

# WSCC Expansion

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Mayor

**Sam Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Shannon Loew**, Chair

**Ross Tilghman**, Vice Chair

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Jescelle Major**

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## Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair  
Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair  
Ben de Rubertis  
Laura Haddad  
Jescelle Major  
John Savo

## Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain  
Lee Copeland  
Thaddeus Egging  
Rachel Gleeson

## Project Description

The Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) is proposing to vacate three alleys and two streets on three blocks bounded by Pine St, 9th Ave, Howell St, and Boren Ave. The petitioner is requesting the full vacation of the following three mid-block alleys:

- Block 33 (Site B) - bounded by 9th Ave, Howell St, Terry Ave, and Olive way
- Block 43 (Site C) - bounded by Terry Ave, Howell St, Boren Ave, and Olive Way
- Block 44 (Site A) - bounded by 9th Ave, Olive Way, Boren Ave, and Pine St

The petitioner is also requesting a full street vacation of Terry Ave, between Olive Way and Howell St, as well as a subterranean street vacation of Olive Way, between 9th Ave and Boren Ave.

The preferred scheme includes approximately 2.385 million square feet (sf) of development on three sites. The WSCC expansion would occur on Site A and extend through the subterranean vacations of Olive and the Terry Avenue vacation. The remaining two sites will include co-developments. The preferred proposal includes:

- 1,499,700 square foot building located on Site A
- 29 story, approximately 400 unit residential tower located on Site B
- 16 story, 515,700 sf office tower located on Site C
- 43,000 sf of developable space dedicated to street-level uses
- Partially below-grade parking for 700-800 vehicles
- Below-grade loading services

## Meeting Summary

The SDC was briefed on the Washington State Convention Center's (WSCC) proposal as it relates to the proposed street and alley vacations. The purpose of this meeting was to have the SDC receive a presentation of pedestrian experience as it relates to the proposed expansion. The SDC did not take an action at this meeting and will not take an action until the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) is released early in 2017.

September 15, 2016

1:00 - 3:30 PM

**Type**

Vacation

**Phase**

Briefing

**Previous Reviews**[04/21/16](#), [02/04/16](#)**Project Team Present**

Chris Eseman | LMN Architects

Shannon Nichol | GGN

**Attendees**

Jasmine Arayana | GGN

Margery Aronson | Art Advisor

Beverly Barnett | SDOT

Lyle Bicknell | OPCD

Linnea Cook | LMN Architects

Katheryn DeBenedetto | MKA

Jim Erickson | Citizen

Kurt Gahnberg | Transpo Group

Pat Hanson-Lund | MKA

James Johnson | MKA

Bryn Kepler | GGN

Lindsay King | SDCI

Jane Lewis | PSG

Katherine Mackinnon | Nyhus

Michael Maddux | Citizen

Nancy Mee | Artist

Jessica Miller | LMN Architects

Steve Pearce | OWF

Matt Rosauer | PSG

Seiji Watanabe | LMN Architects

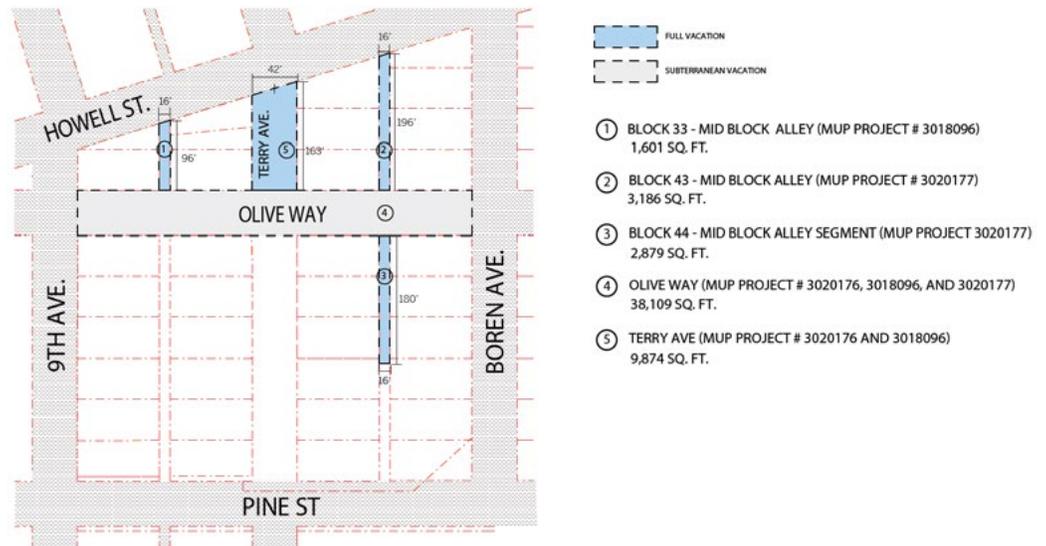


Figure 1: Proposed vacation petitions



Figure 2: Project site location

**Recusals and Disclosures**

There were no recusals or disclosures.

**Summary of Presentation**

Chris Eseman, of LMN Architects, and Shannon Nichol, of GGN, presented the project briefing for urban design merit. The presentation focused on the pedestrian experience as it relates to the proposed WSCC expansion. Chris Eseman provided an overview and site context for the proposed project. The vacations (see figure 1) would enable the building form on site A to align with the historic facades of surrounding buildings. The vacations would also result in an enhanced pedestrian experience as well as fewer vehicular access points, reducing the amount of curb cuts needed along each ROW. The project will attempt to improve pedestrian circulation, upgrade utility infrastructure, create open space, and respect surrounding transportation networks.

The project site for the proposed facility is located at the intersection of Downtown, First Hill, Capitol Hill, and South Lake Union neighborhoods (see figure 2). The streets surrounding the project site – Pine St, Boren Ave, Olive Way, and 9th Ave – all serve as primary circulation corridors, while 9th Ave also serves as a designated Green Street. The project proposal will offer a variety of pedestrian experiences along each

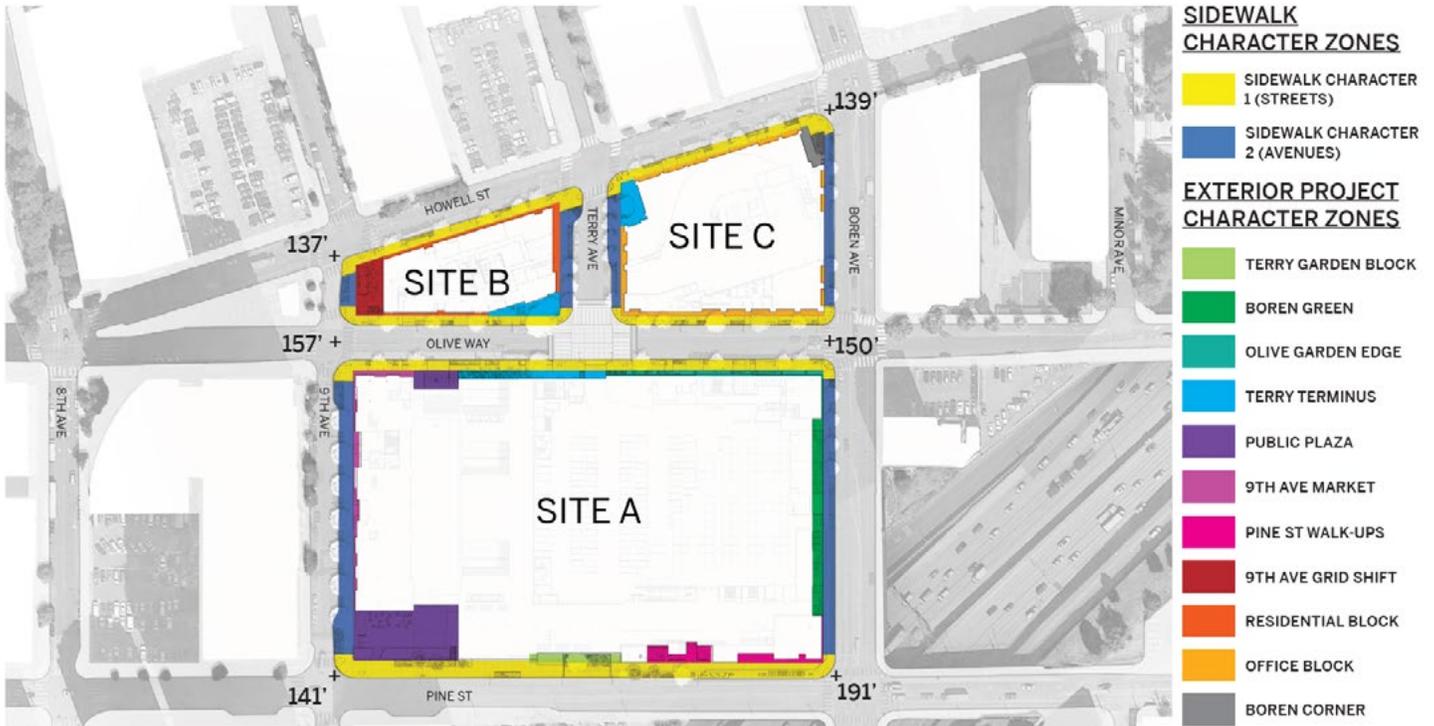


Figure 3: Proposed pedestrian experience zones

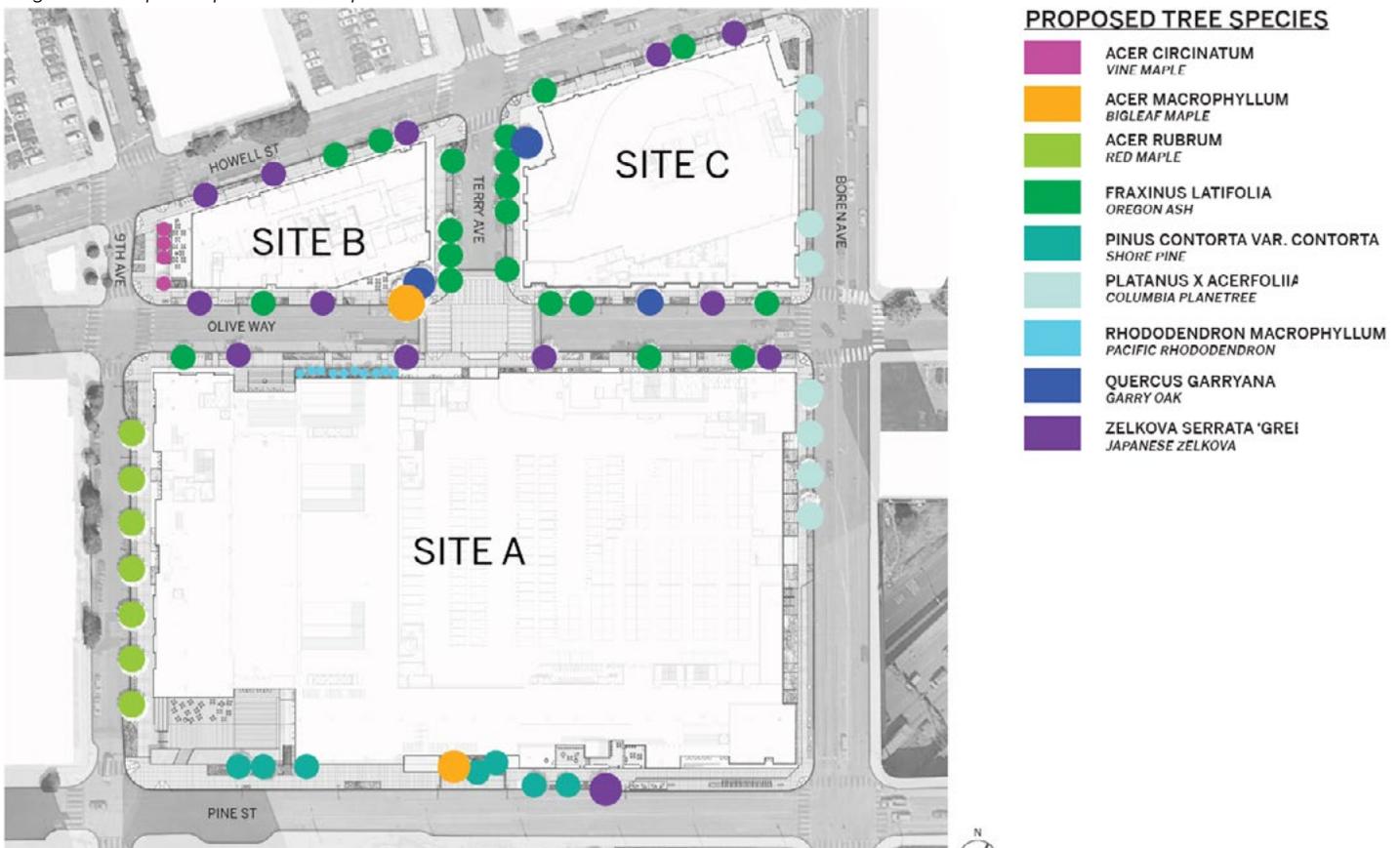


Figure 4: Proposed tree location

street front which will include wide sidewalks, public plazas, retail space, street furniture, street trees and ground level plantings. Public plazas along Pine St will include a variety of benches, tables, and chairs. Benches, street streets, and landscaping will be used to create an intimate yet open space that will be accessible to all see figures 3 & 4 for more detail. Street furniture will include custom benches, planting protection fences, bicycle racks, trash and recycling receptacles, and a bike share station. The proposed plantings are divided into six character zones. Each avenue and street will include a mix of character zones.



Figure 5: Proposed street level programming along Pine St



Figure 6: Proposed street level programming along 9th Ave



Figure 7: Proposed street level programming along Olive Way



Figure 8: Proposed street level programming along Boren Ave



Figure 9: Proposed street level programming along Terry Ave

9th Ave will serve as the main entrance to the public market. The plaza located at the corner of Pine St and 9th Ave will also serve as an extension of the public market. A major entrance will also be located on Olive Way, with smaller entrances along 9th Ave. Subterranean service facilities are located underneath the convention center expansion facility and Sites B and C co development. One garage entrance for freight is located on Boren Ave on Site B with a second general purpose garage ingress/egress located on Boren on Site A. One general purpose garage ingress/egress is located on Olive Way at the Terry Avenue signalized intersection. see figures 5-9 for more detail.

### Agency Comments

**Beverly Barnett**, of SDOT, mentioned that SDOT is actively working with the project team in responding to the DEIS. Ms. Barnett said they are looking at several key issues and are meeting (almost) weekly to address each issue. SDOT has asked for additional analyses are clarifying what the department will want to see follow through into the final design.

**Lindsay King**, of SDCI, stated there is a very high level of complexity raised when thinking about the process that will decide what can be considered as public benefit for this specific project. Ms. King further stated that the department needs to understand what mitigation will be required from different state and city agencies in order to understand what can be considered as public benefit.

**Steve Pearce**, of Office of the Waterfront, stated he is the manager of the Pike/Pine Street improvement program. Mr. Pearce said that the program is just getting started, and they plan to have a concept design by April 2017. Mr. Pearce mentioned that the program will want to develop a coherent treatment and vocabulary along the corridor, including the area around the project site. He stated that the program will have very high emphasis on creating a quality pedestrian environment. Mr. Pearce then stated that the program will not have a budget to redevelop every block and will need to partner with private development. He mentioned that the program group will need to have a conversation with the project team to discuss the treatment of the landscape (including street trees) along the Pine St. edge. Mr. Pearce also mentioned the group is attempting to mitigate the current status of the freeway crossing along the corridor.

### Public Comments

**Jim Erickson**, Freeway Park Association, Freeway Park Association, spoke on behalf of Riisa Conklin and the Freeway Park Association. Mr. Erickson said the park is in need of improvements to pedestrian entrances as well as footpaths located within the park. Mr. Erickson mentioned that the expansion will bring several hundred additional users, which will have a direct impact on Freeway Park. Mr. Erickson then mentioned that Freeway Park Association believes the

street context adjacent to Freeway Park should be under design consideration when reviewing the convention center expansion.

**Michael Maddux**, Citizen of Eastlake, mentioned the area surrounding the project site on Boren and Terry Ave is uninviting. Mr. Maddux is excited to see the direction of the design and the quality of the work being done by the design team to make it more pedestrian and cyclist friendly. He stated that he is a big proponent of parks and other public spaces located throughout the city and is excited to see the commitment from the design team to provide more open spaces that, although privately constructed, are open to the public. Mr. Maddux then stated the vegetation on Boren will have a positive impact on the surrounding community and looks forward to seeing the completion of this project.

**Nancy Mee**, Artist, Provided a brief history of the establishment of the Seattle Artist Commission. Ms. Mee stated that the current convention center has provided an incredible showcase for our city's artist. Ms. Mee then stated that she is here to support the idea of including artists in the project to expand the convention center in a way that will keep it a vibrant, community project.

### Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Fit with larger urban context
- Pedestrian and vehicular circulation
- Pedestrian access and experience (landscaping)
- Equity and social justice issues
- Integration of artwork

#### *Fit with larger urban context*

The SDC is concerned with the project's lack of outreach, integration, and support for other city plans addressing the area surrounding the project location. The commission recommended the project team continue to understand how the project can support goals from related plans that address the surrounding area. Commissioners requested the project team understand how it will integrate the development with the existing convention center facility. The SDC recommended the design team address the connection between the project site and the Capitol Hill neighborhood including information on how the team will address the area surrounding Interstate - 5, which divides the project site from the Capitol Hill Neighborhood.

The SDC also stressed the importance of understanding what is required for mitigation prior to proposing a list of public benefit measures for the project and surrounding area.

#### *Pedestrian and vehicular circulation*

The SDC recognized Pine St as an important connecting link between Downtown and the Capitol Hill Neighborhood. Commissioners recommended the project team understand how the steep slope along Pine St will affect pedestrian circulation and provide solutions that will accommodate the steepness of the slope. The commission also requested more information about the loading/circulation plan, specifically in the area surrounding Terry Ave.

#### *Pedestrian access and experience*

The SDC appreciated the design team highlighting the pedestrian experience, but acknowledged the team should provide more context such as traffic noise and traffic flow in order to provide a more realistic pedestrian experience. Because the project site is situated between three distinct neighborhoods, the Commission also recommended the design team provide street furniture that will highlight the neighborhood in which the furniture is situated, similar to the nuanced landscape design. Commissioners appreciated the design of the proposed pocket areas, which will allow for different types of movement through and within the space. The SDC also encouraged the project team to provide seating areas for all, not just for users patronizing businesses, along all street fronts.

#### *Equity and social justice issues*

The SDC stressed the importance of providing public space that truly feels public and is accessible to all users. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to think about the affordability of commercial space located within the facility. The SDC recommended the project team provide a broad range of outreach opportunities in order to

increase the potential for feedback from surrounding communities.

### *Integration of artwork*

The SDC encouraged the design team to understand how the proposed art sculptures will contribute to light pollution within the surrounding area. Commissioners recommended the project team separate proposals for future artwork programs, which will be a part of the public benefit package, from proposals to integrate existing artwork, which cannot be considered as public benefit. The SDC encouraged the project team coordinate with 4Culture in proposing the relocation of existing artwork as well as the proposal for future artwork.

### **Action**

The SDC did not take an action during today's meeting. The Commission provided the following recommendations that should be addressed prior to the next SDC meeting:

1. Details on the location and design treatment of all access points, including a better understanding of the need for the residential loading space within the building
2. The location, extent and design treatments for all transit facilities
3. What type of bicycle improvements will be included within the right of way
4. How planning efforts are being implemented in the right of way improvements, along with any updates to the proposal based on City requirements
5. How the landscape plan reflects and responds to traffic impacts, pedestrian volumes, use impacts, and topography, with special consideration given to how the design responds to increased traffic and activity on the site (Pine Street) and with regard to mobility and accessibility (Boren Ave.)
6. How street furniture is designed to respond to the urban context in this area
7. A table that illustrates land use code, SEPA requirements and proposed public benefits
8. The vacation and no vacation analysis for the co-development sites that illustrate development capacity, in support of Council policies
9. How community outreach has affected the design of features within the right of way
10. How you are incorporating any existing public art into the proposal, specifically the tree museum
11. Increased sustainability target or goals even if the end result is not a LEED certification