Promenade	Off-site: Consistent with the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan, design and build a pedestrian woonerf on Terry Avenue between Cherry Street and Marion Street, providing critical new public open space in the rapidly redeveloping First Hill neighborhood.	First Hill Improvement Association	\$3-4 million

Name	Type of Benefit and Description	Sponsor	Estimated Value
Virginia Street Woonerf	Off-site: Design and build a woonerf on Virginia Street between Boren Avenue and Minor Avenue to provide critical new public open space in the rapidly growing South Lake Union neighborhood.	Seattle Department of Transportation (co-sponsored by Seattle Neighborhood Greenways)	\$0.5-1.5 million
Active Transportation Facilities			
8th Avenue Bicycling Improvements	Off-site: Design and implement a northbound protected bike lane between Pike Street and Bell Street to increase bicycling safety and transportation options.	Seattle Department of Transportation (co-sponsored by Cascade Bicycle Club and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways)	\$4.5-6 million
Interstate 5 Overpasses “Kit of Parts”	Off-site: Design and implement a suite of pedestrian improvements for Downtown I-5 overpasses to make crossing the freeway more safe and enjoyable. The “kit” may include art, vegetation, lighting, buffers, sound barriers, enhanced fences, and wayfinding systems. Anticipate future I-5 lids in the designs.	Seattle Department of Transportation (co-sponsored by Lid I-5 Steering Committee, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, and Central Seattle Greenways)	\$1.5-5 million
Olive Way Interstate 5 Overpass Walking Improvements	Off-site: Increase pedestrian safety on the Olive Way I-5 overpass via a reconfiguration of the roadway and nearby freeway ramps. Engage the public early in the design process and refer to the 1998 Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan and the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide for best design practices.	Seattle Department of Transportation ⁴ (co-sponsored by Seattle Neighborhood Greenways and Central Seattle Greenways)	\$0.2-0.5 million
Pike-Pine Corridor Bicycling Improvements	Off-site: Consistent with the Bicycle Master Plan, design and implement protected bike lanes on Pike Street and/or Pine Street between 2nd Avenue and Broadway to create a critical east-west connection, increase bicycling safety, and incase transportation options..	Seattle Department of Transportation (co-sponsored by Cascade Bicycle Club, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, and Central Seattle Greenways)	\$8-10 million
Affordable Housing			
Affordable Housing	In-lieu: Make a contribution to the Seattle Office of Housing to subsidize construction or acquisition of 300 homes affordable to workers earning hospitality industry wages (50-60 percent of area median income) within one mile of the Convention Center Addition, towards an overall need of 519 affordable homes for workers at the Addition and related hospitality industry expansion.	Capitol Hill Housing and Housing Development Consortium	\$33 million (leverages \$50 million in self-financing and low income housing tax credits)

All signing organizations endorse all of the Community Package benefits proposed by fellow signees. Additional endorsements for particular Community Package benefits are as follows:

1. Horizon House, Town Hall Seattle, Virginia Mason, Washington Holdings

2. 43rd District State Representative Jamie Pedersen, Seattle Parks Foundation, Pike-Pine Urban Neighborhood Council, AIA Seattle Public Policy Board, Futurewise
3. 43rd District State Representative Jamie Pedersen, Seattle Parks Foundation, Pike-Pine Urban Neighborhood Council
4. Capitol Hill Community Council

Appendix B - Map of Community Package Investments

This map provides a general overview of Community Package investments in areas proximate to the WSCC Addition. Many of the projects overlap and intersect. Affordable housing within one mile, additional potential I-5 lid study areas, and the I-5 overpasses "kit of parts" are not shown. This map is for general illustration purposes only and may not reflect the precise scope of project boundaries.

View this map online: goo.gl/q1vIBy.



OpenStreetMap data used under Creative Commons.

Appendix C - City Council Resolution 31142, Policy 5, Section 1

Public benefits may include, but are not limited to:

A. On-site Public Benefits: on-site benefits are favored as the provision of the public benefit can also act to offset any increase in scale from the development. On-site public benefits may include:

- Publicly accessible plazas or other green spaces, including public stairways;
- Streetscape enhancements beyond that required by codes such as widened sidewalks, additional street trees or landscaping, street furniture, pedestrian lighting, wayfinding, art, or fountains;
- Pedestrian or bicycle trails;
- Enhancement of the pedestrian or bicycle environment;
- View easement or corridors; or
- Preservation of landmark buildings or other community resources.

B. Off-site Public Benefits: where it is not practicable to provide the public benefit or more than a portion of the public benefit on the development site, the public benefit may be provided off-site. This may include:

- Pedestrian or bicycle trails or public stairways;
- Enhancement of the pedestrian or bicycle environment;
- Enhancement of existing public open space such as providing playground equipment in a City park;
- Improvements to designated Green Streets;
- Funding an element from an adopted Neighborhood Plan;
- Providing wayfinding signage; or
- Providing public art.

C. Real Property May Be Conveyed: in certain circumstances the City may accept real property as a public benefit. The property proposed to be conveyed must be property that the City is willing to accept. The Petitioner is responsible for any costs associated with the conveyance including appraisals, title work, environmental site assessment, deeds or other document production, taxes on the transaction, or other expenses related to the conveyance of real property, including environmental remediation.

D. Payment of Funds: in certain circumstances where it is not practicable to provide or develop public benefits such as those listed above, the City may accept the payment of in-lieu funds dedicated for a specific purpose consistent with these policies as a public benefit. Such payment must be determined to be an acceptable alternative by the City. Such payment to meet public benefit obligations does not substitute for the payment of the required street vacation fee.