

Burke Gilman Trail Missing Link

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair

John Savo, Vice Chair

Lee Copeland

Rachel Gleeson

Brianna Holan

Ben de Rubertis

Rick Krochalis

Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

Evan Fowler

Laura Haddad

Project Description

The Burke-Gilman Trail is a 20-mile long regional trail connecting Bothell to Golden Gardens. The trail serves as a major transportation corridor, connecting many neighborhoods throughout the region. The trail currently consists of two segments, which are separated by a 1.4-mile gap. The Missing Link project will provide a 1.4-mile trail through the Ballard neighborhood, connecting the two existing trail segments to provide a complete trail corridor. The project will reallocate space within the right-of-way along NW 45th St, Shilshole Ave NW, NW Market St, and NW 54th St and will also include safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and trucks.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link project since 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase of the project. After the presentation, questions, and deliberation, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design phase of the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link project with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

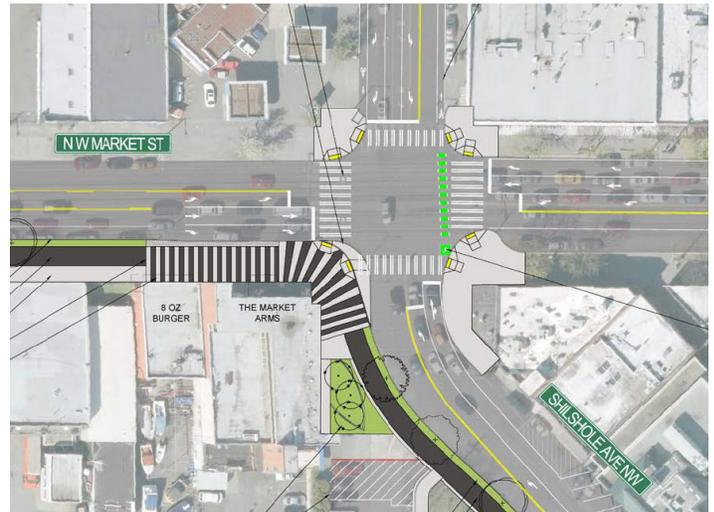
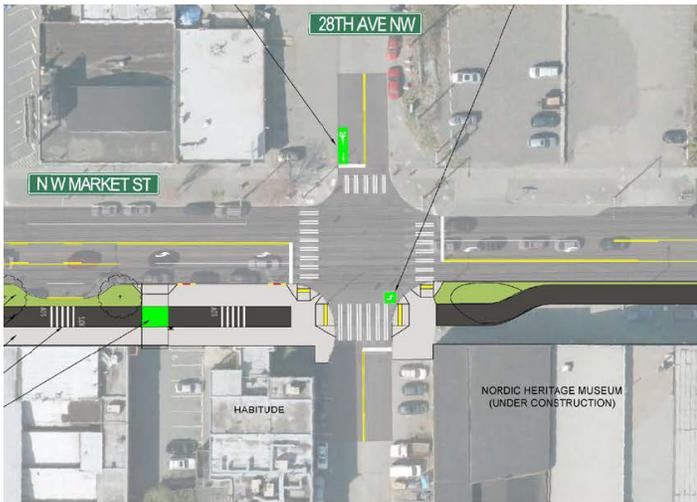


Figure 2: Proposed improvements at Market St and 28th Ave (left) and Market St and 24th Ave (right) intersections



Figure 3: Proposed design along Shilshole Ave NW



Figure 4: Proposed bicycle and pedestrian connections

User Interface

The SDC discussed the proposal to include flashing lights and signage as a way to caution pedestrians and cyclists that trucks are approaching. Several commissioners thought the proposal would be an effective system for cyclists, while other commissioners thought it might confuse pedestrians. The commission encouraged the project team to research if flashing lights located on other trails are used by cyclists.

Commissioners agreed with the proposed design solution for the pedestrian and cyclist mixing zones. The commission recommended the project team use high contrast materials to make sure the design won't fade over time.

The SDC commended the project team for the adjustments made to the design at the rail crossing. Commissioners feel the striping and fencing will slow users down.

Interacts with urban network

The SDC agreed the proposed design is well integrated with the surrounding urban network. Commissioners commended the project team for providing connections to the water and neighborhood greenways. Commissioners also appreciated how the trail interacts with areas along NW Market St. The commission recognized the difficulty in designing a pathway that will be used as a sidewalk and trail. Commissioners commended the project team for providing an adequate solution for separating different uses.

Placemaking

The SDC encouraged the project team to include information addressing wayfinding and trail history. Although they were encouraged to see the addition of trees along the trail, commissioners also recommended the proposed design include additional planting strips, specifically along Shilshole Ave NW. The commission stressed the importance of adding vegetation that enhances the pedestrian experience but will not compete or overshadow the character of the surrounding industrial area. While the commission agreed with the location of the green space near 24th/Market, they disagreed with identifying the green space as a place of refuge. The commission recommended the project team identify pause points along the proposed trail.

The SDC expressed their disappointment that an artist was not a part of the design team. The commission recommended the project return for a subcommittee meeting to review the progress of the art plan.

Sustainability

The SDC recognized the trail as a sustainable element as it provided alternative transportation options for pedestrians and cyclists. Commissioners expressed their desire for the use of permeable paving material for the trail in this context. The commission also reemphasized the use of plants as a way to increase sustainability along the trail. Commissioners encouraged the project team to include more opportunities for sustainable elements in the trail design. The SDC then recommended the project team return for a subcommittee meeting to review additional sustainability strategies.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the schematic design presentation of the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link Project. The Commission was glad to see that the missing link would finally be built. Commissioners appreciated the development of the user interface. They applauded the team for looking beyond the site for ways to improve connectivity to the neighborhoods. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the schematic design phase for the Burke-Gilman Trail Missing Link Project with the following recommendations:

1. Consider planting in lieu of pervious material Shilshole Ave NW, as there maybe plants appropriate to this location. This edge, while in an industrial area, should be greened to provide habitat and to make the trail visible as a civic amenity.
2. Provide areas for cyclists and pedestrians to stop and rest. Reexamine how the boat park can serve this purpose.
3. Continue the development of art, interpretive, and wayfinding elements along the trail. We are disappointed that the artist is being hired so late in the design process.
4. Be sure there is enough contrast in the striping of the mixing zones and use materials that avoid fading over time.
5. Consider again the flashing warning lights and their appropriateness in the context of this trail.