

Trailside Vacation

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John Savo, Vice Chair

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Evan Fowler
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis

Non-voting Commissioners Present

Justin Clark
Mark Johnson

Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis

Project Description

The applicant is petitioning to vacate NE 48th St between 24th Ave NE and the Burke-Gilman Trail. The vacation would allow 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 and a pedestrian and cyclist connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail at the intersection of NE 47th St and 24th Ave NE.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the Trailside Vacation project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the public benefit proposal. At this meeting, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the public benefit proposal for the Trailside Vacation with one condition and several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures

March 1, 2018

1:30 - 3:30 pm

Type

Street Vacation

Phase

Public Benefit

Previous Reviews

[1/18/18](#), [11/16/17](#)

Presenters

Brian Bishop

SiteWorkshop

Attendees

Beverly Barnett

SDOT

Emily Ehlers

SDOT

Jeremy Febus

KPFF

Preston Hart

Phoenix Property Group

David Landry

SDCI

Jack McCullough

McCullough, Hill, Leary, PS

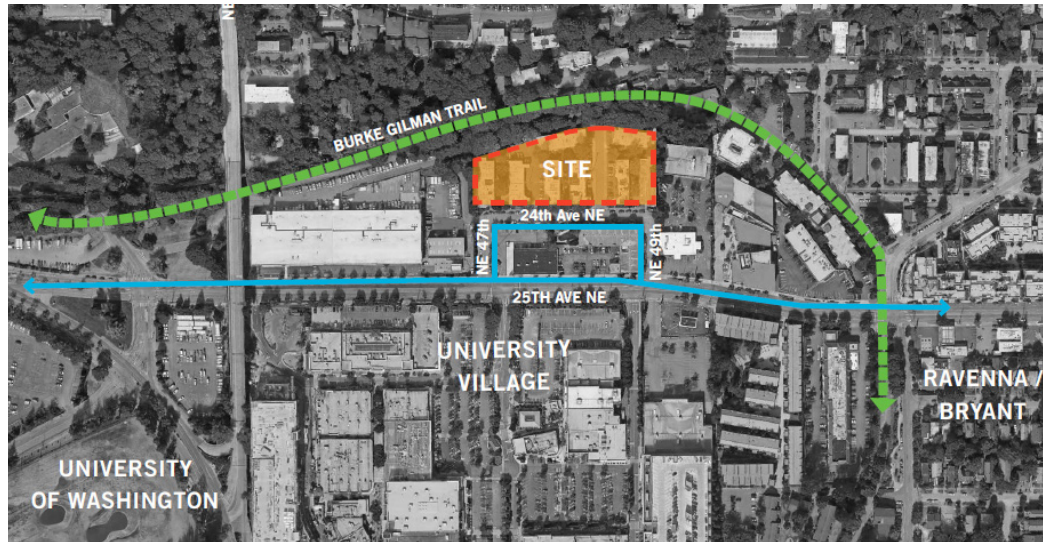


Figure 1: Context map

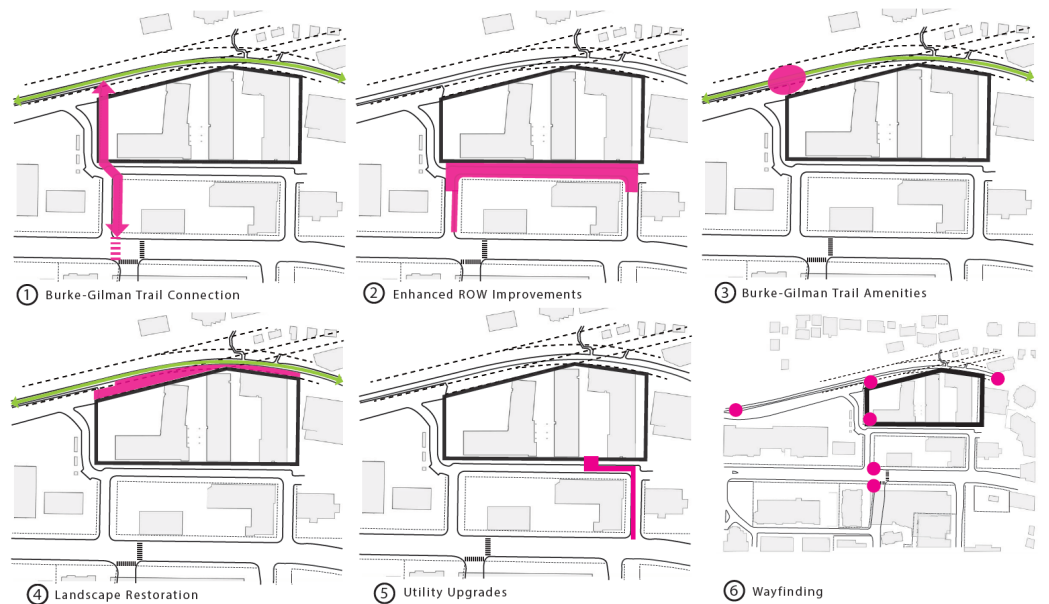


Figure 2: Public benefit proposal

Summary of Presentation

Brian Bishop, of SiteWorkshop, presented the public benefit proposal. The presentation included a brief review of the neighborhood and site context (See figure 1), updates to the proposal since the January 18, 2018 presentation, and the presentation of the public benefit proposal refined since the commissions last meeting. Since the January 18, 2018 commission meeting, several changes were made in response to commission concerns. The proposed fence and gate along the perimeter of the project commons has been removed. The stairs between the trail connection and project commons have been modified and increased in width. The remainder of the presentation focused on the following public benefit elements (See figure 2):

1. Burke-Gilman Trail connection
2. Enhanced ROW improvements
3. Burke-Gilman Trail amenities
4. Landscape restoration
5. Utility upgrades
6. Wayfinding

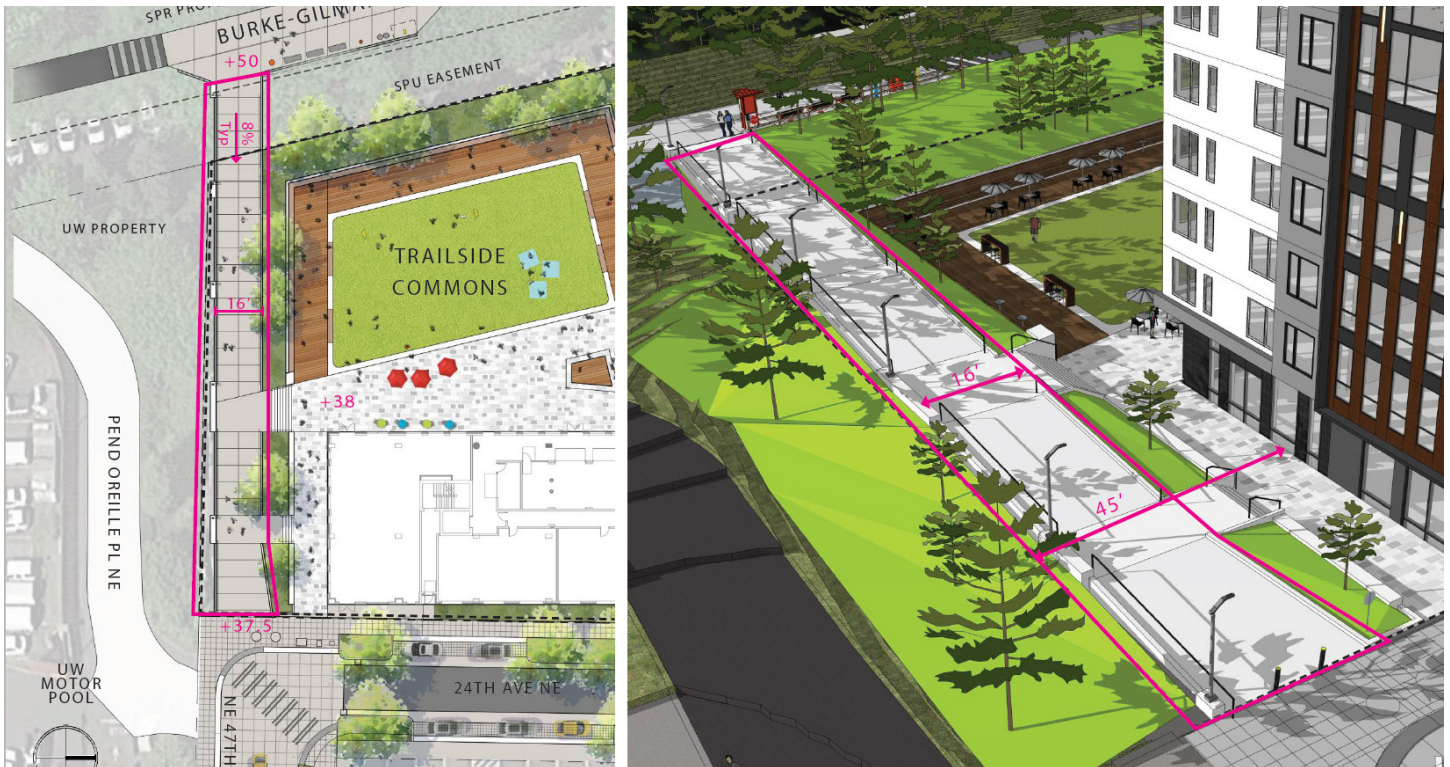


Figure 3: Burke-Gilman Trail connection

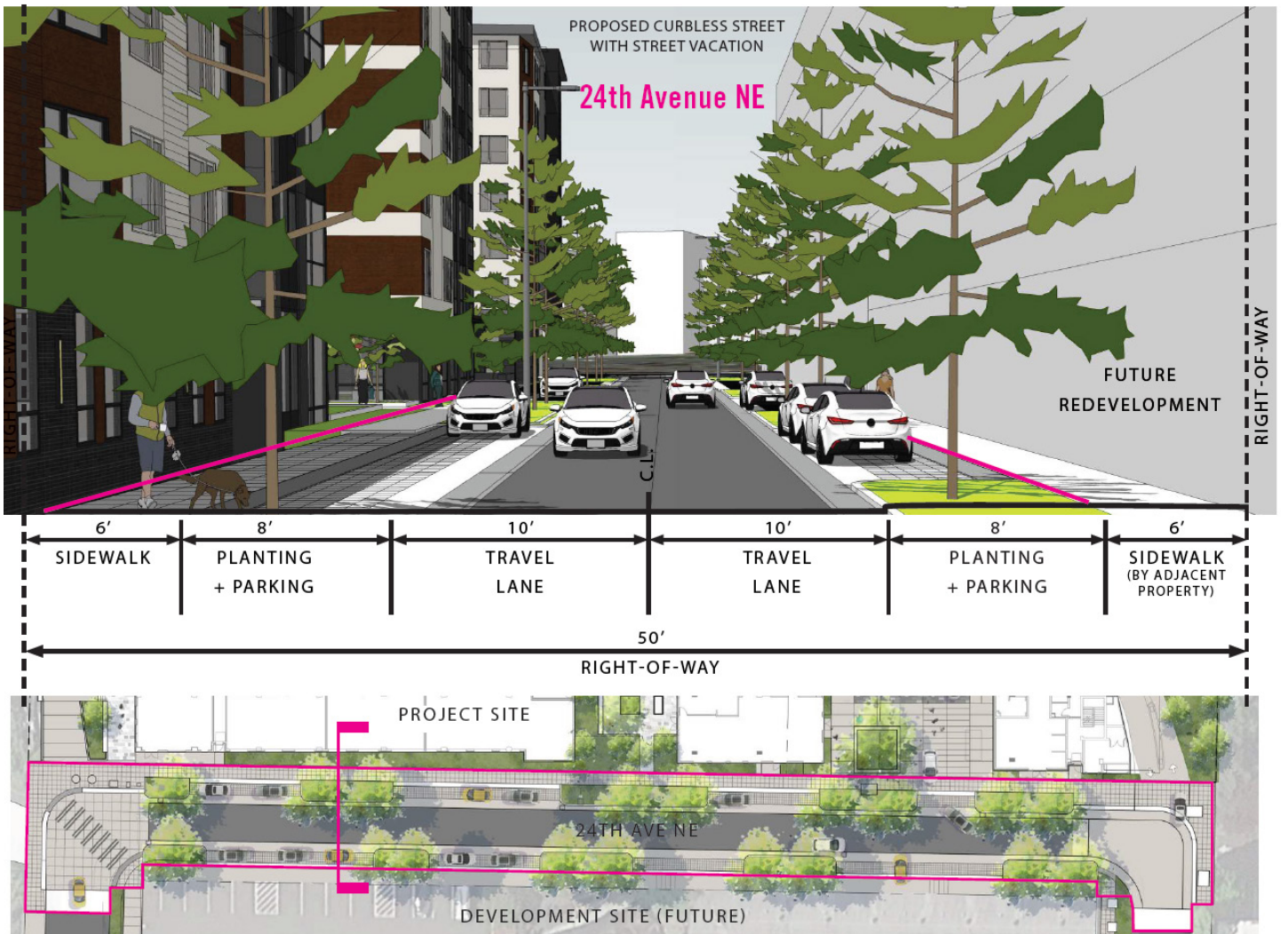


Figure 4: 24th Ave NE ROW improvements

Burke-Gilman Trail connection

The 16 foot wide pedestrian and bicycle connection, totaling 3,960 square feet in area, will span from the Burke-Gilman Trail to 24th Ave NE. In addition to providing a connection to the Burke-Gilman trail, pedestrian lighting, seating walls, and bollards for safety will also be included. The access stairway connecting the project commons to the train connection has also been widened. To enhance the trail connection, improvements are proposed at the intersection of 24th Ave NE and NE 47th St. (See figure 3 for more detail.)

Enhanced ROW improvements

24th Ave NE between NE 47th and NE 49th Streets will be developed as a curbside street. The proposed design includes on street parking and plantings on both sides of the street, as well as a 6-ft. wide sidewalk on the west side of the street. The 24th Ave NE and NE 47th St intersection will include pedestrian scaled pavers as well as a crosswalk connecting the trail connection with the sidewalk along the northside of NE 47th St. (See figures 4 & 5 for more detail.)

ROW improvements along NE 47th St will include an 8-ft. wide mixed-use pathway and 6 ft. wide planting strip along the north side of the street, as well as curb improvements on the northwest corner of the 25th Ave NE and NE 47th St. intersection.

Burke-Gilman Trail amenities

Proposed amenities along the trail segment abutting the project site include pedestrian lighting, drinking fountains, seating, a bike repair station, wayfinding, and an informational kiosk. The proposed amenities will be located on property between the trail and project site, which is owned by University of Washington and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR). The amenities area and adjacent portion of the trail will include concrete surface. Transition zones that include concrete banding, will be located at both ends of the area to signal to trail users that they are entering a new area. A split rail fence will separate the amenities area from the landscape restoration area. (See figure 6)

Landscape restoration

This element includes the restoration 12,530 sf area between the Burke-Gilman Trail and project

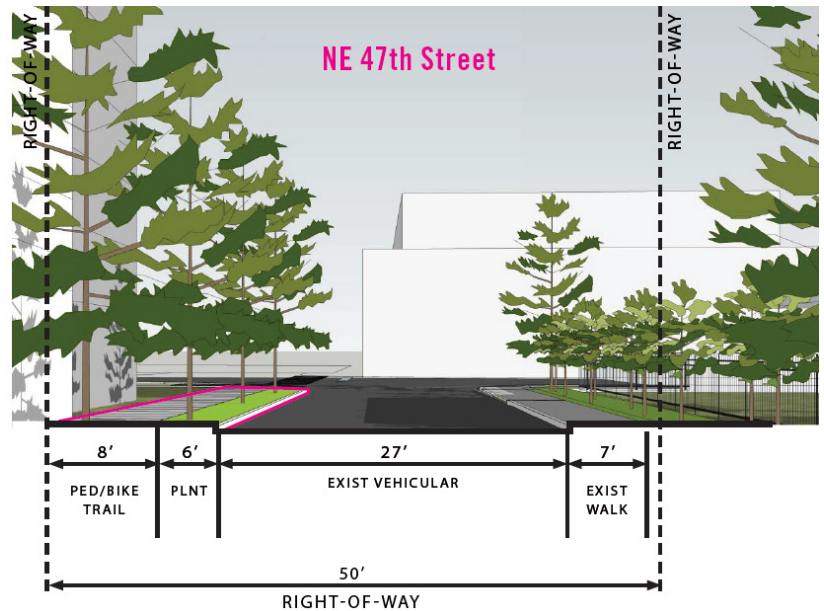


Figure 5: NE 47th St. ROW improvements



Figure 6: Burke-Gilman Trail amenities

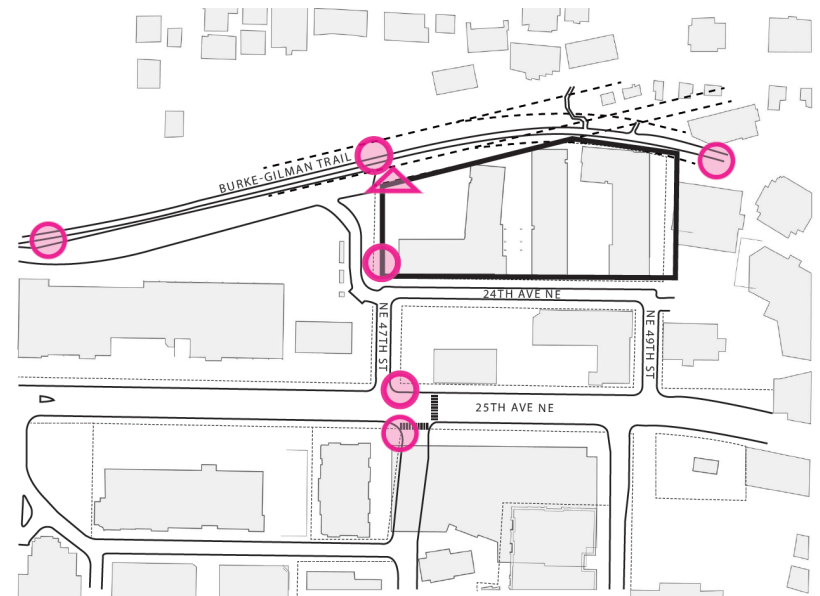


Figure 7: Wayfinding signage locations

site. The plan will restore native plant species and the removal of invasive plants. Either the developer will implement the project, or a \$15,000 contribution will be made to Green Seattle Partnership for them to complete the restoration project. The proposal also includes funding for maintenance.

Utility upgrades

Proposed upgrades include the undergrounding of overhead utilities, which currently cross the Burke-Gilman Trail. The power utilities will be rerouted from the east.

Wayfinding

This element includes providing wayfinding at 6 locations adjacent/near to the project site for pedestrians and cyclists (See figure 7). An informational kiosk will be located in the Burke-Gilman Trail amenities area. The project team is working with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) as they continue to develop a city-wide wayfinding program.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, voiced her excitement for the proposed trail connection and amenities. Ms. Barnett said the project team had been very responsive in prioritizing the things that are important to the city and community. Ms. Barnett then stated that Seattle Parks and Recreation department is also in support of the proposed connection. Ms. Barnett said SDOT would need to calculate what percentage of the proposed landscape restoration, if any, will be required by code. Ms. Barnett recommended the undergrounding of utilities not be considered as a public benefit, followed by commenting that SDOT would support the project without the element in the public benefit package. Because SDOT does not know how many wayfinding signs will be appropriate for the area, Ms. Barnett then suggested the project team provide a range for the number of wayfinding signs they are proposing rather than stating a specific number.

Emily Ehlers, SDOT, commented that the project team had responded to every comment and suggestion SDOT provided. Ms. Ehlers mentioned that SDOT is excited about the proposed design of NE 24th St., which incorporates everything required by the new Right-of-Way manual, and thinks it will transform the space. Ms. Ehlers then stated that the plan will also include raised intersections at both ends of 24th Ave NE to calm vehicular traffic. Ms. Ehlers also stated that the current project proposal provides the best connection between the Burke-Gilman Trail and surrounding neighborhood.

David Landry, SDCI, stated that his department supports the project because it provides less mass along the Burke-Gilman Trail and 24th Ave. Mr. Landry said that if the Commission approves the proposed vacation then it offers several benefits that would not otherwise be proposed. Mr. Landry then commented that the current design proposal fits in nicely with what the Design Review Board is looking for as well.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Trailside commons open space
- Burke-Gilman Trail connection
- Enhanced ROW improvements
- Burke-Gilman Trail amenities
- Landscape restoration
- Utility upgrades
- Wayfinding

Trailside commons open space

The SDC thought it was appropriate to discuss the relationship between the trail connection and the adjacent open space, which is open to the public but is not under consideration as a public benefit element. Since the last review the project team has removed the perimeter fence and gate, but recognizes that if safety becomes an issue

in the future then the project team might consider adding the fence and gate around the perimeter of the open space. The SDC commended the project team for removing the proposed fence, acknowledging that the removal increased connectivity between the trail and open space. The commission then adopted a condition that if the project team felt the need to reintroduce the fence then the SDC would need to review the proposal.

Burke-Gilman Trail connection

Prior to discussing the proposed element, the SDC strongly recommended the project team rename the element as “Enhanced Burke-Gilman Trail connection” so to not mistake it for the basic connection, which is a part of the urban design merit proposal. Commissioners then agreed the proposed element provided significant improvements above what would be required under any improved connection under the no-vacation alternative, and therefore should be considered as a public benefit. The Commission then discussed the width of the proposed connection. Commissioners thought the proposed 16 ft. wide connection was adequate and would provide for a lot of flexibility in the future. The SDC then discussed potential conflicts as cyclists approach the intersection of 24th Ave NE and NE 47th St. Commissioners thought the inclusion of bollards would help in reducing conflicts and recommended the project coordinate with SDOT to understand the appropriate spacing for bollards to reduce cyclist speed. The Commission also recommended providing low ambient levels for pedestrian lighting along the connection to assist in the transition from NE 47th St, which is lighted, to the Burke-Gilman Trail, which is not lighted.

The SDC recommended the project team provide an update about the design and width of the trail connection to SDC staff at 90% design; if there are significant changes the SDC may require the updated design return for a subcommittee review.

Enhanced ROW improvements

The SDC discussed the enhanced ROW improvements along 24th Ave NE followed by discussing the improvements along NE 47th St. The Commission commended the project team for the proposed ROW improvements along 24th Ave NE. Commissioners then discussed alternatives to the proposed solid crosswalk striping at the 24th Ave NE and NE 47th St. intersection. The Commission provided examples of alternatives that would provide a visual cue to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian area. The SDC recommended the project team continue to work with SDOT on the design of the intersection, paying close attention to materials and pavement treatments to prioritize pedestrian movement.

The SDC then discussed the enhanced ROW improvements along NE 47th St. Commissioners recommended the project team reduce the curb radius at the 25th Ave NE and NE 47th St to reduce vehicular speed. The Commission then had several concerns with the mixed-use pathway along the northside of NE 47th St. Commissioners are concerned the proposed mixed-use pathway is not wide enough to handle two-way traffic for both pedestrians and cyclists. The SDC recognized this street as part of a bicycle corridor between the Burke-Gilman Trail and U-Village and recommended the project team work with SDOT to create an appropriate design to facilitate the safe movement of cyclists and pedestrians along NE 47th St.

Burke-Gilman Trail amenities

The SDC appreciated the proposed amenities, specifically the water fountain, along this segment of the Burke-Gilman Trail. Commissioners suggested the project team look at alternative methods for the design of the transition between the trail and the amenity space.

Landscape restoration

The SDC appreciated the project team’s proposal to provide support in the restoration of natural areas adjacent to the Burke-Gilman Trail. The commission encouraged the project team continue to work with City departments to understand which areas are appropriate for restoration. The Commission also recommended the project team continue to work with SDOT and Parks to calculate the percentage of proposed landscape area that should be considered as public benefit.

Utility upgrades

The SDC agreed the proposed undergrounding of utilities should not be considered as a public benefit element.

The Commission recommended this element be removed from the public benefit package proposal.

Wayfinding

The SDC recommended the project team provide a range for the number of wayfinding signs they are proposing rather than stating a specific number. The Commission then recommended the project team continue to work with SDOT and SPR on the design and information provided on the proposed wayfinding signs and kiosk.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for its presentation on the public benefit package for the Trailside Vacation project. Overall, the Commission appreciated the project team's responsiveness to commission comments as well as input provided by organizations and the surrounding community. The Commission also recognized the importance of providing a connection between the Burke-Gilman Trail and 25th Ave NE. With the understanding that the project team would 1) rename the first public benefit element as the "Enhanced Burke-Gilman Trail Connection" and 2) remove the undergrounding of utilities element from the public benefit package, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the public benefit package for the Trailside Vacation project with the following condition:

1. Return to the SDC for a review if the project team decides to fence the perimeter of the common area.

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Rename the first public benefit element as the "Enhanced Burke-Gilman Trail Connection".
2. The undergrounding of utilities element should not be considered as a public benefit.
3. Pay special attention to spacing of bollards at the entrance to the trail connection at NE 47th and 24th AVE NE to reduce cyclist speed.
4. Consider providing low ambient levels for pedestrian lighting to assist in the transition from NE 47th St, which is lighted, to the Burke-Gilman Trail, which is not lighted.
5. Provide an update about the design and width of the trail connection to SDC staff at 90% design; if there are significant changes the SDC may require the updated design return for a subcommittee review.
6. Continue to work with SDOT on the design of the pedestrian crossing at the 25th Ave NE and NE 47th St intersection; pay attention to materials and pavement treatment to prioritize pedestrian movement.
7. If possible, consider reducing the curb radius at the intersection of 25th Ave NE and NE 47th St.
8. Continue to work with SDOT to create an appropriate design to facilitate the safe movement of cyclists and pedestrians along NE 47th St between 24th and 25th Avenues.
9. Continue to work with SDOT to calculate the percentage of proposed landscape area that should be considered as public benefit.
10. Provide a range for the number of wayfinding signs they are proposing rather than stating a specific number.
11. Continue to work with SDOT and SPR on the design and information provided on the proposed wayfinding signs and kiosk.