



# GENERAL TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION #174

Affiliated with the INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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Rick Hicks  
Secretary-Treasurer

November 10, 2016

## ***Via Hand Delivery and U.S. Mail***

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

**Re: *A Better Solution for the Missing Link - Burke Gilman Trail***

Dear Mayor Murray,

On behalf of the Teamsters Local 174, I am writing to express concern over SDOT's proposed project to complete the Missing Link of the Burke Gilman Trail along Shilshole Avenue Northwest in Ballard. We strongly urge the City to complete the Burke Gilman Trail along the proposed alignment located on Leary Avenue and Market Street.

Today, Local 174 has over 7,500 members in the Seattle area. Our organization has a long history in Seattle dating back to 1909, when our first members drove teams of horses to deliver goods for local employers. Local 174 was a major force in the region's unionization efforts before WWI, gained strength through the 1920s and Great Depression, and has emerged as a progressive force in the Northwest's labor movement. Now our diverse membership includes heavy freight drivers, truck drivers, equipment operators, transit operators, and dock workers, together with hundreds of other jobs in the region. Local 174 is dedicated to serving the best interest of our membership and the entire community – of which we are a vital part.

Local 174 has contracts with the family-owned, local businesses located in the maritime industrial district in Ballard. It has come to our attention that the City of Seattle is threatening the health of these contracts, and the thousands of jobs that come with them, because it is proposing to construct a recreational bicycle trail that would run directly in front of these businesses. This is unacceptable. As the champion of our members, who rely on the family- and union-wage jobs these companies provide, we implore the City to allow Shilshole Avenue NW to remain a Major Truck Street without recreational bicycle and pedestrian traffic and to complete the Burke Gilman Trail along the proposed alignment located on Leary Avenue and Market Street.

It is unsafe to mix bicycles and trucks. We understand that last year, an elderly bicyclist was killed on the Burke Gilman Trail when he failed to stop at a stop sign and hit a ready-mix concrete truck. The ready-mix concrete truck was following the rules of the road. The bicyclist was not. If you are familiar with the DEIS released by SDOT this summer, you will know that SDOT proposes to use stop signs and pavement markings to keep people who are riding along

the proposed trail from getting killed—exactly what they tried and what failed in Kenmore last year. Signs and paint do not protect people – especially if those people do not follow them.

Completing the Missing Link on Shilshole Avenue Northwest is a recipe for disaster. It is not a question of whether someone will be killed, but just a question of when and how many. It is irresponsible, dangerous, and shortsighted for the City to purposely attract cyclists and pedestrians to a Major Truck Street with heavy maritime and industrial traffic. It is shortsighted both from a safety perspective but also from an economic perspective—why would the City risk undermining the good-paying jobs in this area in exchange for yet another recreational trail?

Ballard's maritime and industrial district provides thousands of union- and family-wage jobs that employ many of our members. Locating the Missing Link through the heart of this area will threaten the businesses that provide these jobs, thereby threatening the very livelihood and financial well-being of our members.

This is of paramount importance to Local 174 and needs to be more important to the City. Seattle's maritime and industrial businesses generate billions of dollars of annual revenue in Puget Sound and are an integral part of our regional economy. If SDOT constructs the Missing Link on Shilshole Avenue Northwest, many of these family-owned businesses will suffer losses and some will close for good. Once these businesses are gone, we cannot get them back, leaving our members out of jobs.

Local 174 will, as it has done for decades before, stand up for our members. The City's disregard for the maritime and industrial community – in favor of something like a recreational bicycle trail – is alarming and disheartening. To us, it looks like the City is arbitrarily insisting that the trail be completed on Shilshole Avenue Northwest, directly through Ballard's maritime and industrial district, even though SDOT is constructing better-protected bicycle facilities elsewhere in the City and it is plainly obvious that trucks and cyclists should not go together.

Our members should not need to contend on a daily basis with cyclists who do not follow the rules of the road. The City should not favor recreational cyclists at the expense of thousands of working class people. We request that you please reconsider your position and move the Missing Link away from Shilshole Avenue Northwest 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.

Please contact me directly at [lawrence@teamsterslocal174.org](mailto:lawrence@teamsterslocal174.org) or (206) 441-6060 Ext. 1318.

Respectfully,

**GENERAL TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION NO. 174**



Lawrence A. Boyd  
Senior Business Agent