



**City of Portland, Oregon**  
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**Land Use Services**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** November 13, 2015  
**To:** Portland Design Commission  
**From:** Staci Monroe, City Planner – Urban Design  
(503) 823-0624, [staci.monroe@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:staci.monroe@portlandoregon.gov)  
**Re:** November 19, 2015 Design Advice Request  
EA 15-236632 DA – Burnside Bridgehead Skywalk

Please find plans attached for the Design Advice Request (DAR) for a potential skybridge to span across NE 3rd Avenue between Block 67 (21-story building currently under construction) and Block 76W (5-story building pending Type 2 Design Review). The bridge is intended to facilitate pedestrian and bike connections between the Burnside Bridge and Couch Street to the Block 67 roof amenities and retail uses. Details of the proposal include:

- 10'-0" wide, uncovered, aluminum truss bridge with grate metal decking and stainless steel cable netting guardrail.
- Located:
  - 22'-10 above the finished grade immediately below on NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave
  - 4'-2" above and 117'-2" north of the Burnside Bridge

The Type I skybridge would require a Major Encroachment Review, which is processed by Transportation with City Council as the Review body. The Design Commission would forward an advisory recommendation to the City Engineer, who would consider the Commission, as well as public and other City agency, comments.

Transportation (PBOT) is not supportive of the proposed skybridge to connect pedestrians and bikes to the roof amenities and retail uses between the Block 76W and Block 67 developments. The encroachment policy language clearly states skybridges are to be discouraged to prevent adverse impacts on the sidewalk as the primary pedestrian system. More importantly, it must demonstrate a public benefit that cannot be achieved without the encroachment. The proposed skybridge appears to primarily serve the private developments and has the potential to take pedestrian activity off of NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Therefore, **the primary discussion for the DAR should center around the appropriateness of the skybridge and if the Commission feels it could meet the Major Encroachment approval criteria.**

More specific information on the recently approved skybridges:

- Center for Health and Healing South (CHHS) – Originally proposed two skybridges and reduced to one across SW Whitaker. Supported by the Commission since it was a very specific patient care facility with shared program elements (surgery and recovery) and care continuum in separate buildings that necessitated quick and sterile connections across SW Whitaker. The Commission stated this skybridge was acceptable because it serves a social good related to surgery and patient care. The Design Commission recommended approval and City Council recently approved the Major Encroachment.
- PSU School of Business Administration (SBA) – The proposal included demolishing a segment of an existing skybridge for the new building and reconstructing the segment 30' west of its original location to reconnect to the existing skybridge within the SW

