

1. What is the Comprehensive Plan (including any Neighborhood Plan) designation of the property and surrounding area? What goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan apply to the proposal? Be specific. How does the proposal fulfill these policies?

The skywalk, in bridging Spokane Falls Boulevard, will connect two planning districts, the East End in which the INB and Convention Center campus is located, and the Downtown Core, in which the new convention hotel is being constructed. The zoning is DTC 100 for the Convention Center site and DTC for the convention hotel site.

Through SMC 12.02.410 the City Council declared that "it is the policy of the City to approve, in principal, the construction of pedestrian skywalks over City streets". Further recognizing that such skywalks "are intended to augment pedestrian movement, reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflict" and serve the convenience of the public in congested areas of the CBD. SMC 12.020.410B(2).

*Applicable policies of the 2008 Downtown Plan, **Fast Forward Spokane, Downtown Plan Update, November 2008**, are summarized below. The summary includes the applicable planning policies and a discussion of the consistency of the project with the plan. Essentially, the relevant topics include skywalks, gateways, convention center expansion, and development of opportunity sites, specifically the "South Site," on which the new convention hotel is being constructed.*

CHAPTER TWO – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SECTION 5.1 EXISTING ZONING

CBD-1 Category: *CBD-1 is applied to the Downtown Core, the mixed-use, high-intensity, pedestrian-oriented center of the City. Generally, all uses are allowed, except auto-oriented and industrial. (Location of hotel)*

CBD-3 Category: *CBD-3 is applied to the East End – the area immediately east of the Downtown Core – and the Riverpoint Campus. This is a high-density, mixed-use area in which community-serving retail uses, residential, and office uses are encouraged, especially as part of a mixed-use development. Generally, all uses are allowed, except auto-oriented and industrial. (Location of Convention Center/INB Campus)*

EXISTING STREET CLASSIFICATIONS MAP---Spokane Falls Blvd is a Principal Arterial.

SECTION 7.1 - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Skywalks

Downtown Spokane is served by a 15-block system of skywalks. While they provide comfortable pedestrian connections during cold or inclement weather, they also reduce street-level activity and create a visual obstruction.

The project location is a special district within the downtown core known as the “Hotel, Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center District” that provides lodging and public venues that host both local and out-of-town visitors. The DoubleTree Hotel around which the Convention Center wraps, and the new convention center hotel/parking garage currently under construction are major components of this district. The DoubleTree is connected to the Convention Center along the elevated pedestrian connector between the Convention Center West and the Exhibit Hall. The new convention hotel and parking garage will have its main guest entrance located on the south side of Spokane Falls Boulevard across from the Convention Center/INB Performing Arts Center Breezeway. At present, the pedestrian traffic in this area is predominantly related to the activities and events at the Convention Center, the INB Performing Arts Center, and the DoubleTree Hotel. However, the new hotel will increase the vehicular and pedestrian activity along Spokane Falls Boulevard beyond that presently existing as people will be moving between the hotel and public venues. No retail activity is along the north side of Spokane Falls Boulevard (outside the Double Tree Hotel). Retail activity along the south side between Bernard and Browne Street is limited to two restaurants and a FEDEX shipping/office center.

SECTION 9.0 - SUMMARY OF TRENDS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Convention Center and Davenport Hotel

The newly-expanded Convention Center is a key economic engine for the City, helping to draw visitors to Spokane and to support additional restaurant, entertainment, and retail opportunities in Downtown.

The proposed skywalk would support and enhance the visitor experience for the Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center patrons, by providing an all weather connection to the convention hotel and its parking garage (which includes 300 parking spaces owned by the Spokane Public Facilities District (District). In addition, with the increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic during events, the skywalk will reduce the potential conflicts between persons crossing Spokane Falls Boulevard and the vehicles using the Boulevard for circulation or ingress and egress to the new hotel or parking garage.

CHAPTER THREE - VISION GOALS AND CONCEPT

SECTION 1.2 DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Connections link Downtown’s retail, recreational, entertainment, educational, medical,

and cultural facilities with nearby districts and neighborhoods. Downtown has a unified system of gateways that create a sense of arrival for residents and visitors entering the urban core.

Spokane Falls Boulevard links the Convention Center Campus, new convention center hotel, and downtown business core with the regional transportation routes, including I-90, US 395, US 2, and SR 290. It is a gateway to the downtown.

SECTION 3.0 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Skywalk Improvements

Improved connections from the skywalks to the street level and parking ramps will enhance the overall system for both shoppers and employees.

The proposed skywalk will connect the INB and Convention Center to the convention center hotel and parking garage via a grade-separated crossing of Spokane Falls Boulevard. Pedestrian connections to the sidewalk will be available at both ends. The primary users, however, are not shoppers, but attendees of events and activities at the INB and the Convention Center who are staying in the new hotel or using its parking garage.

CHAPTER FOUR - STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 2.0 PRIMARY LAND USE

Eight primary land uses are identified as vital to the future economic health and vibrancy of the Downtown: 2. Restaurants/Entertainment/Conventions

The function of the Convention Center Campus is to provide venues for entertainment and conventions. Its connected hotels, the Doubletree and the new convention hotel provide lodging, restaurants, and other guest services.

LANDUSE CLASSIFICATIONS – MAP 41. PRIMARY LAND USE

The land use map identifies four distinct types of commercial uses:

Commercial

2. Visitor-Serving Commercial

The **Visitor-Serving Commercial** land use is concentrated along the Spokane River to the east of Riverfront Park. The Convention Center and planned expansion of the Convention Center are located in this area. The types of commercial uses in this land use category will include visitor accommodations such as hotels, motels, and inns, eating and drinking establishments, and entertainment venues.

Cultural and Institutional

Existing cultural facilities in the Downtown area include the INB Performing Arts Center, Convention Center, [Fox Theater, Knitting Factory] Civic Theater, Interplayers, The Bing Crosby Theater, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Mobius Kids, and numerous art galleries.

The Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center cross into both the Visitor-serving Commercial and Cultural & Institutional areas. The development of a direct connection to the convention hotels will strengthen their capacity to serve the full range of clientele using the District's facilities.

SECTION 4.0 CATALYTIC OPPORTUNITIES

CATALYTIC OPPORTUNITY SITES

1. Convention Center Expansion (South Site) - The Spokane Convention Center is located on the south bank of the Spokane River adjacent to Riverfront Park north of Spokane Falls Boulevard between Washington and Division Streets. The campus includes the INB Performing Arts Center and the Spokane Convention Center, with the focal point being the new Group Health Exhibit Hall. The 100,160 square foot elliptically shaped facility was completed in June 2006. A recent renovation of the Spokane Convention Center, completed in May 2007, offers more than 164,307 square feet of meeting space. The INB Performing Arts Center, which is adjacent to the Spokane Convention Center, has a 2,700 seat auditorium.

The block south of the existing Convention Center bordered by Spokane Falls Boulevard, Main Avenue, Washington Street, and Bernard Street is slated for further expansion of the Convention Center. The preliminary development program for the South Site includes future expansion of the Convention Center facilities and related parking. It could also include a multi-modal transportation hub as well as other public uses.

MAP 4.3 OPPORTUNITY SITES

The South Site property where the hotel and parking garage are being constructed is designated as an opportunity site (Site 1). Following a Master Plan process completed in 2009, the site was purchased by the District for interim use as a parking lot to support the Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center, and for future Convention Center opportunities. In 2013, the site was sold to a private sector developer for the specific purpose of constructing a new convention hotel and parking garage that would be complementary to and support the Convention Center Campus activities. Connection of the hotel and the Campus with a grade-separated, climate-controlled skywalk benefits both uses, particularly the hotel and parking garage. Indeed one of the conditions of constructing the convention hotel at this location was the provision of a skywalk connection across Spokane Falls Boulevard.

SECTION 5.0 REQUISITE STRATEGIES

A new project must connect to its surroundings, have easy access, have identification through signage and wayfinding, be linked to open space and transportation amenities, have adequate parking, be environmentally sustainable, and play a role in the overall

image and marketing of the Downtown. This integrated approach will support the long-term success and vibrancy of each Opportunity Site as well as the entire Downtown.

The skywalk connection to the Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center will enhance pedestrian access between the convention hotel and parking garage for guests who will use both facilities. To aid in wayfinding, the PFD is proposing a subtle graphic to be placed on the glass wall of the skywalk that states "Convention Center". This will also serve to identify the Hotel, Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center District.

C. Gateways, Signage, and Wayfinding: A comprehensive program to direct residents and visitors to stores, civic uses, entertainment venues, events, parks, open spaces, campuses, and other Downtown amenities via gateways, signage, and wayfinding.

The Downtown Plan recognizes that gateway, signage and wayfinding program will support the creation of a "cohesive identity for Downtown and its sub-districts". Plan at 118. This wayfinding will help "visitors navigate the Downtown safely and easily", as well as, identify a major destination for persons attending events and activities at the public facilities. This entry gateway feature will be on a skywalk connecting an assemblage of buildings which serves as a place for entertainment, exhibition, and gathering, This district creates a special context and condition in the downtown area.

CHAPTER 5-DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

SECTION 1.0 STREETScape AND PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Skywalk Improvements

Concentrate Skywalks

1.6 Concentrate skywalks as functional links in the Downtown Retail Core, strengthening the connections between activities in the retail core by expanding or possibly removing skywalks where appropriate, and providing incentives for property owners through the design review process to remove or expand skywalks.

Maintain and enhance existing skywalks of functional importance. Consider the removal of existing skywalks that are not well utilized and have a negative impact on the aesthetics of connected buildings within the context of a Skywalk Master Plan.

New additions to the skywalk system should improve overall connectivity of the existing system, including connections to parking areas. Skywalks should not detract from building design and should not be added to historic buildings.

The INB-Convention Center campus is at the edge of the Downtown Retail Core and is a key adjacent activity center that supports the retail core. The new hotel to which the skywalk would provide connectivity, is within the downtown core. Since the hotel and parking garage will replace and

enhance the surface parking used by the public, this skywalk provides grade separated pedestrian access between that parking and the District facilities across Spokane Falls Boulevard. In addition, it will connect the District's facilities with lodging, food, and additional meeting space, thus expanding the overall convention capability in downtown Spokane.

The skywalk design is being very carefully crafted by the same architectural firm that designed the INB (original Washington State Pavilion Opera House) so that it complements rather than competes with that iconic structure.

Skywalk design – Improved Street linkages

1.7 Orient skywalks to the street level by improving the visual and functional connection of skywalks to the street. Provide incentives for property owners to upgrade and improve the general appearance of their skywalks.

The proposed skywalk is not within the retail district and is intended to serve a specific public use for persons moving between the District's facilities and the new hotel and parking garage in the northeast corner of the downtown Core. The casual pedestrian walking past the Convention Center campus is not the intended user. The nearest potential skywalk connection to the new hotel is located two blocks to the west in the Bennett Block at Howard and Main. It is possible that when the parking lots on these intervening blocks are replaced by buildings, such expansion could occur pending owner interest.

Skywalk System Coordination

1.8 Improve signage and develop brochures to guide skywalk users. Address other problems such as locked doors, hours of use, and lack of system coordination.

As the only two destinations for the proposed skywalk, the PFD and convention hotel will coordinate ingress and egress, hours of use and internal signage.

Strategic Parking Management

Public Parking Structures

2.43 Develop additional off-street parking structures for short-term parking Downtown while encouraging long-term parking on the periphery of Downtown. Continue to connect the peripheral parking to the Downtown Core with the trolley system and pedestrian links. Continue the CityTicket program.

The new hotel project, by agreement with the PFD, is providing structured parking adjacent to and below the hotel structure. The primary purposes of the parking garage will be to support the convention hotel and the District facilities. City Ticket hours were recently increased by the District Board at

the request of STA.

SECTION 3.0 GATEWAYS, SIGNAGE, & WAYFINDING

A gateway, signage, and wayfinding program will inform residents and visitors of the existence and location of community services, recreational opportunities, retail shops, restaurants, campuses, parking, restrooms, and other information. A signage and gateway program will also support the creation of a cohesive identity for Downtown and its sub-districts. A clear hierarchy should be established to provide both directional and identification signage.

Gateway features are related to signage in helping to identify Downtown Spokane and signal the start of a unique area. Such features can be created through a combination of landscaping, directional signage, lighting, public art, and building design. They can range from subtle to monumental in scale, but all gateways should fit with the overall character and image of surrounding development and Downtown Spokane.

The Convention Center Campus and the new convention center hotel are within a unique and special purpose district that introduces entry into the downtown retail district. Stretching from Division Street, the major north-south spine of Spokane, to Washington Street, another north-south gateway route, the Convention Center district enhances the activities of the downtown retail and business core.

SECTION 7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION

7.13 Support and promote the expansion of the Spokane Convention Center on the block south of the current facility, which is bounded by Spokane Falls Boulevard, Main Avenue, Washington, and Bernard Streets.

CHAPTER SIX -- DISTRICT STRATEGIES

SECTION 1.0 DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

OPPORTUNITY SITES

Convention Center Expansion (South Site)

1.3 Further expansion of the Convention Center south across Spokane Falls Boulevard will help make significant inroads into connecting the Convention Center with the East End and Downtown Core. The development will include a Class A Convention Center Hotel, additional convention space, structured parking, a multimodal transportation hub, and other public uses. It will be critical that the development has active ground floor uses, especially along Main Avenue.

SECTION 2.0 SPECIAL DISTRICTS

HOTEL, INB PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, AND CONVENTION CENTER DISTRICT STRATEGIES

2.8 Promote redevelopment activities and reinforce the Hotel, INB Performing Arts Center, and Convention Center District around the Convention Center.

2.9 Improve pedestrian connections between the Convention Center, hotels, the Intermodal Center, the Davenport District, and across Division Street to the Riverpoint Campus. Encourage and enhance pedestrian crossings of Division at West Main Avenue and along the Centennial Trail.

The objective of the skywalk is to connect and facilitate pedestrian flow, with a grade separated crossing of Spokane Falls Boulevard, between the new convention hotel and parking garage with the District facilities.

CHAPTER SEVEN - IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 3.0 IMMEDIATE ACTION

As a major driver of all other economic markets in Downtown Spokane, the Convention Center expansion is recognized as the highest priority project. The Convention Center expansion will bring additional visitors to Downtown Spokane, thereby fueling growth in the retail, hospitality, and hotel industries. Development of a large Class A Convention Center hotel facility that can accommodate all conference participants in a single hotel will open the door for additional hosting opportunities. New restaurants, entertainment, and shopping venues will attract more Spokane residents and visitors to spend more time Downtown.

The provision of a skywalk link between the convention hotel and the Convention Center Campus will support the operations of the hotel and the parking garage. The hotel and parking garage, will, in turn, strengthen the position of the Convention Center in providing a more convenient and vibrant guest experience.

2. Considering the design of the skywalk or air right and the uses existing in the area, what impact will the skywalk have on surrounding properties? What measures are you proposing to avoid significant adverse effects or interference with the use of neighboring property or the surrounding area?

The Convention Center District establishes the context for the proposed skywalk which will cross Spokane Falls Boulevard just west of Bernard Street. The enclosed pedestrian connection will link two prominent developments which occupy both the entire block between Bernard and Washington Streets and Spokane Falls Boulevard and Main Avenue, the Convention Center campus, including the existing Double Tree Hotel, occupies the entire area between Division and Washington streets and Spokane Falls Boulevard and the Spokane River. The context of the proposed skywalk will be to bridge these developed areas.

The Convention Center is a horizontally-oriented flat white plane separated from the INB Performing Arts Center by a spacious breezeway that opens to the river and Riverfront Park. The skywalk would enter the building below the juncture of the sloping roof of the INB and the angled dark glass west façade of the Convention Center. Impressed horizontal and vertical lines, with the horizontal prevailing, emphasize the horizontal mass of the Convention Center. Dark glass dominates the facades of the Convention Center and the facing INB.

Other buildings and uses in the immediate vicinity include the following:

South and East – parking lot and two-story brick FedEx Office building (Fruci), and to its east, the historic four-story brick Fruci building, and four-story horizontally-banded concrete School District 81 headquarters. East of the Fruci buildings is Azteca Restaurant, a parking lot, and 20-story concrete Park Tower. An entire block in area, the 13-story convention center hotel, it would be the dominant feature on the south side of Spokane Falls Boulevard.

West - Both the new convention center hotel, to which the skywalk will be attached, and the INB Performing Arts Center extend to Washington Street, a distance of about 360 feet. Beyond Washington Street along the south side of Spokane Falls Boulevard are nearly two blocks of asphalt parking lots; Riverfront Park is along the north side. About 1800 feet west is the skywalk connecting Riverpark Square parking garage and Spokane City Hall.

There is currently a marquee sign that occupies a portion of the viewshed through which the skywalk would pass. This sign is 39 feet in width, about 15 feet in height, and spans about 1/3 the distance between the wall of the Convention Center and the wall of the new hotel, a distance of about 112 feet.

The skywalk would connect the Convention Center, constructed in 1974 as the Washington State Pavilion (with the adjoining opera house, now INB Performing Arts Center) to the new convention hotel that is presently under construction. The skywalk is proposed to be 14-feet in width, and 112 feet in length.

3. Considering the design of the skywalk or air right and the uses existing in the area, what impact will the skywalk have on surrounding properties? What measures are you proposing to avoid significant adverse effects or interference with the use of neighboring property or the surrounding area?

See above.

4. How does the application for skywalk or air rights conform to the standards contained in the Spokane Municipal Code Sections 12.02.0430 through 12.02.0474? Be specific. Please complete a Skywalk Specifications Checklist and submit with this application form.

The skywalk will comply with these provisions with the two following exceptions:

[Section 12.02.0460](#) Dimensions – Angulation – Slope

A. Skywalks must be no less than eight feet nor more than fourteen feet in width, and no more than fourteen feet in height.

Because of the difference in floor heights of the Convention Center and the new convention hotel, the skywalk internal walkway will have a slope. The internal ramp slope will meet the ADA and SMC criteria at 5% maximum slope, however, the allowable external slope of the structure (1%) is less than that allowed for the internal ramp. Consequently, the external structure has been deepened to meet the 1% requirement and appropriately complement the aesthetics of the skywalk and receiving buildings. Because of the greater than normal length of the skywalk, 112 feet, the additional height of the skywalk elevation is proportionate to the overall dimensions of the structure. The proposed height is 18 feet which exceeds the 14-feet specified above. This would allow the slope of the ramp to

be disguised within the skywalk enclosure and provide a horizontal orientation to the structure. This would complement the aesthetics of the receiving buildings.

The skywalk design is intended to complement and be sensitive with the design of the INB and Convention Center, and new convention hotel. The intent of the designers (same firm that designed the INB for EXPO 74) is to create a structure that is simple, transparent, elegant and blends into the receiving buildings. The length of the structure, 112 feet will allow a higher height that would be appropriately proportioned to the mass and scale of the receiving buildings.

And, [Section 12.02.0470](#) Signs – Lighting:

The graphic lettering that would provide the gateway announcement “CONVENTION CENTER” would be graphically incorporated into the glass of the skywalk with the intent of announcing the arrival in a subtle and sensitive manner to convey place and direction. The intent is to integrate the graphic into the context of the skywalk structure and not clash with the skywalk envelope or the buildings to which it serves.