

## **Skywalk Connecting Spokane Convention Center and New Convention Hotel** Spokane Public Facilities District Convention Center, West 334 Spokane Falls Blvd.

### **Project Description and Purpose**

The project is construction by the Spokane Public Facilities District of a skywalk over Spokane Falls Boulevard, west of Bernard Street, to connect the Spokane Convention Center and the new convention hotel to the south. The District does not own the hotel or the hotel site, but will own 300 spaces in the new hotel parking garage which will be accessed through the hotel lobby.

The proposed skywalk, a structure of about 112 feet in length and 18 feet in height, will connect a new mezzanine floor within the Convention Center to the second floor of the new convention hotel. The skywalk will include steel structure, a ramp and mechanical/electrical equipment, and be enclosed with glass and aluminum panels.

The purpose of the project is to provide a grade-separated, all-weather pedestrian connection over Spokane Falls Boulevard. 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." 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.

### **Variance Requested for Height**

A variance is requested to exceed the 14-foot height limit (SMC 12.02.0460A). Because of the difference in floor heights between the Convention Center and the new convention hotel, the skywalk internal walkway will have a slope. Although that slope will meet the ADA and SMC criteria with a 5% maximum slope, the allowable external slope of the structure (1%) is less than that allowed for the internal ramp. Consequently, the external structure needs to be deepened from 14 feet to 18 feet meet the 1% requirement to include disguising the ramp slope to complement the aesthetics of the skywalk and receiving buildings.

### **Wayfinding Sign on Skywalk to Replace Existing Marquee Sign**

To aid in wayfinding, the PFD is proposing a subtle graphic, "Convention Center," to be placed on the exterior wall of the skywalk. This graphic will identify the downtown's Hotel, Convention Center and INB Performing Arts Center District. The Convention Center and new convention center hotel/parking garage are major components of this district that provides lodging and public venues that host both local and out-of-town visitors.

The Downtown Plan recognizes that gateway, signage and 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 used for entertainment, exhibition, and gathering events and activities at the public facilities.