



City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Transportation

Scott Kubly, Director

April 4, 2016

Mike McQuaid

South Lake Union Community Council

Re: Vacation of portions of Broad Street, 8th Avenue North and Mercer Street

Dear Mr. McQuaid:

Thank you for submitting the South Lake Union Community Council's comments on the proposed vacation of Broad Street in the South Lake Union Neighborhood. I appreciate your willingness to meet with Eric Tweit and myself to discuss the street vacation, public benefits and enhancements to the South Lake Union transportation system. I apologize for the delay in sending this response, but I understand that you have been communicating with Eric about the street vacation and related issues in the time since our meeting.

As you are aware, SDOT is requesting the vacation so that we can consolidate the property in the two-block area to sell it to fund construction of the Mercer West Project. This was part of a funding plan endorsed by the City Council when they authorized SDOT to proceed with construction through Ordinance 123992 in 2012. In addition to providing funds for the Mercer West Project, the vacation of Broad Street and consolidation of properties on the two-block area allows for development that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and with recommendations of the South Lake Union Mobility Plan and Urban Design Framework.

As part of the street vacation, SDOT is proposing to dedicate a 40-foot wide Eighth Ave N right-of-way through the middle of the Broad Street property to create a pedestrian-emphasis green street. An additional ten-foot easement will be required on either side of Eighth Ave N to provide a 60-foot pedestrian and open space corridor complimenting existing and future improvements on Eighth Ave N north and south of the site. SDOT looked at other potential options for open space and concluded that the Eighth Ave N corridor is the best location to provide open space in combination with development on the site.

While the neighborhood priorities identified in the Community Council's letter do not necessarily fall under the types of improvements that would be considered a Public Benefit under the City's Street Vacation Policies, the City is committed to working with you to implement these priorities. SDOT is initiating a Center City Mobility Plan (CCMP) that will establish a long term transportation vision and implementation plan to meet the changing needs in Seattle's growing Center City Neighborhoods, including South Lake Union, and the

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Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation is completing an assessment of community center needs across the city.

The Center City Mobility Plan (CCMP) will identify policies, capital projects, and programs as part of a multi-modal system plan that is focused on connecting people and goods within the Center City neighborhoods and to the rest of the region. The CCMP will identify transit service and operations improvements needed to support the current and projected growth in employment and housing in South Lake Union and other Center City neighborhoods. It will integrate the City's transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and freight master plans and identify any changes or enhancements to those plans needed to support the Neighborhood and City vision. The final CCMP will include an implementation plan which will set early priorities, identify funding sources and guide investments over the plan's 20-year horizon.

The Center City Mobility Plan will include recommendations for capital, operational, and programmatic improvements to create a Transit Hub on Aurora Ave N (future Seventh Ave N) between Thomas and Harrison streets. SDOT will engage the South Lake Union and Uptown neighborhoods, along with WSDOT and King County, to develop the recommended improvements, which are likely to include:

- Bus stop design with covered waiting areas for Rapid Ride and other bus routes on Aurora Ave N and for new transit service on Harrison St (a relocated Route 8 from Denny Way or other east-west service).
- Streetscape improvements to support pedestrian connections from the surrounding neighborhood and between bus stops
- Bicycle storage
- Travel information (bus arrival times, etc.)
- Potential public or private uses on adjacent property to activate the area

Development of the WSDOT property located in the northwest corner of Aurora Ave N and Thomas St is a key component of the Transit Hub. WSDOT has indicated that they are willing to sell this property once the tunnel and surface street construction is complete, as long as they can find a way to accommodate parking needs for their employees located at the adjacent tunnel operations building. This could be accomplished within future development on the site or at another location in the vicinity. SDOT will work with WSDOT to find ways to address their needs and achieve the vision of the Transit Hub.

Implementation of the Transit Hub will be integrated with the North Surface Street Project (re-build of Aurora Ave N after the SR 99 Tunnel opens to traffic), subsequent development of the WSDOT property on the west side, and development of the private property on the east side (King 5 site). The latter has included features to support the Transit Hub in its design. The CCMP will identify funding sources, which may include the SR 99 Tunnel Program, City funds, King County Metro, and Private Development.

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Eric Tweit will lead the CCMP for SDOT and coordinate a project team with our consultant and our Downtown Transportation Alliance partners – King County Metro, Sound Transit, the Downtown Seattle Association, and the Office of Planning and Community Development. We expect it will take 18 to 24 months to finalize the plan, which will have an early component focused on the end of joint bus and rail operations in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. We will likely convene the South Lake Union Community Council, Uptown Alliance, and other stakeholders on the Transit Hub starting in the 3rd Quarter of 2016. Eric will keep you updated on the schedule and coordinate with you to schedule sessions on the Transit Hub and other South Lake Union elements of the plan.

I understand that a community center is also a priority for the South Lake Union Community Council. The Department of Parks and Recreation is completing an assessment of community center needs city-wide, and they are aware that this is a priority for the South Lake Union Community Council. They expect to have draft recommendations ready for public review near the end of March.

City legislation to approve the sale of the Broad Street Property is another opportunity to advance Community Council priorities that fall outside the street vacation policies, such as a community center or open space. This is a separate legislative action and will be subsequent to the approval of the Street Vacation. In addition to deciding how the proceeds from the sale of the property will be used, the City Council may require that specific uses be developed independently or integrated with development on the site.

To help inform their decisions around the sale of the Broad Street Property, the City Council provided funding in the 2016 budget and direction to the Executive to analyze options for selling the surplus property. Budget Green Sheet 90-3-A-1 states:

“As part of this analysis, Council requests that the Executive engage the South Lake Union community in a process for soliciting input on the types of benefits or uses that the community would like to see as a part of the site redevelopment. Examples of community benefits could include, but are not limited to: a childcare center, pre-school, community or performing arts space, affordable housing, and/or multi-modal transportation considerations.”

The City Council has requested a response to the Green Sheet by May 31, 2016. The Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) and the new Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) are leading this work. SDOT will continue to coordinate with both departments to develop a consolidated set of recommendations for the street vacation and the property disposition that incorporates input from the Community Council and other stakeholders.

Based on the appraisal that was completed in 2013 and current market conditions, we anticipate there will be additional revenue from the sale of the property after the Mercer

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West debt is retired. The Mayor has proposed that the City invest the net proceeds (currently estimated at \$7 million if no additional requirements are placed on the sale of the property) in affordable housing in South Lake Union. This recommendation will be a consideration in the response to the Green Sheet, along with other input from the community.

Thank you again for your interest in the Broad Street vacation and for working with us to identify the appropriate public benefits, transportation improvements and other community priorities for South Lake Union. We look forward to continuing our efforts with you to develop the Mobility Plan for South Lake Union and other Center City neighborhoods and the Transit Hub on Aurora Ave N. I am optimistic that we will be able to advance your priorities while meeting the funding obligations for the Mercer West Project with the Broad Street Property.

Sincerely,



Scott Kubly
Director, Seattle Department of Transportation