

# Trailside Vacation

**Tim Burgess**  
Mayor

**Samuel Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Ross Tilghman**, Chair

**John Savo**, Vice Chair

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Evan Fowler**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Brianna Holan**

**Rick Krochalis**

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## Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair  
John Savo, Vice Chair  
Lee Copeland  
Ben de Rubertis  
Evan Fowler  
Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad  
Brianna Holan  
Rick Krochalis

## Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

## Project Description

The applicant is petitioning to vacate NE 48th St between 24th Ave NE and the Burke-Gilman Trail. The vacation proposal includes the development of two 7-story residential buildings with an estimated 268 residential units, ground floor retail, outdoor amenities space for residents, and below grade parking with 278 parking stalls. The development also includes publicly accessible open space, pedestrian and cyclist connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail near NE 47th St, as well as an additional pedestrian connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail near NE 49th St.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the Trailside Vacation project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the urban design merit phase of the project. The Commission did not take an action during this meeting. The SDC provided several recommendations to be addressed prior to the next meeting.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Thaddeus Egging** recused himself as his employer, KPFF, is working on the project.

**November 16, 2017**

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

**Type**

Street and Alley Vacation

**Phase**

Urban Design Merit

**Previous Reviews**

None

**Presenters****Austin Besse**

Weber Thompson

**Mark Brands**

SiteWorkshop

**Preston Hart**

Phoenix Property Group

**Attendees****Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

**Skye Bremberg**

Weber Thompson

**Jeremy Febus**

KPF

**Sonya Gabrielson**

MKA

**Amanda Keating**

Weber Thompson



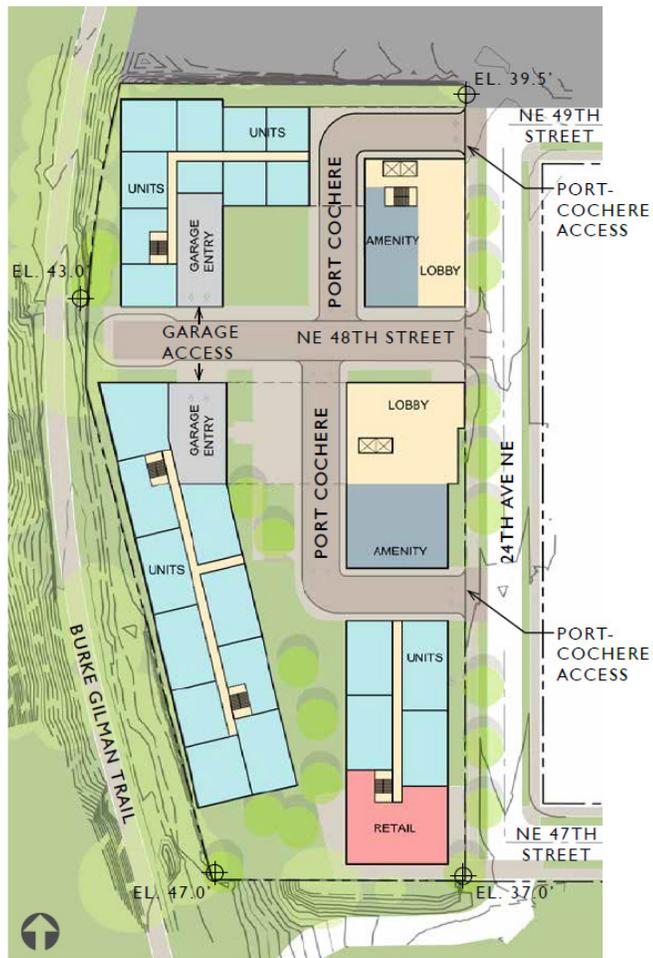
Figure 1: Location of development site

**Summary of Presentation**

Austin Besse, of Weber Thompson, Mark Brands, of SiteWorkshop, and Preston Hart, of Phoenix Property Group, presented the urban design merit phase for the Trailside Vacation. The project site is located within the University Community Urban Center along 24th Ave NE between NE 47th St. and NE 49th St. The site is one of several planned projects for the area west of University Village (see figure 1). The development does not anticipate generating a high volume of vehicular traffic. Rather, the project team anticipates most residents will utilize the adjacent Burke-Gilman Trail for high percentage of daily trips.

The project proposal includes the petition to vacate NE 48th St between 24th Ave NE and the Burke-Gilman Trail. Under the vacation scenario, the project proposal includes two 7 story residential buildings with ground floor retail, lobby and residential amenity space. The proposal includes two 22-foot-wide vehicular access points along 24th Ave NE. A garage entry for below grade parking is located near the northeast corner of the project site at the intersection of NE 49th St and 24th Ave NE. An arrival court will be located between the two buildings. The project proposal also includes public space and two connections to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Proposed public space will be located near the southwestern portion of the site to maximize sunlight as well as provide a visual connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail and NE 47th St. The public space will include gathering space, lawn area, and seating. A mixed-use pathway will be located along the southern edge of the site, providing a connection between the Burke-Gilman Trail and NE 47th St. An additional pedestrian pathway will be located along the northern edge of the site between NE 49th St and the trail. The vacation scenario also includes redeveloping 24th Ave NE into a curbsless street between Ne 47th St and NE 49th St. see figures 2 & 3 for more detail.

**NO STREET VACATION**



**WITH STREET VACATION**

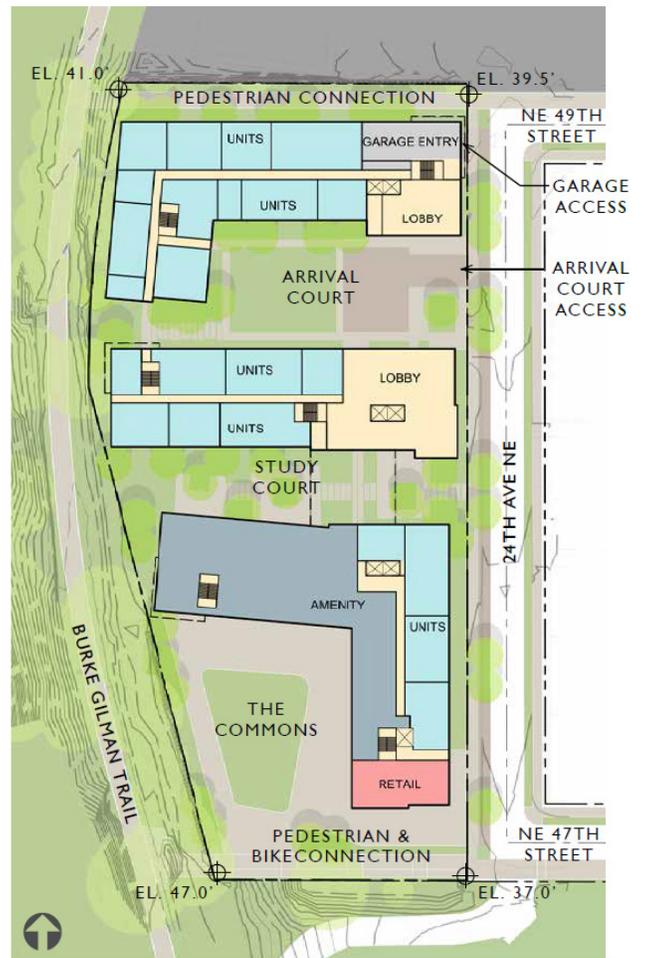


Figure 2: Proposed site layout under a no vacation (left) and vacation (right) scenarios



Figure 3: Proposed site plan under a vacation scenario

The no-vacation scenario also includes two 7-story residential buildings with ground floor lobby, retail, and residential amenity space. Under this scenario, the proposal includes two vehicular access points on 24th Ave NE as well as two vehicular access points and two garage entrances on NE 48th St. The no vacation scenario does not include a connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail on private property, but NE 48th St is intact and can be used by the public to access the trail. see *figure 2 for more detail*.

## Agency Comments

**Beverly Barnett**, SDOT, stated that the project makes sense for the area and highlighted the additional connections to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Ms. Barnett said that SDOT has concerns with placing both vehicular and pedestrian access points together on the northeast corner of the site. Ms. Barnett then stated that the project team should continue moving through the iterative design and technical process to make everything work well on site.

## Public Comments

None

## Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Access and circulation
- Open space
- Utilities
- Air, light, and views
- Neighborhood context

### *Access and circulation*

The SDC identified the no vacation scheme as a worst-case scenario and then reminded the project team that it is important to show a no vacation alternative with a well thought out design. Although the Commission recognized the direct connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail provided in the vacation alternative and agreed it provided a better experience for pedestrians and cyclists than in the no vacation alternative, several commissioners questioned if the vacation alternative provided additional connections that could not otherwise be achieved in a no vacation scenario. The Commission recommended the project team provide more information about the necessity of the vacation request. Several commissioners then encouraged the project team to consider providing a connection between the arrival court and the Burke-Gilman Trail. The project team responded that SPR was against providing a connection to a private use.

The Commission recommended the project team consider consolidating garage access and the arrival court to minimize curb cuts along 24th Ave NE. Commissioners also commented that a garage access point should not serve as a terminus for NE 49th St. The SDC requested more information about circulation near the southeastern corner of the project site and the adjacent development.

### *Open space*

The SDC agreed that including a large amount of open space on site provide a positive addition to the project. The Commission also commended the design team for providing open space adjacent to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Commissioners appreciated that the vacation scenario did not place a long building façade along the trail. The commission then suggested the project team include the street as open space in the no vacation scenario.

### *Utilities*

The SDC had no issues with the proposed utility changes.

### *Air, light, and views*

In recognizing that this segment of the Burke-Gilman Trail is already well shaded, the SDC agreed there was little to no difference in shade created between the vacation and no vacation scenarios. The commission commended the project team for placing open space on the southside of the site. Commissioners then acknowledged the increased visual connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail and proposed open space from the intersection of 25th Ave NE and NE 47th St. Although the air, light, and views along this portion of NE 48th St will be lost, commissioners recognized public access to the north and south of the project site adequately replace the space lost due to the vacation. Several commissioners are concerned the north public access point will be located permanently in the shade and will be

less appealing to use. The SDC encouraged the project team to design the pathway in a way that will make it more appealing for pedestrians to use.

#### *Neighborhood context*

The SDC thought the information was limited to the area surrounding University Village. Commissioners recommended the project team include more information on areas to the west and northwest of the project site to provide a better understanding of who the project is serving.

#### **Action**

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation on the urban design merit phase for the Trailside Vacation project. While the Commission appreciated the proposed public space and additional access to the Burke-Gilman Trail, Commissioners felt that the project had yet to establish a reason to justify vacating NE 48th St. at this location. The SDC did not take an action during today's meeting. The Commission provided the following recommendations that should be addressed prior to its next review:

1. Provide more information about public access between the right-of-way and Burke-Gilman Trail. Specifically, show how the project will provide accessible connections and public spaces that would not occur otherwise without vacating the street.
2. Put more thought into the vacation scenario plans.
3. Study the idea of providing a connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail midway through the site.
4. Provide demographic information on the surrounding area to explain who the project will be serving.