

### **TYPE III SKYWALK PERMIT**

to construct a skywalk over Howard Street, north of Main Ave.

**Project Narrative:** The purpose of the project is to replace and relocate the existing skywalk spanning Howard St. north of Main Ave. that connects the Bennett Block to the east and the Macy's building to the west.

**Street Level Access:** The need to replace this skywalk is a result of the renovations planned for the Macy's building. Its current plan position spans from the southeast and southwest corners of each city block it connects. A primary goal of the design is to relocate the skywalk further north of Main Ave, removing the mass from the corners of the buildings and opening the Howard St view corridor to the north allowing a better visual connection of the historic Bennett Block façade, the Rotary Fountain, as well as further emphasizing the retail storefront character of the Main Ave corridor. The new site for the skywalk is approximately one hundred and six feet north of the current location.

Pedestrians were able to access the Howard St. skywalk via an exterior stair at the northwest corner of Howard and Main. At its new position the sidewalks are narrower, so space is not available for reinstating an exterior stair connecting to street level within fifty feet of either terminus (SMC 12.02.0474). There are, however, two access points within the Bennett Block development that will be available along the new skywalk circulation pathway through the second level of the building. The exit stair at the west edge of the building has direct access to the street and is immediately accessible from the public corridor. This stair was previously approved as street level access when the building owner modified the skywalk spanning Main St to the Parkade. The travel distance from the east terminus of the skywalk to this access point is one hundred and ten feet. The other available access point is at the northeast corner of the Bennett Block development and is eighty-five feet from the east terminus of the skywalk. The position of this access point offers a couple of advantages to the skywalk circulation system. First, it is in a direct line of sight from the east skywalk terminus which aids in wayfinding. And second, there is an elevator available at this location providing ADA wheelchair access, which is a public service beyond that required of the Municipal Code. Pedestrian grade level access from the sidewalks to this entrance point is available via the alley north of the Bennett Block as well as the pedestrian pathway along the east edge of the Bennett Block. Each of the pathways have been thoughtfully developed by the building owner to be pedestrian friendly, safe environments, and are heavily used and recognizable as public circulation features within the immediate neighborhood. Signage features will be added to the interior and site circulation to further aid in wayfinding.

Even though the travel distance to each access point exceeds the fifty foot maximum; it is the combined attributes of these two pedestrian access points and the features they offer above the code minimum that we feel providing access within the Bennett Block offers a superior solution than what could be developed at its east terminus in the Macy's building. We are therefore requesting a variance to exceed the fifty foot minimum as prescribed by SMC 12.02.0474.C.

**Level Tolerance:** The skywalk's current west terminus lands at the second level of the Macy's building, which is approximately twelve feet above the first floor (street entrance level) of the structure. To create viable retail environments within the building, the current second floor will be demolished in order to increase the volume of the retail tenant spaces. In doing so, the existing third floor will become the new second floor level and is approximately twenty three feet eight inches above the first floor. The elevation of the east terminus of the skywalk, connecting to the Bennett Block, is approximately five feet

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two inches lower than the new second floor of the Macy's building (previously the east terminus was approximately six feet five inches higher than the original second floor landing that will be demolished).

The new skywalk structure will then need to slope up from its east terminus to connect to the new second floor level of the Macy's building. This will be accomplished by means of a ramped floor structure rising at a slope of one inch rise in twelve inches of run (1:12 or 8.3%) which is the maximum allowed by ADA standards. The distance between the buildings is seventy-four feet six inches, and after incorporating the required landings limiting the rise of each ramp run, the entire ramp will rise five feet two inches within the skywalk structure between each terminus. The floor structure of the ramped walkway will be supported by a trussed steel frame structure, and as an entire assembly is sloped at 6% between its end supports at each building.

Pursuant to the requirements set forth in Section 12.02.0460 of the Municipal Code, the structure has been sized so that when enclosed its overall height does not exceed fourteen feet in height. However, due to the 6% slope of the structure in conjunction with the length of its span, if the enclosure were to be constructed to satisfy the requirement for skywalks to be level within one percent tolerance between building contact points – striking level lines at the roof parapet contact point and soffit contact point would result in an overall height of approximately eighteen feet.

We have considered the impact of the skywalk design to the character of Howard St and the historic structures that front it, as well maximizing the view corridor from Main Ave. north to Riverfront Park and the Rotary Fountain. Knowing that the skywalk structure could satisfy only one of the requirements of either being level or under fourteen feet in height, priority has been given to reducing its overall bulk and provide a slimmer sloped structure to span the street. The design has been presented to the Design Review Board, and upon their review has recommended approval. In conclusion, we are requesting a variance to exceed one percent slope tolerance from level between building contact points as prescribed by SMC 12.02.0460A.