

**City of Seattle**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION – 2011-2012**

*Date:* May 16, 2011

*Applicant:* Chris Leman

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*Name of general area, location, or site that would be affected by this proposed change in text (attach additional sheets if necessary):* A popular pedestrian commuting and recreation area that is between the Capitol Hill, North Broadway, Eastlake, and South Lake Union neighborhoods.

*Applicant Signature:*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Leman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

*Date:* 5/16/11

Attachment A

## **REQUIRED QUESTIONNAIRE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application**

*1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed amendment and a clear statement of what the proposed amendment is intended to accomplish. Include the name(s) of the Comprehensive Plan Element(s) (Land Use, Transportation, etc) you propose to amend.*

On the Seattle Urban Trails System map (Transportation Figure 1 in section 3.6 of the Comprehensive Plan), mark as “planned” a one-block walkway on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. between the E. Blaine Street Stairs and the E. Howe Street Stairs.

Explanation. Known nationwide for their views and recreational value, Seattle’s staircases are widely used not only for recreation but also for commuting. Two of the longest and most heavily used staircases, on the E. Blaine St. and E. Howe St. rights-of-way, are one block apart. These staircases connect Capitol Hill and the North Broadway neighborhoods with the Eastlake and South Lake Union neighborhoods. These stairs are heavily used, for example, for commuting between some of Seattle’s densest residential areas and some of its major employment centers, and south along Lakeview Blvd. they connect to WSDOT’s Lakeview/Melrose pathway south to downtown.

Because of their length and views, the Blaine and Howe St. staircases are also heavily used for recreational walking. They connect with such amenities as Volunteer Park, Streissguth Gardens, the St. Marks Greenbelt, Colonnade Park, and Lake Union. Because these two staircases are just one block apart, they are also used as an exercise loop by many people who go up one staircase and down the other.

Unfortunately, at the foot of the Blaine and Howe St. staircases along the east (uphill) side of Lakeview Blvd, there is no walkway connecting them. Instead, the steep and eroding hillside forces pedestrians who wish to walk between them (or who wish to walk between the walkways on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. that continue north and south of this block) to go into the street amidst fast-moving traffic, some if from the I-5 off-ramp. Alternatively, pedestrians must make two crossings of this same dangerous traffic in order to reach the sidewalk on the west side of Lakeview Blvd. The current proposal is to specify on the Seattle Urban Trails System Map that a one-block walkway is planned on the east side of Lakeview Blvd.

*2. Describe how the issue is currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. If the issue is not adequately addressed, describe the need for it.*

The Seattle Urban Trails System map (Transportation Figure 1 in section 3.6 of the Comprehensive Plan) currently shows as “planned” a walking route just north and just south of this one-block site. However, at the site of the proposed one-block walkway on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. between the E. Blaine Street Stairs and the E. Howe Street Stairs, the map (last updated in the year 2000) is occupied with

Attachment A

two large dots oriented east-west that indicate past planning for the pathway and stairs under I-5 through Colonnade Park to connect this site to the Lake Union area. Those dots (which the City placed on the map many years ago as a result of a successful Comp Plan amendment proposed by the undersigned) are no longer needed because the planned trail and staircases were actually built as a part of the Colonnade Park project. Now the east-west dots obscure the needed clear marking for a planned walkway on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. between the Blaine and Howe St. staircases. Such an addition to the Seattle Urban Trails System map is wholly appropriate and badly needed.

*3. Describe why the proposed change meets the criteria adopted in Resolution 30662 for considering an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The criteria are listed at the end of this application form. Is a Comprehensive Plan amendment the best means for meeting the identified public need? What other options are there for meeting the identified public need?*

Adding to the Urban Trails System Map a planned one-block walkway on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. between the Blaine and Howe Street staircases is particularly appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan because doing so does not attempt to specify to SDOT how it is to engineer such a walkway. Two distinct possibilities that SDOT has studied include cutting into the slope to install a retaining wall, or narrowing the traffic lanes and extending the curb further from the hillside to make room for the walkway on the existing paved surface. These are operational decisions; it is important only for the Comp Plan to recognize this one-block walkway as something that is needed and planned.

It is difficult to conceive of another urban trails project that would, in just the one-block extent of this walkway, benefit as many people. Thousands of people a week use the Blaine or Howe St. staircases, and many will use the new walkway when it is built. In fact, many pedestrians currently walk this route in the street, an inconvenience and danger to them and a liability to the City.

*4. What do you anticipate will be the impacts caused by the change in text, including the geographic area affected and the issues presented? Why will the proposed change result in a net benefit to the community?*

The planned one-block walkway will have wide benefits, better linking the areas of Capitol Hill, North Broadway, Eastlake, and Lake Union. It will provide safer and more convenient access to Volunteer Park, Streissguth Gardens, Colonnade Park, and Lake Union. It will make it easier for people to commute on foot between some of the City's largest residential and employment centers. It will enhance this area's already developing reputation as a good place to visit from other parts of Seattle, and from outside of Seattle.

*5. How would the proposed change comply with the community vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan? Please include any data, research, or reasoning that supports the proposed amendments.*

With just a slight change in the Urban Trails System map to reflect a planned one-block walkway on the east side of Lakeview Blvd. between the Blaine and Howe Street stairs, this project greatly enhances the Comprehensive Plan's efforts to promote safe and convenient pedestrian connections, as well as access to recreation and to jobs.

*6. Is there public support for this proposed text amendments (i.e. have you conducted community meetings, etc.)? Note: The City will provide a public participation process, public notice, and environmental review for all applications.*

The large and increasing number of users of the Blaine and Howe St. staircases "vote with their feet" by walking between these staircases along Lakeview Blvd. (often dangerous in the traffic lanes). It clear they will acclaim and use the proposed walkway when it is built. Whenever we have collected signatures on behalf of improvements like this from users of the staircases, it has been very easy to collect hundreds of signatures.