

# Trailside Vacation

**Jenny A. Durkan**  
Mayor

**Samuel Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Ross Tilghman**, Chair

**John Savo**, Vice Chair

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**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  
Brianna Holan

## 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) second review of the urban design merit for Trailside Vacation Project. On November 16, 2017, the SDC reviewed the urban design merit proposal for the project but did not take an action. At this meeting, the SDC voted, 8-0, to approve the urban design merit phase of the Trailside Project with several recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

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

January 18, 2018

1:30 - 3:30 pm

**Type**

Street Vacation

**Phase**

Urban Design Merit

**Previous Reviews**[11/16/17](#)**Presenters****Austin Besse**

Weber Thompson

**Mark Brands**

SiteWorkshop

**Preston Hart**

Phoenix Property Group

**Attendees****Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

**Chris Fiori**

Ravenna Bryant Community Assoc.

**Jonathan Freedman**

Feet First

**Jeremy Febus**

KPF

**Jack McCullough**

McCullough, Hill, Leary, PS

**Chip Nevins**

SPR

**Kelsey Mesher**

Cascade Bicycle Club

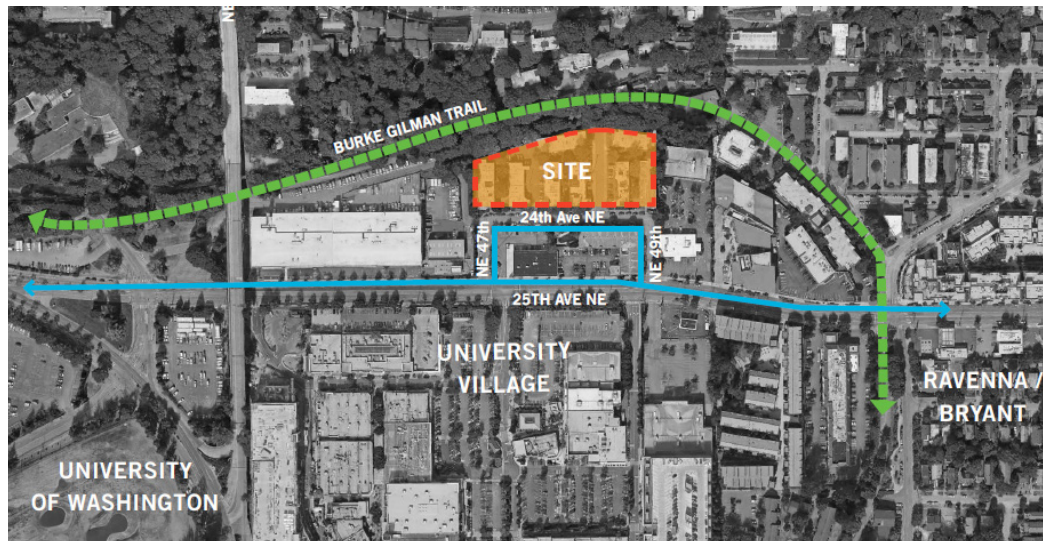


Figure 1: Context map

**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 of the Trailside Vacation. The presentation included a review of the urban design analysis as well as updates to the vacation and no vacation scenario proposals since the previous review on November 16, 2017. 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 updated vacation scenario includes the elimination of the pedestrian pathway along NE 49th St to the Burke-Gilman Trail, slight realignment of the garage entry, and modification to the design and layout of the proposed open space along the southwest edge of the site. A fence with two access points will surround the proposed open space. The proposed mixed-use pathway along the southern edge of the site connecting the Burke-Gilman Trail with NE 47th St has increased in width from 12 feet to 16 feet. The proposal also includes the addition of a crosswalk across NE 47th St along the pathway between the trail and U-Village. (See figure 2). The proposal will also relocate above ground electrical utility lines crossing the Burke-Gilman Trail below ground.

The updated no-vacation scenario includes two arrival courts with entrances along NE 48th St, as well as an additional garage entrance on the southeast corner of the project site. The proposal also includes the potential for a direct access between NE 48th St. and the Burke Gilman Trail. Cyclists and pedestrians traveling between the Burke-Gilman Trail and U-Village will use a less direct path, traveling down NE 48th St, 24th Ave NE, and NE 47th St. See figure 3 for more detail..

**Agency Comments**

**Beverly Barnett**, SDOT, commented that it is still early in the vacation review process. Ms. Barnett stated that the Street Improvement Permit process is going well and that they have not found any major issues with the project. Ms. Barnett then commented she was pleased with the community outreach process.

**Chip Nevins**, SPR, commented on how the department assesses providing potential connections to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Mr. Nevins stated that due to high traffic volumes and speeds, the department wants to limit the amount of connections to the trail. Mr. Nevins then commented that the department agrees with providing a connection along 47th St, which would serve as a great amenity for the neighborhood.



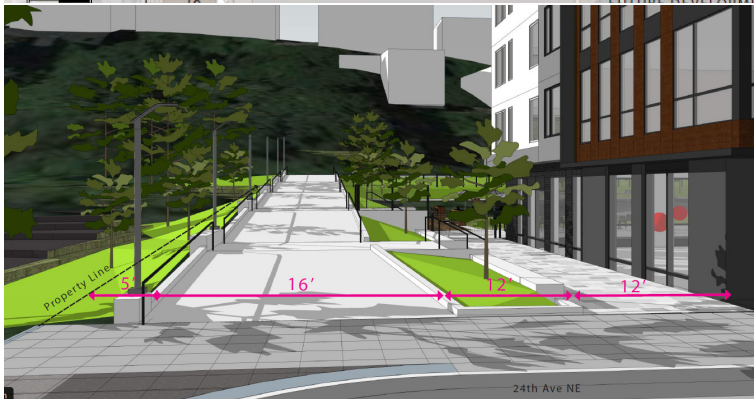


Figure 2: Updated vacation scenario plan (top), mixed-use pathway (bottom left), and proposed pedestrian and cyclist connection (bottom right)

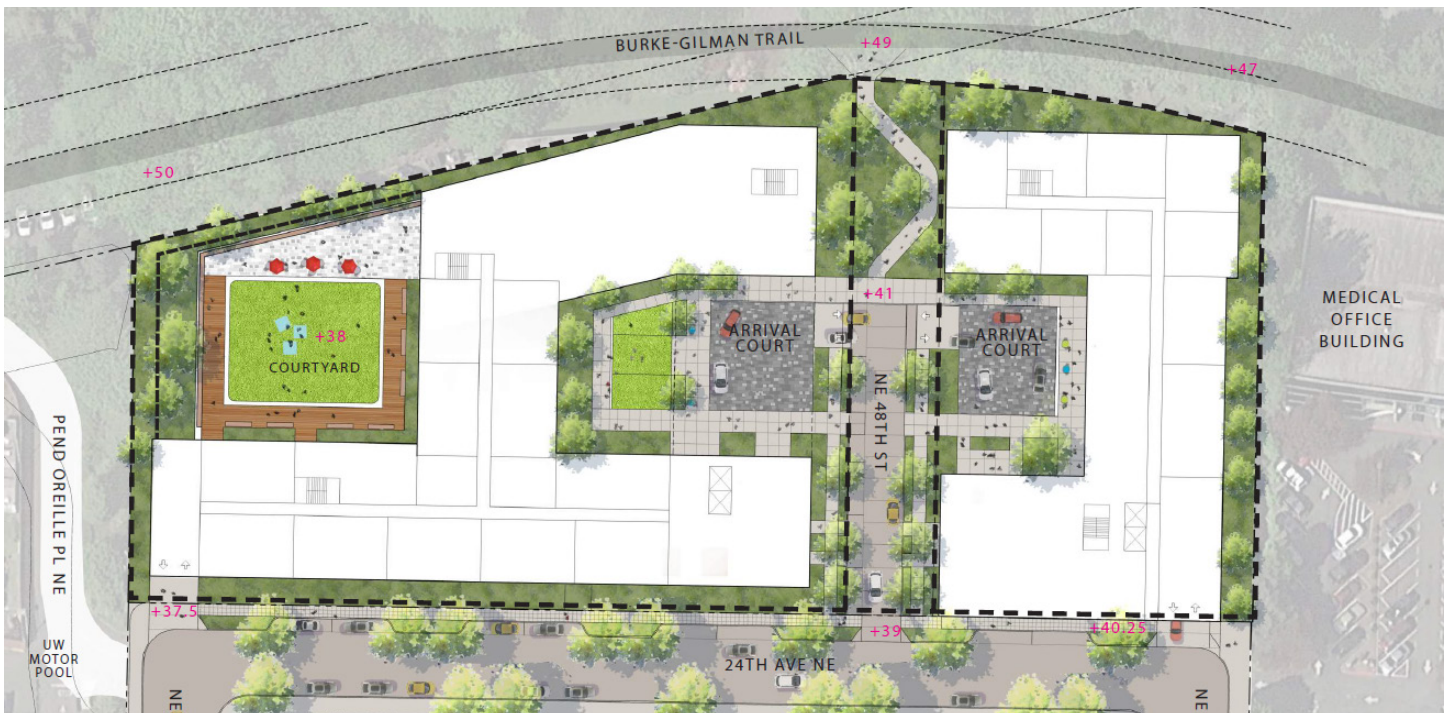


Figure 3: Updated no-vacation scenario plan

January 18, 2018

## Public Comments

**Chris Fiori**, Ravenna Bryant Community Association, recognized that, while this project is not in the Ravenna- Bryant Neighborhood, it is located near a major commercial area, which is used by many community members. Mr. Fiori stated that the association has been very supportive of the project, which he recognizes will provide a stronger pedestrian and cyclist connection from the Burke-Gilman Trail to U-Village. Mr. Fiori then commented that the connection and open space associated with the project will be well utilized. Mr. Fiori then agreed with not providing a connection from NE 49th St to the trail.

**Kelsey Mesher**, Cascade Bicycle Club, is very supportive of the project. Ms. Mesher stated that the project team has done a great job in reaching out to her organization. She commented that the Burke-Gilman Trail is one of the most used active corridors in our region, but lacks a major connection to several amenities. Ms. Mesher then stated that U- Village provides many amenities and should have a safe connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Ms. Mesher views the proposed connection to the trail as a true public benefit as it will be used by many people.

**Jonathan Freedman**, Feet First, commented that the existing condition with trail access is dismal and dangerous and that the proposed connection will be a tremendous improvement. Mr. Freedman then commented that he appreciates his organization being brought into the planning process. Mr. Freedman stated that he does have concerns about the proposed shared pathway and wants to continue working on the design to make sure pedestrians and cyclist know where they should be moving. Mr. Freedman also mentioned that elements such as lighting, pavement materials, and signage will all be important to address as the project moves forward.

## Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Access and circulation
- Open space and programming
- Neighborhood context and demographics
- Light, air, views, and utilities
- Vacation vs. No-Vacation scenario

### *Access and circulation*

The SDC commended the project team for addressing issues with the previous design proposal, specifically the no-vacation scenario. The Commission thought the revised vehicular access points were appropriate, but encouraged, to the extent possible, locating loading services in the garage below grade.

The Commission then agreed the pedestrian and cyclist circulation worked well. Commissioners commended the project team for increasing the mixed-use pathway from 12 feet to 16 feet in width. The SDC is concerned with potential conflicts between cyclists and vehicles near the intersection of NE 47th St and 24th Ave NE. Commissioners recommended the design team include elements such as bollards and paving materials to distinguish vehicular and cyclist pathways near the intersection. The commission also agreed with removing the north pedestrian pathway along NE 49th St from the design proposal.

### *Open space and programming*

The SDC appreciated the idea of identifying the project as a trail oriented development. Commissioners encouraged the project team to provide enough activation in the open space adjacent to the arrival court in order to attract users. The commission also encouraged the project team to understand how pet needs will be addressed on site.

The SDC then commended the project team for providing open space near the southwest corner of the project site. Several commissioners are concerned the open space will appear too private and recommended the project team include elements that will create a space that is inviting and will encourage public use. The SDC then discussed potential solutions to create a more inviting space. While they did not propose a specific solution, the commission encouraged the design team to include elements that will attract public users in their public benefit proposal. The commission then recommended the proposed connection include more placemaking opportunities, specifically as the pathway approaches the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Commissioners then discussed the necessity of including a fence and gate around the perimeter of the open space. Several commissioners commented that the open space could function well without the fence. The commission then recommended the project team to consider protecting the building entrance with a gate rather than fencing the



entire perimeter of the open space.

#### *Neighborhood context and demographics*

The SDC appreciated the thoroughness of the community outreach. Commissioners agreed with providing this type of development along the Burke-Gilman Trail and within proximity to the University of Washington and U-Village. The Commission recommended the project team retain as much of the natural environment as possible along the edge of the Burke-Gilman Trail.

#### *Light, air, views, and utilities*

The SDC agreed the vacation scenario better addressed light, air, views, and utilities. Specifically, commissioners appreciated that utilities crossing the Burke-Gilman Trail would be relocated underground in the vacation scenario.

The SDC again commended the design team for locating open space near the southwest corner of the project site.

#### *Vacation vs. no vacation*

The SDC discussed the location of the pathway to the Burke-Gilman Trail in the vacation and no-vacation scenarios. Commissioners agreed the location of the trail at NE 47th St in the vacation scenario increased the visibility and accessibility of the trail from U-Village. Commissioners then continued their discussion on the necessity of including the trail connection as part of the urban design merit proposal. The SDC agreed the proposed connection from NE 47th St. to the Burke-Gilman Trail was essential to the urban design merit proposal. Commissioners then commented that proposed amenities along the connection should be what is considered for public benefit.

### **Action**

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation on the urban design merit phase for the Trailside Vacation project. Overall, the Commission appreciated the team providing a credible no-vacation alternative, strengthening the connection to the Burke-Gilman Trail, and providing adequate outreach to neighborhood groups and organizations. The SDC voted, 8-0, to approve the urban design merit phase of the Trailside Vacation with the following recommendations:

1. Consider using elements such as bollards and paving materials to reduce potential conflicts between cyclists and vehicles near the intersection of NE 47th St and 24 Ave NE.
2. Consider including placemaking opportunities when designing the mixed-use pathway, specifically in areas near the Burke-Gilman Trail
3. Consider eliminating the fence and gate from the perimeter of the open space or other means to indicate that the south courtyard is open to public use
4. Retain as much natural environment as possible along the edge of the Burke-Gilman Trail
5. Continue to pursue activation of the north court