

The “Community Package” of Public Benefits for Street and Alley Vacations Associated with the Washington State Convention Center Addition



To: Seattle City Council — Lisa Herbold, Bruce Harrell, Kshama Sawant, Rob Johnson, Debora Juarez, Mike O’Brien, Sally Bagshaw, Tim Burgess, and Lorena González

From: The Community Package Coalition

We are a coalition of nine nonprofits, community organizations, and advocacy groups serving neighborhoods adjacent to the Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) Addition. We collectively represent thousands of Seattleites who are dedicated to creating a more attractive, safe, livable and affordable city center.

The WSCC Addition is estimated to cost \$1.6 billion, making it the single largest real estate development in Seattle history—more costly than Safeco and CenturyLink Fields combined.¹ The project’s size, central location, public ownership, and extensive request for public right-of-way requires the WSCC to offer an accordingly large-scale investment in our communities. This development poses a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leverage the development and build a long-term positive legacy to make improvements in Seattle’s central neighborhoods.

The WSCC put forth its initial package to the Seattle Design Commission on February 16, 2017. Our coalition does not believe that the proposed benefits are commensurate with the permanent impacts of this project. Beverly Barnett, from the Seattle Department of Transportation, echoed this sentiment in a statement at the same meeting, noting the large gap in expectations that must be addressed.

Our coalition has put forth a proposal called the **Community Package** – investments valued in the range of \$66-\$86 million for what the community needs most: public open spaces, safe routes for people walking and bicycling, and affordable homes for working families. This proposal is commensurate with the scale of the vacation petition and is comparable to other recent large, multi-block developments such as the SoDo arena proposal.²

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 and Appendix C for a status report of the Community Package.

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.
- **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.

¹ “Price tag of Seattle convention-center expansion hits \$1.6 billion”, *The Seattle Times*, June 9, 2016.

² Seattle Clerk File 314369, Attachment 1, February 8, 2017; Seattle Arena Presentation to City Council, April 19, 2016.

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.

These investments are interrelated and are critical to ensuring the communities surrounding the Addition are improved. The Community Package will ensure the city center remains livable and is enhanced as we welcome the many new visitors, staff, and traffic the project will bring. Learn more the Community Package at our website (<https://www.communitypackage.org/>) and in the following appendices.

Given that the community has a vested interest in this project and its success, we ask that Seattle City Councilmembers **please endorse the entirety of the Community Package as a starting point for all future negotiations**. Our coalition, and the people we represent, will be following this process closely and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you more about the details of the proposal.

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, SDOT Director Scott Kubly, OPCD Director Sam Assefa, OH Director Steve Walker, DPR Superintendent Jesús Aguirre

Community Package contacts: Alex Hudson, alex@firsthill.org, (206) 486-0007
Gordon Padelford, gordon@seattlegreenways.org, (206) 963-8547



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. This project was adopted into SDOT's Right of Way Improvement Manual and is endorsed by all adjacent property owners.	First Hill Improvement Association ⁴	\$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 safer and more 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 ⁵ (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 increase 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:

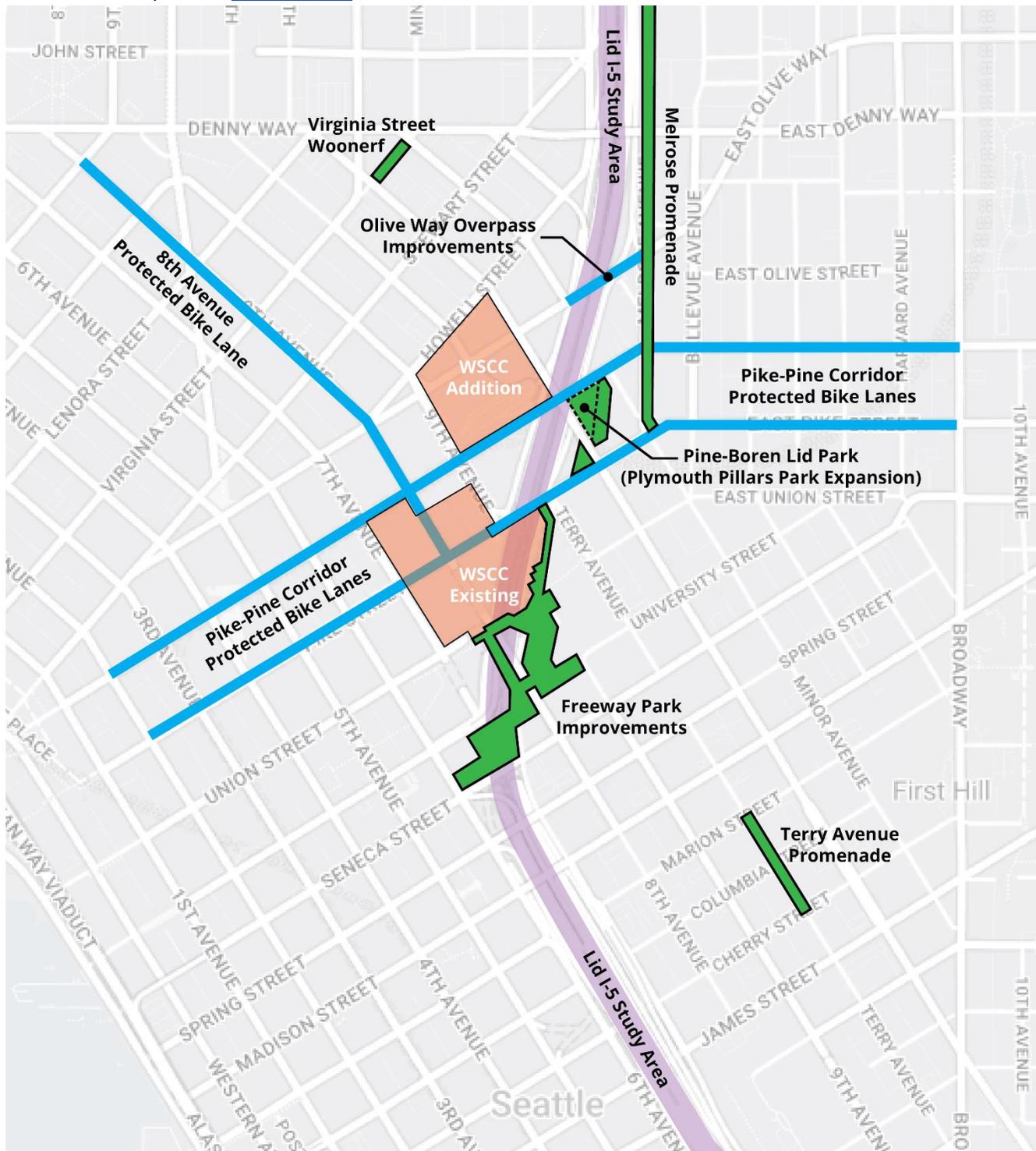
1. Horizon House, Town Hall Seattle, Virginia Mason, Washington Holdings

2. Seattle City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, 43rd District State Representative Jamie Pedersen, Seattle Parks Foundation, Pike-Pine Urban Neighborhood Council, Capitol Hill Community Council, AIA Seattle Public Policy Board, Futurewise
3. Seattle City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, 43rd District State Representative Jamie Pedersen, Seattle Parks Foundation, Pike-Pine Urban Neighborhood Council
4. BloodWorks, Columbia Pacific Advisors, Frye Art Museum, Harborview Medical Center, O'Dea High School, St. James Cathedral, Virginia Mason Medical Center, Westbank Development
5. 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/q1yIBy.



OpenStreetMap data used under Creative Commons.

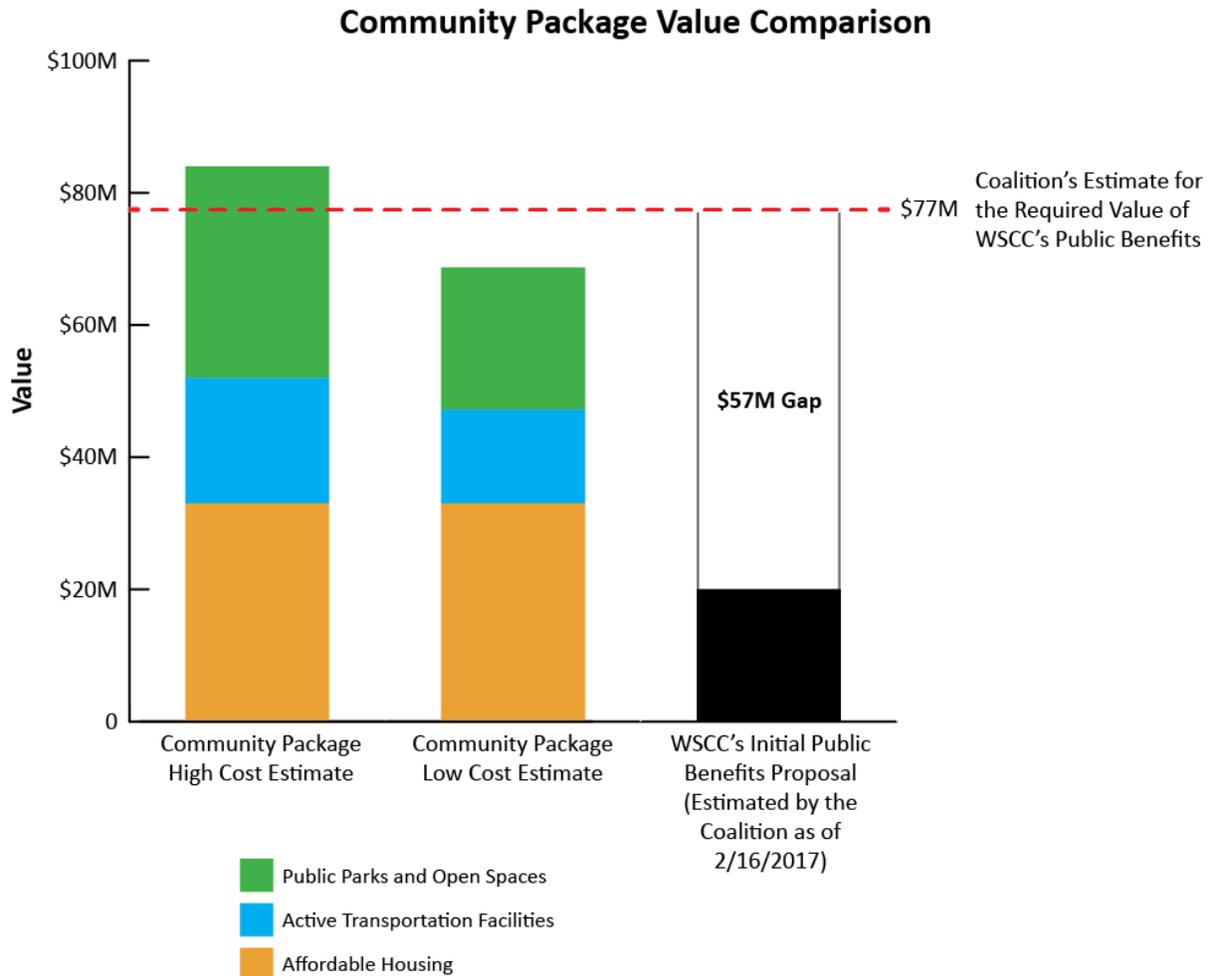
Appendix C – Community Package Status Report

This table describes each component of the Community Package and its status in relation to the WSCC’s initial proposal presented to the Seattle Design Commission on February 16, 2017.

Community Package Component	Estimated Value	WSCC Initial Public Benefits Proposal Status (2/16/2017)
Public Parks and Open Spaces		
Freeway Park Improvements	\$5-10 million	INCLUDED – SCOPE UNCLEAR
Interstate 5 Lid Feasibility Study	\$1-1.5 million	INCLUDED – SCOPE UNCLEAR
Melrose Promenade	\$1.5-5 million	NOT INCLUDED
Pine-Boren Lid Park	\$8-10 million	NOT INCLUDED
Terry Avenue Promenade	\$3-4 million	NOT INCLUDED
Virginia Street Woonerf	\$0.5-1.5 million	NOT INCLUDED
Active Transportation Facilities		
8th Avenue Bicycling Improvements	\$4.5-6 million	INCLUDED – SCOPE UNCLEAR
Interstate 5 Overpasses “Kit of Parts”	\$1.5-5 million	PARTIALLY INCLUDED – PINE STREET AND PIKE STREET ONLY
Olive Way Interstate 5 Overpass Walking Improvements	\$0.2-0.5 million	NOT INCLUDED
Pike-Pine Corridor Bicycling Improvements	\$8-10 million	INCLUDED – SCOPE UNCLEAR
Affordable Housing		
Affordable Housing	\$33 million	PARTIALLY INCLUDED - \$5 MILLION ONLY

Appendix C (Continued) – Community Package Status Report

This chart illustrates a comparison between the estimated high and low values of the Community Package, the coalition’s estimated public benefits obligation of the WSCC, and the coalition’s estimate of the WSCC’s initial proposal. There is a \$57 million gap between the WSCC’s initial proposal and what is commensurate with the scale and scope of the requested street and alley vacations.



Appendix D - 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.

Appendix E – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the basis for the coalition’s \$77 million estimate in required public benefits?

The City of Seattle has no formula or methodology for calculating public benefit value in association with street and alley vacations. Instead, precedents are relied upon to generate a rough sense of scale and commensuration.

Seattle has no precedent for the scale of the WSCC’s five requested vacations. The closest recent comparison of a multi-block development of such size is the proposed SoDo arena, which is offering \$26.5 million in public benefits for a single street vacation. The WSCC Addition is estimated to cost \$1.6 billion, slightly less than three times the cost of the proposed arena. The \$77 million figure is derived by making a proportional calculation of project value.

What if the \$77 million estimate is off?

The WSCC and its representatives have stated that, without the entire set of vacations, the Addition project would likely become infeasible. This means that even if the coalition’s calculation has a margin of error, the fact remains that the street and alley vacations are extremely valuable to the project. This greatly escalates the obligations for public benefits. The WSCC’s initial public benefits proposal certainly does not meet a sufficient level of benefits, but full adoption of the Community Package would.

The alleyways proposed for vacating are used little. How does that affect the value of required public benefits?

By claiming the three alleyways proposed for vacation are of limited value, the WSCC has implied their public benefits obligation in return should be minimal. We respectfully disagree. While the alleys have little use today, that is because they are surrounded by parking lots, a bus depot, and vacant buildings. These alleys would otherwise be retained in public ownership in perpetuity. In all probability, if the WSCC were not proposing to expand at this location, the adjacent properties would follow Downtown construction trends and soon be redeveloped with multiple mixed use towers. The alleys would be critical for public interests such as tower spacing for light and air, views, parking access, freight loading, and utility infrastructure.

In addition, since 1998 the community had expected Terry Avenue would be reconnected between Pine Street and Olive Way with, at a minimum, a pedestrian connection. That opportunity is lost with the WSCC Addition proposal.

Most of the requested vacations are underground. How does that affect the value of required public benefits?

Although Olive Way and Terry Avenue will be restored after construction, the impacts during construction in the right-of-way will be massive. These will be the first subterranean vacations in Seattle to transfer ownership underneath the entirety of arterial streets, and the vacations will result in multi-year street closures and traffic disruptions. Therefore, the public benefits package should be scaled appropriately and must not duplicate environmental mitigation or construction management measures.

Are there other public benefits proposed by the WSCC that are not part of the Community Package?

The WSCC is proposing a number of other public benefits. In the interest of maximizing public investment in the community, we are generally supportive of these other proposals. The coalition welcomes the opportunity to partner with the WSCC, neighborhood organizations, and advocacy groups to add these benefits to the Community Package.

- On-site improvements beyond code, including setbacks, transparency, and street level uses
- Pike Pine Renaissance streetscape improvements
- 9th Avenue improvements
- Historic building lighting
- Public art

What is the City’s official position on the initial public benefits proposed by the WSCC?

Beverly Barnett, SDOT’s expert on the street vacation process, stated at the February 16, 2017 Design Commission meeting that there is a major gap between the WSCC’s initial public benefits proposal and the scale and impact of the street and alley vacations. This is consistent with the stance of the Community Package coalition.