



4701 Shilshole Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98107

Via Hand Delivery and U.S. Mail

Mayor Edward B. Murray
P.O. Box 94749
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Re: *The Missing Link, Burke Gilman Trail*

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I am the owner of CSR Marine, and on behalf of CSR, I am writing to urge the City to support the proposed alignment of the Missing Link of the Burke Gilman Trail along the alternative located on Leary Avenue and Market Street. CSR is deeply concerned about SDOT's proposal to complete the Missing Link along Shilshole Avenue in Ballard.

For nearly forty years, CSR Marine has provided products and services to the Northwest with the mission of making a day on the water better for sailors and boaters. Beginning as the partnership of myself and Tim Ryan in 1977, CSR Marine has grown into a full service boatyard with over 40 employees and 5 acres of outside space in the heart of Ballard's maritime and industrial corridor on Shilshole Avenue Northwest. We provide a unique blend of services ranging from bare minimum boat maintenance to fully customized fabrications of sailboats and yachts. Many of our employees are sailors and boaters themselves, giving our company and workforce a deep knowledge and appreciation of boating, sailing, and the water.

Each and every employee of CSR Marine earns a living wage. Many of our employees are active in the community. We sponsor a local Little League team, we donate our time and services to various non-profits including Sail Sand Point, Footloose Sailing, Fremont Solstice Parade Cyclists, Northwest Marine Trades Associated, and the Manufacturing Industrial Council. With a relatively young workforce, many of our employees can not afford to live in the city, and need to commute in. They live outside of the city, and are starting families That commute is by car, due to the distances many live away. Parking is essential to many of our employees. That parking would all but be eliminated with the south orientation.

Just like a day on the water, each day is different at CSR Marine. However, for many years, we have worried that our days in Ballard are numbered because of SDOT's proposed bicycle trail that would run right in front of our business on Shilshole Avenue Northwest. As longtime business owners, employers, and supporters of Seattle's maritime and industrial tradition, CSR Marine fully supports completing the Burke Gilman Trail along the proposed alignment located on Leary Avenue and Market Street. We urge the City to adopt this as its preferred alternative as it considers options to complete the Missing Link of the Burke Gilman Trail.

We are familiar with the DEIS released by SDOT this past summer. Unfortunately,

SDOT's current design remains an inherently unsafe sidepath. Sidepaths are universally acknowledged as being more dangerous when compared to protected bicycle facilities, much like the protected bicycle facilities being constructed elsewhere throughout Seattle. We are confused as to why SDOT favors a dangerous proposed location for the trail, which will cross 55 driveways and intersections, which equates to the potential for an accident at every crossing for every bicyclist every 144 feet. This creates an unsafe environment for anyone to bicycle, whether that person is a recreational cyclist or a commuter. It is common sense that it is dangerous to mix bicycles and trucks. In the DEIS, it is clear SDOT plans to use design features such as stop signs and pavement markings to keep people who are riding along the trail from getting hurt or killed. These efforts will not be enough. Signs and paint do not protect people who do not follow them, even when drivers are careful and doing their very best to follow each and every traffic rule.

This is especially important to us at CSR Marine. In addition to being a local and regional boatyard that services hundreds of boats per year, we are also integrally involved with the annual Seattle Boat Show. Each and every boat and yacht that is part of that event comes through our facility in one way or another. This means that these boats and yachts are delivered to our facility from local businesses as well as from national dealers, all of which would have to cross the proposed Missing Link on Shilshole. Many of these are so large they must be delivered on very large "low-boy" trailer, which, due to the terrain of our driveways, would block the trail for 5, 10, and sometimes even 20 minutes or more. In addition to what this will do to prospective trail users, the more important point is that we are an extremely busy boatyard serviced by hundreds if not thousands of truck trips per year and it makes no sense to purposefully mix big trucks with vulnerable users on bicycles.

At CSR Marine, we are gravely concerned about safety. And it appears we are more concerned than SDOT. The DEIS included one (1) single page about safety. The DEIS dedicates more pages to discussion of potential impacts to Fish and Wildlife (2.5 pages) and Street Trees (3.5 pages) than it does to safety. It seems like SDOT has not even attempted to conduct a comprehensive study of the inherent dangers of locating a multi-user sidepath on major truck streets in an industrial area and in the other alternative locations. Without this comprehensive study and discussion of traffic hazards, the DEIS is inadequate.

Ballard's maritime and industrial district provides thousands of union- and family-wage jobs. Locating the Missing Link through the heart of this area will threaten the businesses, like CSR Marine, that provide these jobs. Business likes ours are an integral part of our regional economy. The City cannot risk putting all of us out of business for the sake of a 1.5 mile recreational bicycle trail. If SDOT constructs the Missing Link on Shilshole, many family-owned businesses like ours will suffer losses and some will even close for good. After the maritime and industrial community leaves a certain location, it never returns, and neither do the thousands of union- and family- wage jobs that come with them.

It has become clear the City does not value the maritime and industrial community as much as recreational cyclists.

Based on the amount of money SDOT proposes to spend on completing the Missing Link, it is also clear to us at CSR Marine the City does not believe in bicycle equity and is not fulfilling its Race and Social Justice initiative. We understand SDOT expects to spend between \$20 million and \$25 million on this project, between actual construction costs and SEPA process costs. We further understand SDOT typically builds protected bicycle facilities throughout Seattle for approximately \$1.3 million to \$1.6 million per mile. At these rates, instead of

spending \$20 million to \$25 million to build 1.5 miles of recreational bicycle trail in Ballard, which is already a well-served community, the City could reallocate some of those funds to construct many miles of protected bicycle facilities elsewhere in the City, for example, in South Seattle or in other underserved communities or communities of color.

Even though the City markets itself as a city on the forefront of progress, this project is unfortunately an example of Seattle lagging behind with regard to infrastructure and social justice. There is a stark contrast between bicycling north of the ship canal, in a community like Ballard, and cycling in South Seattle. A recent article in *Momentum Mag*, an online bicycling magazine, hit the nail on the head when discussing issues relating to bicycle equity, stating:

In predominantly white, upper-income regions of many cities, residents enjoy car-free plazas and protected bike lanes designed to encourage and enhance the vitality of their active transportation (walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.) communities. In the very same cities' poorer regions where the majority of residents are people of color, many streets don't even have sidewalks or crosswalks, let alone a bike lane."¹

We know that in theory, Seattle strives to be better, but in practice it does not. By continuing to pour millions of dollars into more bicycle infrastructure in a predominately white community that is already well-served, SDOT is simply reinforcing Seattle's historical funding bias toward white, wealthy communities to the detriment of the rest of the City.

To rectify SDOT's historical inequitable treatment, SDOT—and the City—need to ask itself who needs bicycle infrastructure most and who will benefit the most when deciding where to spend millions of dollars?

According to bicycle advocate Oboi Reed, co-founder of Slow Roll Chicago, a non-profit organization that uses social bike rides to foster positive social change in Chicago's Southside and Eastside, these are precisely the questions a city has to ask in order to right this inequitable treatment. As *Momentum Mag* points out,

What we look at when we talk about bicycle equity is who needs the most and who stands to benefit the most[.] When we frame it up in terms of cycling, what we say is, those who bike the least need the most bicycle resources in order to help them bike more." It is obvious then that "[i]n marginalized communities where safe cycling infrastructure is scarce if it exists at all, the government should be investing more in bike programs and infrastructure than it does in communities where the groundwork has already been laid. Any program that does otherwise at best maintains socioeconomic imbalances – and at worst intensifies them."

None of this should be news to the City. The goal-oriented Racial Equity Toolkit released by the City as part of your Race and Social Justice Initiative specifically uses "[i]ncrease transit and pedestrian mobility options in communities of color" as an example of positive community outcomes that increase racial equity.

What is puzzling is why you are condoning SDOT's failure to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

By spending an exorbitant amount of money on 1.5 miles of recreational bicycle trail in a

¹Bicycle Equity: Fairness and Justice in Bicycle Planning and Design, *Momentum Mag*, available at <https://momentummag.com/bicycle-equity-fairness-justice-bicycle-planning-design/> (October 26, 2016).

predominantly white, wealthier area of the City, SDOT is failing to fulfill your Initiative and is failing everyone else in the City at the same time. We urge the City to remember and prioritize its race and social justice goals instead of continuing to listen to a handful of predominately white middle-class advocates with a myopic view of the issues involved in this project. Continuing down that path only works to the disadvantage of our communities of color, low-income people, and working class workers and families. Perhaps Momentum Mag said it best:

When the majority of Americans biking for transportation are low-income people and people of color ***but the majority of American bike advocates are upper-income white people riding for recreation***, there's a strong potential for the needs of many to be misunderstood by the few who are supposed to be representing them."

While we see many problems with this project as presently designed and presented by SDOT, CSR Marine fully supports completing the Burke Gilman Trail so long as it does the least amount of harm to our community and the City as a whole. Please adopt the proposed alignment located on Leary Avenue and Market Street as the preferred alternative. Building protected bicycle facilities on Leary and Market is a far better option when compared to Shilshole Avenue Northwest. Not only would it be less expensive to do so, thereby freeing money to be spent elsewhere on underserved communities, but it would be safer. Without question, protected bicycle facilities are safer compared to sidepaths—which is why SDOT is building such facilities throughout Seattle instead of more sidepaths. The only question is why is SDOT insisting upon shoehorning this outdated design into the heart of Ballard's maritime and industrial district, thereby forcing bikes and trucks to mix?

As a business and employer located in the heart of Ballard's maritime and industrial corridor in Ballard, we request you please reconsider the City's position and move the Missing Link to the Leary-Market alternative. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this important issue further.

Sincerely,



Scott Anderson
Owner
CSR Marine