

**Idaho Statesman, Saturday, April 16, 2011 -- by Cynthia Sewell**

## **5-story medical building proposed near St. Luke's in Boise**

*A skybridge would cross a street near Broadway and Warm Springs.*

Signs that Boise's dormant development community may be springing back to life: the May 2 Boise Planning and Zoning Commission agenda is packed with proposed building projects, including the new medical office building atop a three-floor underground parking garage.

The building proposed for 305 E. Jefferson St. would be just across the street from St. Luke's Boise Medical Center and would provide office space for doctors and other medical providers. A skybridge over Avenue B would connect the new building to St. Luke's east tower.

The city's planning commission denied the project on March 7 because of parking concerns, but developer Mark Guho worked out some solutions and the planning commission has agreed to reconsider the project at its May 2 meeting.



The city approved the project in 2009, but the developer has requested to add one more story, which requires new approval. Guho said if the project

is approved, he is not sure when construction would begin or how long it would take. "The building footprint really hasn't changed from the proposed footprint or site plan proposed back in 2009," said city planner David Moser. Parking is a concern in the area between one of the city's largest employers, St. Luke's, and the residential East End. The proposed three-floor underground parking garage would have 274 spaces. In addition — to encourage alternative transportation — Guho plans on providing lockers and parking for bicycles, adding a bus shelter and paying half the cost of employee bus passes.

St. Luke's supports the project and says it can help with the parking solution. "St. Luke's has been working closely with the developer of this project and anticipates being a tenant of this project," Matt Bell, St. Luke's vice president of strategic planning, wrote in a letter to the city. St. Luke's employees who work in the building would be able to park in St. Luke's garages.

The proposed building's height wasn't a concern for the planning commission, but it is for some neighbors. The proposed building has multistory buildings on the three sides. Two residents from the adjacent nine-story apartment building testified against the project at the March 7 hearing, citing concerns that the new building would block their Foothills view and create more parking problems.

Guho and the project's architect, Greg Ugrin with Hummel Architects, explained at the hearing that the building's design is four stories stepping up to five stories. Where the building steps from five to four stories is positioned to help minimize how much of the neighbors' view is blocked, Ugrin said.