




King County

Parks and Recreation Division
 Department of Natural Resources and Parks
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July 18, 2014

To: Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, City of Kirkland

From: Linda J. Sullivan, Project Manager, Project Manager Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Regional Trail Project 

Subject: SRM Public Improvement Application (#002 – Process B)

Thank you for the opportunity to review 100% Design Development drawings for the Cross Kirkland Corridor Improvements, which you forwarded June 19. We at King County appreciate the importance to Kirkland of Google's development plans and recognize the vitality the Google complex can bring to the Cross Kirkland Corridor. Wastewater Treatment Division comments on the June 19 submittal have been forwarded by separate e-mail. Comments related to compliance with railbanking requirements under the National Trails System Act will be addressed in a separate correspondence from King County after review of the pedestrian bridge plans that you forwarded July 16.

King County Parks is currently working on its master plan for a regional trail in the ERC. As owner of a trail easement in the Kirkland portion of the ERC, King County is committed to working with Kirkland to assure that the ERC/CKC trail meets accepted guidelines for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel by the general public. In that spirit, we offer several comments relating to this project and the County's regional trail guidelines.

The proposed design is most typical of a regional trail passing through an active recreational park. In such locations, trail guidelines are often modified to recognize differences in user types, user volumes, and higher likelihood of uncontrolled pedestrian trail crossings. We understand that as a City of Kirkland facility, the proposed trail will sometimes vary from county guidelines. At the same time, it is in all of our interests and a goal of the ERC Regional Advisory Council to create seamless trail connections and reasonable similarity in design standards for trail facilities within the ERC. The comments below describe where the trail segment under review is not consistent with County regional trail guidelines:

- The proposed trail surface appears to be concrete. Asphalt is preferred under the County trail guidelines. However, we recognize concrete may be appropriate in this location as a

traffic calming strategy and to provide a signal to trail users to expect congestion and pedestrian cross traffic.

- The proposed trail section is 16' paved with no soft-surface shoulder. This is not consistent with County guidelines. However, we recognize it may be appropriate for this location given the proposed use and character of this segment of the trail.
- Several concrete seating wall features are located directly adjacent to the trail edge, with no shy distance. Although the trail is wider than standard, providing minimum one-foot shy distance or preferred five-foot shy distance as per County guidelines would reduce the potential for accidents. In some cases the seat walls seem to be designed to encourage users to sit with their feet on the trail surface, which we do not recommend.
- The planting design for the northeast quadrant of the proposed vehicle crossing may not provide adequate sight distance. Low-growing multi-stemmed trees are located where they could potentially obscure approaching trail users from drivers. Independent of the planting design, sight distance is also reduced by the horizontal alignment of the trail as it approaches the crossing from the north. We recommend that trees be either removed or relocated in this quadrant, and that the groundcover planting design emphasize lower growing species.
- The trail crossing appears to be raised on a speed table at the proposed crossing. No other traffic control devices are indicated on the plans. We recommend that vehicles be stopped at the crossing. Warning strips are included in the proposed design, however there is no detail shown to indicate how they would provide tactile feedback to trail users, since the entire path in this section is concrete.
- Three designated "mixing zones" are included in the proposed design to define areas where non-motorized users will either cross, enter, or leave the trail. These locations are preceded by concrete warning strips in the trails surface, and appear to be surfaced with either textured concrete or unit pavers. Texture in the mixing zones should be compatible with ADA, and should not include vertical relief that would cause users of small-wheeled recreational devices (e.g. skateboards, in-line skates, roller skis) challenges with control or comfort.

Some general comments below apply to potential concerns not specifically addressed by the County's trail guidelines.

- Bike racks are not specifically called out on the plans and should be included.
- An activity zone adjacent to the path is shown to be surfaced in sand and/or safety surfacing (likely either granular rubber or engineered wood playground surfacing.) Sand on the trail is a hazard which should be avoided if possible. We recommend modifying the design to include a landscape or grass buffer between the trail and the sand surfacing.
- As with many similar locations where shared-use trails pass through active recreational sites, there is high potential for user conflicts and accidents. Conflicts will increase as more segments of the trail are developed and trail use correspondingly increases. Adding design elements that would limit unexpected pedestrian entries onto the trail or

basketballs bouncing onto the trail, or emphasize the distinction between the trail and the adjacent recreational areas, would potentially reduce user conflicts and accidents. These are easier to include now than to retrofit the design in the future.

Please feel free to contact me at 206-477-4533 if you would like to discuss further.

cc: Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
David St. John, Policy Advisory, DNRP
Robert Foxworthy, King County Parks Regional Trails Coordinator, DNRP