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## THE BALLARD CYCLE TRACK: A BETTER SOLUTION TO THE MISSING LINK

2017

Completing the Missing Link through Ballard requires a 21st Century solution: A protected bicycle facility—or cycle track. Protected bicycle facilities are the most modern and safest forms of bike facilities, used in progressive cities around the globe including Copenhagen, Portland and New York City. In Seattle, solving the Missing Link with a protected bicycle facility only requires moving the trail a couple of blocks from the currently proposed location on NW 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Shilshole Avenue NW to Leary Way NW and NW Market Street. The cycle track route starts near the Fred Meyer in Ballard by turning north onto 8th Ave NW and then immediately turning northwest onto NW Leary Way where it will continue until it reaches NW Market St., where it will go west until it reconnects with the existing Burke-Gilman trail at the Locks. This route, compared to the City's proposal, provides connections to major biking "arterials," 8th Ave NW and 24th Ave NW, and existing and proposed neighborhood greenways.

- In 1996, the Seattle City Council unanimously (9-0) passed Resolution 29474 selecting Leary Way NW and NW Market St. as the preferred route to complete the Missing Link of the Burke-Gilman Trail. The Council did this as part of approving a 30-year franchise for the Ballard Terminal Railroad, which is still operating and has a franchise until 2026.
- In 2001, the Friends of the Burke-Gilman Trail started advocating to move the route from Leary/Market to 45<sup>th</sup>/Shilshole Avenue/Not-54th.
- In 2003, after an extended lobbying effort by the Cascade Bicycle Club and the Friends of the Burke-Gilman Trail, the City Council in a split decision (7-2) adopted Resolution 30583 moving the route to 45<sup>th</sup>/Shilshole/Not-54<sup>th</sup>.
- In 2008, SDOT issued the SEPA DNS for the trail and the Ballard Businesses appealed.
- In 2010, a group of Ballard businesses and organizations funded a study by Gehl Architects from Copenhagen to locate the safest route to complete the Missing Link using a cycle track. The Ballard Cycle Track is the result of that work. <http://www.ballardcycletrack.com>.
- Cycle tracks are the safest bicycle facilities and are being use all over the world, including Seattle. <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cycletracks.htm>.
- After three trials and two appeals, in August 2012, the City's Hearing Examiner agreed with the Ballard businesses group and ordered SDOT to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) because SDOT's design is so unsafe.
- In February 2012, then Mayor McGinn and SDOT agreed to study both design and locational alternatives for the Missing Link in the EIS, including the Ballard Cycle Track alternative.

- Mayor McGinn included approximately \$300,000.00 in the budget to complete the EIS. To date, SDOT has spent over \$1,000,000 on the EIS, which will likely cost nearly \$2 million to complete.
- The Draft EIS does not include a cycle track/protected bicycle facility. Instead, it only includes out dated sidepath designs that are universally regarded as the most dangerous design in urban areas.
- SDOT's design of the Missing Link will cost more than \$31 million to complete, including the EIS. The City's 2017-2022 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (pages 193, 230 and 231) includes \$30,888,000.00 for the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension.<sup>1</sup>
- SDOT has already allocated \$9 million from the Move Seattle Levy to build this 1.5-mile section of this recreational trail. The remaining funds come from other local sources, the State and the Federal government.
- SDOT is building cycle tracks/protected bicycle facilities throughout Seattle for approximately \$1.3-1.6 million per mile compared with SDOT's design for the Missing Link, which will cost approximately \$21 million per mile. For this amount of money would could build 24 miles of protected bicycle facilities instead of 1.5 miles of a recreational sidepath.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.seattle.gov/financedepartment/1722adoptedcip/documents/2017-2022AdoptedCIP.pdf>