

CC 3/19/19  
ORAL COMM

**Request of City Staff for 65% Design Review of Regnart Creek Trail**

The 65% design, which is expected to be brought forward in May, should address the most difficult engineering challenges first.

The most challenging issues for the proposed Regnart Creek Trail include:

- 1) Attaining a resolution for Lozano Lane residents where the trail alignment runs in front of residential dwelling units.
- 2) Observing minimum setback requirements from property line and fences to public path behind La Mar Drive and De Palma Lane
- 3) Re-sloping the path behind Lamar so that run off is captured in trenching at the base of neighbor's fences in a way that will not undermine those fences or flood backyards.
- 4) Ensuring the Site Distance Triangle as required by AASHTO guidelines is enforced at trail crossings on major intersections like Blaney, E Estates and Pacifica.
- 5) Ensuring that the removable bridges behind La Mar be designed sensibly and with respect to metal fatigue and the inevitable issues that arise when temporary structures no longer fit back together after repeated removal & reassembly.

Since the Regnart trail alignment has severe constraints and challenges, we request the council to direct the City staff to bring Alternate 4 in the feasibility study that uses on-street facilities along with Alternate 1 at 65% design review in May.

The resolution 18-081 which approved Regnart Creek Feasibility study in August 2018 does not preclude the city from bringing multiple design alternatives to the council.

Our request to you is simple. Please ensure that established safety guidelines and requirements are followed, and treat the adjacent neighbors fairly. Bring multiple alternatives to the council in May for consideration. We are the ones who will be most affected by this path 24/7, but see little to no reason to use it ourselves. Thank you.

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ORAL comm.

March 19, 2013

Mayor Scharf, Council Members and Staff

My name is Gary Wong, a 21 year resident of Cupertino

I have several remarks pertaining to the Regnart Creek Trail.

1. At the last City Council Meeting, I made several remarks pertaining to the differences of the Approved Feasibility Study for the Regnart Creek Trail and the Final Study posted on the City's Website. A few days later, the Final Study was removed from the City's website with no explanation. I want to ask why it was removed and if there is any significance to this action. Does this mean the approved draft dated August 21, 2018 the governing document?
2. The Joint User of the Regnart Creek Trail, the land owner, the Santa Clara Valley Water District expressed its preference for Alternative 4. There is a Trail Walk scheduled on Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. This Trail Walk should also include Alternative 4 and not just Alternative 1. The public should receive a fair and balanced view of the options under consideration.
3. Lastly, at several Council meetings, it was mentioned that the Trail will improve safety and home values. I am submitting an editorial from the Seattle Times, which reports of 20 year study conducted by The National Association of Reversionary Property Owners. The study, conducted over 20 years, involved 330 properties bordering the Burke-Gilman Trail. They studied the assessed values bordering this trail and found homes along the trail appreciated 26% while the average properties in King County

went up 325%. Further, the slower growth in property values of the homes along the trail resulted in a \$50 million reduction from the tax rolls to the City and County. This loss in tax revenue was made up by higher taxes to the other residents in the County.

4. The same study reported, and the Seattle Police Department confirmed, that crime rates were higher for those homes along the trail.

With tens of millions of dollars potentially allocated to City trails, the practicality of the proposed trails, and the cost – benefits thereof, merit serious consideration in light of the many competing needs for city projects and available financial resources that will be discussed tonight.



# Citizen Review Online

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Saturday March 16, 2019

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## Trails boost crime, reduce value

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Opinion/Editorials : Monday, October 05, 1998

Editorial by Richard Welsh  
Special to The Times

THE Seattle Times' [main](#) editorial of Sept. 24, 1999 "East Lake Sammamish's rocky rail-to-trail ride" made a few bold statements with absolutely no factual basis for the statements. The editorial states that property values will be enhanced by having a trail next to the properties and "Peeping Toms" and crimes will not occur because of the trail's proximity.

Both of these statements are patently false.

The National Association of Reversionary Property Owners (NARPO), a nationwide nonprofit foundation dedicated to preserving property rights and land values, conducted a 20-year comprehensive study on the property values of the 330 pieces of property bordering the Burke-Gilman Trail. Property values from King County assessment records in the years 1978, 1988 and 1997 were used to see if there was a correlation between the assessed values on the properties bordering the Burke-Gilman Trail, the properties nearby, as well as other similar non-trail properties on Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish.

The studies show the values of the properties bordering the Burke-Gilman trail only increased 26 percent between 1978 and 1988, while the average properties in King County went up 325 percent. The other properties on Lake [Washington](#) and those on Lake Sammamish rose an average of 210 percent. Between 1988 and 1997, the properties bordering the Burke-Gilman Trail only increased 99 percent while the average King County assessment increased 105 percent and the other properties on Lake Washington and those on Lake Sammamish went up 140 percent. Meanwhile, the properties just uphill from the trail rose 113 percent and 137 percent, respectively.

What the slower growth of assessed property value along the Burke-Gilman Trail has cost the city and county taxpayers these past 20 years is substantial. It appears that \$50 million a year in assessed value is reduced from the tax rolls due to the property value reduction caused by the trail. This equates to \$750,000 in actual taxes other King County taxpayers are picking up each year to keep the bike trail open to the 0.3 of 1 percent of citizens who use the trail. The numbers will be the same or greater along the proposed Lake Sammamish bike trail because there are more homes along Lake Sammamish.

The correlation is quite clear that being next to the Burke-Gilman Trail severely reduces the property values of the unfortunate 330 property owners along the trail. The question, then, is why property values are reduced or increase less than other properties nearby. Two issues stand out that reduce the property values: crime and having to cross the trail to get to the homes.

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The crime rate is certainly a valid concern. Earlier this year, Sgt. Dick Hume of the Seattle Police Department testified before the Kirkland Planning Department on a proposed bike trail along the railroad tracks going through Kirkland. Sgt. Hume's job is to analyze crime records as they come into the police department. Sgt. Hume stated at the Kirkland hearing: "There are higher rates of theft and vandalism along the Burke-Gilman Trail." Sgt. Hume also testified at the hearing that the area along the Burke-Gilman Trail experienced a higher crime rate than other comparable neighborhoods.

A quick search of The Seattle Times and Eastside Journal reveals four murders and two attempted murders along the trail, numerous sexual exposure incidents, two rapes, three body-dumping cases, and numerous other thefts, vandalism and scrapes between property owners and bikers. And this is only since 1989.

It got so bad that in 1991, King County and Seattle had to institute 24-hour police bicycle patrols along the Burke-Gilman Trail; yet, since 1991, there have been three murders and hundreds of other reported crimes along the trail.

The Seattle Times reported on June 29, 1991, regarding the need for the bicycle patrols: "Burglars are suspected of using the trail to approach targeted homes and women. . . ."

There is a good chance that if the Burke-Gilman was not there, the four people murdered on the trail would be alive today.

Just last week, a transient riding on a bike trail came off the trail next to Newport Shores in Bellevue, broke into a home and used a baseball bat to severely assault a woman in her home. He was caught while riding away with her jewelry hanging out of his pockets.

And let us not forget the needless death last fall of a woman using the Cedar River Trail in Maple Valley. A transient stalked women using the trail; after making two unsuccessful attempts at rape and murder, he encountered a woman who could not get away. It appears she was raped and then her throat was slit.

The Seattle Times editorial staff needs to recognize family safety, privacy and property values are valid and important issues regarding the proposed bike trail along East Lake Sammamish. You do your readers a great disservice by dismissing these issues as nonexistent.

Richard Welsh is executive director of the Bellevue-based **National Association of Reversionary Property Owners (NARPO)**.

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