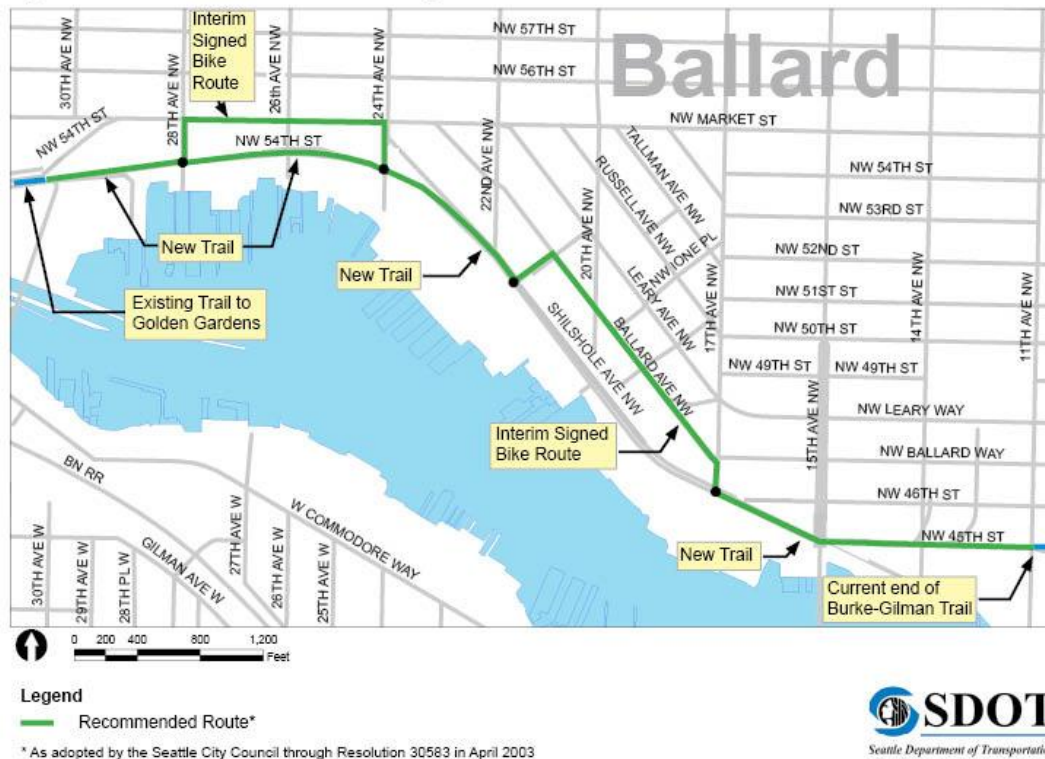


Figure 2 - Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project Route



**** INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE ****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY OF SEATTLE TO COMPLETE MISSING LINK OF BURKE GILMAN TRAIL

Advocacy by Cascade Bicycle Club proves instrumental in landmark decision

SEATTLE – (June 10, 2009) – Cascade Bicycle Club, a leader in creating more livable communities through bicycle education, advocacy, events, commuting and riding programs, announces the ruling by the Office of the Hearing Examiner for the City of Seattle in its favor to complete the “Missing Link” of the Burke-Gilman Trail. The decision by hearing examiner Sue Tanner made on Tuesday, June 9, 2009, is the result years of advocacy by Cascade Bicycle Club, and is an indication of the progress the city is making toward improving Seattle’s bicycle network.

Completing the “Missing Link” section of the Burke-Gilman Trail has been planned by the City of Seattle since it agreed to acquire the abandoned rail line right of way from Burlington Northern Santa Fe in 1989. The BNSF discontinued rail service and abandoned the line in 1997, and the transfer of much of the property took place shortly thereafter. A handful of Ballard businesses opposed the safety improvements along the corridor and appealed the City’s environmental review to the hearing examiner, which was upheld in this case.

“This milestone decision to complete the missing link of the Burke-Gilman Trail is the result of ongoing cooperation and communication between the City and Cascade Bicycle Club,” said Chuck Ayers, executive director of Cascade Bicycle Club. “We couldn’t be more pleased with the outcome of this appeal, and it is a huge step forward in improving safety for the cycling community and all commuters.”

“I am pleased the Hearing Examiner affirmed the City’s work on the Burke-Gilman Trail, “ said Mayor Greg Nickels. “I’ve remained sensitive to the concerns of local property owners. It’s time to move forward and complete this popular project.”

In January of this year, Cascade Bicycle Club filed a motion to intervene as a third party in the matter of the missing link, the progress of which had been stalled by several Ballard businesses along the incomplete section. The decision by the hearing examiner allows the city to move forward with construction that will solve numerous safety problems. This project will provide a new, separated trail and signed routes for bicyclists. Two Shilshole Avenue intersections, located at 17th Avenue NW and NW Vernon Place, will be redesigned to allow for safer crossing by bicyclists. In addition, the hazardous railroad tracks under the Ballard Bridge will be reconfigured.

“After reading the 20 point conclusion, it’s clear that the appellant’s ‘kitchen sink’ appeal was found to be meritless,” said David Hiller, advocacy director of the Cascade Bicycle Club. “We hope this is the point at which trail opponents recognize that this project is going to improve safety and mobility for everyone in the community.”

“This ruling is an affirmation of a process that the City started back in 1995, with its outreach to businesses and local citizens, an extensive and comprehensive review of trail options, and consideration of safety, access, and creating connections,” said Jennifer Macuiba, Ballard District Council executive committee and Friends of the Burke-Gilman Trail board member. “We know that the people of Ballard support the completion of the trail. We can all look forward to the day that we can say, ‘I live in Ballard, where the Burke-Gilman Trail begins!’”

Highlights from the decision:

- ARGUMENT: Appellants argued the [trail construction] proposal is incompatible with existing industrial water-dependent uses as property owners would be unable to perform building maintenance due to the project’s alignment and its proximity to existing structures.
DECISION: [...] testimony in the record established that maintenance of buildings abutting city of rights of way is accomplished through a street use permit that in this case would allow maintenance to be performed [...]
- ARGUMENT: Appellants claimed that SDOT failed to consider mitigation for traffic impacts and related intersection level of service [...]
DECISION: Appellants provided no evidence on intersection level of service. The city’s transportation technical memorandum analyzed it and found no deficiencies. In fact, the transportation technical memorandum determined the level of service at two key intersections *would remain acceptable or improve with the project.*

- ARGUMENT: Appellants cited that the trail was inherently a traffic hazard [...]

DECISION: The appellants did not demonstrate that the trail is inherently a traffic hazard.

Chuck Ayers, executive director, and David Hiller, advocacy director for Cascade Bicycle Club, are available for interviews today, Wednesday, June 10, 2009 between 12:30 and 4 p.m., either in-studio or in Ballard at the site of the missing link of the Burke-Gilman Trail. Please contact Naomi Zeitlin at (206) 682-6979 to coordinate times and locations.

About Cascade Bicycle Club

Founded in 1970, Cascade Bicycle Club is an 11,000-member, nonprofit organization based in Seattle, Washington, serving more than half a million cyclists in the Puget Sound community. The club is operated by a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors, 20 professional staff, and thousands of volunteers. More information about Cascade Bicycle Club's advocacy, commute, education and riding programs is available online at www.cascade.org or by calling (206) 522-3222.

*** High-resolution images available upon request.*

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