

BURKE-GILMAN TRAIL MISSING LINK

Design Advisory Committee - Charter

June 15, 2017



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

Problem Statement

The Burke-Gilman Trail (BGT) is one of the most heavily-used walking and bicycling facilities in Seattle. It is a vibrant, 20-mile trail connecting multiple neighborhoods and other city and regional trails. It serves as a major transportation corridor for people riding to work or running errands, as well as providing a space for recreation. Despite its popularity and utility, it has a 1.5-mile incomplete section as it passes through Ballard; this portion is referred to as the “Missing Link” of the BGT. This Missing Link has been under evaluation since 2001, but due to the unique challenges associated with the heavy industrial, manufacturing, maritime, freight, and rail operations within this area of Ballard along the Lake Washington Ship Canal, agreeing on and designing a safe route for all has been difficult.

Project Description

In 2017, the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link project will design an approximately 1.5-mile missing portion of the trail along the preferred alignment identified through environmental review and consultation with the community and key stakeholders. The design will incorporate stakeholder and community input and the key principles identified in the project framework:

- Safety and predictability for all users both along and across the trail
- Responsive to the commercial and water-dependent industrial nature of adjacent uses
- Connectivity to the existing network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Accessibility and comfort for the greatest diversity of users

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link project is to complete the Burke-Gilman Trail through the Ballard industrial and urban hub neighborhoods to improve safety for all, to support a variety of transportation and recreational uses for people of all ages and abilities, and to preserve freight mobility and access to adjacent properties.

Project Background

The project has been in development since 2001 following the Seattle City Council’s direction to evaluate completing the missing portion of the Burke-Gilman Trail. After many years of planning, stakeholder conversations and litigation, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) completed an initial environmental review of the project, culminating in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in 2016. The DEIS process included a scoping period to determine the alternatives to be considered, several open houses, and public comment periods.

In the DEIS, the City evaluated four alternatives to complete the Missing Link. Suggested routes were evaluated based on:

- Directness of route,
- Number and types of trail crossing (i.e., driveway and intersections)

- Street and arterial classifications,
- Adjacent land uses, and
- Right of Way width.

After reviewing the public comments received on the DEIS, and discussions with both internal and external experts and stakeholders, SDOT combined two of the proposed Build Alternatives to form the Preferred Alternative. The Final EIS is anticipated in May 2017.

Beginning at the existing western trail end (at the Ballard Locks), the preferred alternative would continue east along the south side of NW 54th St until it turns into NW Market St. The trail would continue along the south side of NW Market St, until the intersection with 24th Ave NW. At the intersection of NW Market St and 24th Ave NW, the Preferred Alternative would head south on the west side of 24th Ave NW for approximately 125 feet before the intersection with the south side of Shilshole Ave NW. The Preferred Alternative would then cross 24th Ave NW and proceed along the south side of Shilshole Ave NW, continuing onto the south side of NW 45th St to 11th Ave NW, and the eastern terminus of the trail.



Figure 1 Map of EIS alternatives and the preferred alignment for the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link

Design Advisory Committee Purpose

The purpose of the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) is to provide the SDOT with feedback during design of the Missing Link section of the Burke Gilman Trail. Working collaboratively with SDOT, the DAC’s purpose is to help improve the design of the trail along the preferred alignment so it balances the needs and safety of

all users, with a focus on local freight mobility and trail users, safety goals, parking management, access needs of adjacent properties and the commercial, maritime, retail and industrial community properties. The DAC will be comprised of stakeholders representing various interests.

Design Advisory Committee Process

- SDOT will share updated designs with the DAC for their feedback.
- DAC members will learn about SDOT's proposed design and provide feedback on potential impacts.
- SDOT will listen to feedback from the DAC in moving the design forward.
- SDOT will involve the DAC in future public events and other community outreach when broader community input on design options is solicited.
- SDOT shall ultimately decide on the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link design to recommend.
- DAC members will be provided a mechanism to respond directly to questions from the community.

The DAC will meet up to 15 times to discuss the design of the trail along specific segments and key locations as listed below. The DAC will consult with additional stakeholders for each segment and key location as appropriate. DAC meetings will be open to the general public; members of the general public will be able to listen to the committee's discussions and have an opportunity to comment at the end of meetings.

Key Challenging Locations Along the Preferred Alignment

Segment 1: Market St (Ballard Locks to 24th Ave NW)

- Shilshole Ave. NW/NW Market St. intersection
- 26th Ave. NW and Market intersection
- 28th Ave. NW and Market intersection
- Ballard Locks entrance and parking lot

Segment 2: Shilshole Ave NW (24th Ave NW to Ballard Bridge)

- Shilshole Ave. NW and 17th Ave. NW intersection
- Covich Williams and Salmon Bay properties
- Stimson property and NW Vernon Pl. intersection
- Other businesses, ex. CSR Marine
- Trail/rail crossing

Segment 3: NW 45th Street (Ballard Bridge to 11th Ave NW)

- NW 45th St. trail alignment
- Track realignment under Ballard Bridge
- Access to NW 45th St.
- NW 45th St. and 11th Ave. NW intersection

Project Framework

The City will work with the Design Advisory Committee as it develops the final design for a safe Missing Link, and commits to following the project framework as described below:

1. The Missing Link will incorporate the following key principles:
 - Provide safety and predictability for all users both along and across the trail.

- Maintain access to the commercial and water-dependent industrial uses adjacent to the trail.
 - Provide connectivity to the existing network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
 - Seek accessibility and comfort for the greatest diversity of users.
2. The City will undertake the following design approaches:
 - Utilize data-driven design solutions that apply innovative features to provide safety and predictability for trail users along and freight movement across the trail.
 - Reduce conflicts through lower speeds, clear lines of sight, appropriate access points, and other methods.
 - Expand the range of traffic control devices considered and apply them in a consistent manner.
 - Coordinate with adjacent projects including SPU to minimize trail and business disruptions.
 - Minimize parking loss throughout the project area.
 - Implement utility improvements as necessary, such as for stormwater drainage control and future trail maintenance.
 3. SDOT will discuss with the DAC the concerns of stakeholders at specific locations along the alignment and ideas to address those concerns.
 4. SDOT will update designs based on the discussions and share with the DAC for their feedback.
 5. Discussions will continue with the goal of identifying potential problems with design.
 6. SDOT shall ultimately make the final decisions on the design of the Missing Link.

Roles and Responsibilities

All participants will commit to moving forward with decisions in a timely fashion in support of the design period, anticipated to run between May 2017 – December 2017.

Staff

- Provide technical expertise to offer deeper understanding of the topics and inform DAC dialogue.
- Consult with the DAC, listen carefully and consider DAC input prior to updating alignments and design options.
- Explain how DAC feedback is incorporated when it is, and why when it is not.
- Continue to meet and coordinate with individual property owners outside the DAC process throughout design and construction.
- Provide schedule updates to DAC members

Members

- Be willing to have an open mind and come to meetings prepared for interest-based discussions. Members will share interests and objectives with all DAC members and openly discuss the reasons behind their statements, questions and actions.
- Listen and recognize the legitimacy of the concerns and interests of others whether or not they are in agreement with them.
- Read agendas and any provided materials in advance of each meeting.
- Explore issues from all points of view before forming conclusions.
- Share discussion time, encouraging everyone to participate fully.

- Represent the interests and concerns of their interest groups. Members will consult with their constituencies on a regular basis concerning the discussions and preferences of the DAC. At each meeting, members will report what contact they have had with and what they have heard from their communities.
- Attend every meeting, to the best of their ability. Recognizing that attendance at all meetings may be challenging for volunteer members, alternates may be included. Alternates will be allowed to attend in place of the primary member with the understanding that:
 - 1) one alternate is identified and will be added to the DAC contact list and receive all DAC meeting materials ahead of meetings,
 - 2) alternates are fully briefed by the primary member on the DAC's role and previous discussions,
 - 3) the alternate is able to speak on behalf of the primary member and/or organization.
- If members are not able to meet their responsibilities on the DAC, a replacement will be appointed.
- Respect the decisions made at previous meetings, even if they were not in attendance.

Facilitator

- Serves as an impartial individual who guides the process, including facilitating design advisory committee meetings.
- Keeps the group focused on the agreed-upon task. Sets protocol for each meeting, suggests alternative methods and procedures, and encourages participation by all group members.
- Works with SDOT to coordinate meeting logistics, prepare meeting agendas and materials (including meeting summaries and reports). DAC members will be notified of what materials will be printed prior to each meeting. Summaries will be provided a week following each meeting.
- Assists in keeping communication open between the DAC and SDOT staff. The facilitator will work to assure relevant information is provided in a timely and effective manner, no later than 2 days before DAC meetings.
- Will not offer substantive discussions about design elements.

External Communication

- Members will voice any concerns over the advisory committee process through dialogue with SDOT staff, the facilitator, and other stakeholders before taking any public action or making any public communications that could have consequences for the DAC process.
- Members will avoid characterizing the views or opinions of other DAC members outside of any DAC meeting or activity.
- Members will accurately describe DAC preferences that are conveyed to SDOT.
- Meeting observers will have an opportunity to provide oral comments to the DAC at any meetings.

Informing Design Elements

- DAC members will strive to collectively make reasonable requests and suggestions through a cooperative and collaborative discussion process with SDOT.
- In discussions, a facilitator will seek out group consensus; the DAC will not operate by vote. Design decisions are ultimately the decision of SDOT. All DAC feedback will be considered by SDOT.

Meeting Ground Rules

- Meetings start and end on time.
- Silence electronics.
- Ask questions of each other to gain clarity and understanding.
- Express yourself in terms of your personal preferences, interests, and outcomes you wish to achieve.
- Listen respectfully, and try sincerely to understand the needs and interests of others.
- Come with curiosity and willingness to listen, learn and contribute.