



# BANDS OF GREEN

2011 UPDATE & RECOMMENDATIONS



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**The alternatives and recommendations presented in this report are those of the project team and should not be construed as the official position of Seattle Parks Foundation.**

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the Cedar River Group was asked by Seattle Park Superintendent Holly Miller to create a preliminary plan for expanding Seattle's system of boulevards, trails and linear parks as background for the Department's new Comprehensive Plan. The report that emerged was called Bands of Green, and included dozens of proposals in conceptual form for connecting Seattle's parks with new trails and expansion of the Olmsted boulevard system. Although fewer than a dozen copies of the original report were produced, many of the ideas it contained found their way into neighborhood plans, city planning documents, and the project lists for voter-approved bond and levy programs. As a result, many of the proposals have become reality, and others are now under construction.

In 2006, the Seattle Parks Foundation commissioned the Cedar River Group to update Bands of Green and identify new opportunities to create "green connections" among the city's parks. That effort produced more than 50 proposals for trails, boulevards, and linear parks throughout Seattle. The report was featured in a front page article in the Seattle Post Intelligencer when it was released in December 2006.

As the first step to implement Bands of Green 2006, the Seattle Park Foundation forged an alliance with the City of Seattle to create the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop, a 6.2 mile multi-purpose trail around Lake Union. The Foundation then turned its attention to the Lake to Bay Loop, linking Lake Union Park with the Olympic Sculpture Park on the shores of Puget Sound. The Foundation is now leading a broad coalition of organizations in working with the City to complete the project. With those two major projects well underway, in 2010 the Foundation asked the Cedar River Group for an assessment of the opportunities to implement additional elements of Bands of Green 2006, and to recommend priority projects for the Board's consideration. This document was prepared in response to that request.

## Our Approach

The report was developed during the fall of 2010 through a review of current city policies and plans, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, extensive fieldwork, internet research, and a visit to Portland, Oregon, to see that city's new system of neighborhood green streets. The report begins with an assessment of what has been accomplished so far to implement Bands of Green's recommendations. We then present a series of "Findings" based upon our research, which include lessons learned from past projects, the emerging trends we see on the horizon, and key challenges that must be overcome. We then present a series of recommendations for the Foundation, listing those projects we believe hold greatest promise.



## WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED (1990-2006)

When the first edition of Bands of Green was written in 1990, the “green connections’ among Seattle’s parks consisted of a limited number of Olmsted park boulevards dating from the early days of the twentieth century, remnants of the city’s original Interlaken Bike Trail, and a segment of the Burke-Gilman Trail that ran from the north end of Lake Washington to Gasworks Park.

The creation of the Burke-Gilman Trail can be said to have provided the impetus for Bands of Green. The trail represented a new form of linear park of a type that is more in keeping with the concept of the “pleasure-ways” the Olmsteds had imagined than the highly traveled thoroughfares their boulevards have since become. The Burke-Gilman was also one of America’s first urban “rails to trails” projects, and it awakened the public to the possibility that the unused or underused rail corridors that had long separated Seattle’s neighborhoods might one day be transformed into green connections to unite them.

Ironically, it was a threat to the existing portion of the trail that laid the groundwork to extend this new form of linear park throughout the City and beyond. In the mid-1980s the Burlington-Northern Railroad attempted to sell a section of the Burke-Gilman rail corridor - including a section of the existing trail - to an out-of-state land developer. The sale triggered an immediate public outcry, forcing the cancellation of the transaction. The public relations fiasco that followed opened the door for negotiations between the City and Burlington Northern about the future of not only the Burke-Gilman corridor, but all rail routes in the city. The agreement crafted in those negotiations gave the City the option to acquire any abandoned rail corridors in return for forgiving the Company’s responsibility to remove the rails and repair the city streets they had crossed. That agreement was a major factor in the first Bands of Green report, which included proposals for trails within railroad rights-of-way along Lake Union, the Ship Canal and the Duwamish River.



*A commuter rides The Burke-Gilman Trail along the ship canal*

By the time Bands of Green was updated in 2006, many of those original proposals had been brought to fruition, providing key elements of the City’s trail network. Some progress was also made during that period on expanding the City’s boulevard system: Planted medians were completed on Beacon Avenue, Sand Point Way, and Eighth Avenue North, for example, but the level of effort to expand the boulevard system did not match the attention dedicated to the trail network.

## Progress Since 2006

When the Seattle Parks Foundation commissioned an update of Bands of Green in 2006, it did so in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation, which provided both a share of the funding and the technical assistance of their GIS expert, Tim Rood. The partnership paved the way for the conceptual plans contained in Bands of Green to be used as background material for the City's Bicycle Master Plan, which was adopted as official city policy in 2007. The coordination of the two plans was a key factor in launching the implementation of many of the key projects contained in Bands of Green 2006. For example:

- The Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop was established in City policy within a year of the report's publication. The route has been signed, and sections have been upgraded (e.g., the approach to the South end of the Fremont Bridge). Community groups now use the trail for 10K races and other special events.
- Voters approved funding for Bands of Green projects in both the "Bridging the Gap" transportation levy and the "Parks for All" levy in 2008.
- The Chief Sealth, Ship Canal and Interbay Trails have all been extended significantly since 2006.
- Bike lanes, "sharrows" and signed routes have been established on 21 of the routes recommended for Boulevard or Parkway designation in Bands of Green.
- As these improvements have been made, the numbers of bicyclists in the City has steadily grown. During the past two years alone, the number of bicycle commuters to downtown Seattle has increased 17%.

- As the number of cyclists has increased, so has their political influence. The Cascade Bicycle Club now has 13,000 members. The Mayor and at least three council members are avid cyclists, and the city government's transportation policies are shifting accordingly.
- The trail system envisioned in Bands of Green within Seattle now extends throughout King County in a regional trail network that will ultimately provide more than 300 miles of recreational trails among the region's parks and open spaces.

The King County Regional Trails map (provided) illustrates the vast network of "Bands of Green" now taking shape at the regional level through the efforts of King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks in cooperation with suburban cities and the City of Seattle. This regional trails network, if fully completed, will ultimately provide the citizens of the region with off-road connections to tens of thousands of acres of parks and natural area.

- The rapid growth of the regional trail network has been fueled in part by a county-wide levy that provides \$0.05 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for parks expansion. (A separate levy funds operations of the regional park system, including trail maintenance.)

The County dedicates \$0.01 per thousand to open space acquisition, \$0.01 to support the Woodland Park Zoo, and \$0.01 to cities, reserving \$0.02 per \$1,000 assessed value (about \$6-7 million) for the development of the regional trail network each year. Some cities also dedicate a portion of their share of the levy to trail development. For example, Seattle has used \$2.5 million in levy funds during the past three years to extend the Burke-Gilman and Chief Sealth Trails. Since the current levy will expire in 2013, future progress on the regional trail network will depend on the voters' decision to renew the levy in that year's election cycle.

## FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK

### 1. Seattle's portion of the regional trail network is very much a work in progress, with significant "missing links" and safety hazards.

Our fieldwork revealed major gaps within the regional trails network as it passes through Seattle. The most significant gaps are described in detail in the final section of this report.

### 2. Bands of Green or Bands of Grey?

Although Bands of Green 2006 had a significant influence upon the Bicycle Master Plan, the two documents have different philosophical origins. Bands of Green is intended to follow in the Olmsted tradition, and focuses on the creation of green connections among the city's parks; the Bicycle Master Plan is at heart a transportation plan, intended to provide efficient connections between city neighborhoods. The two philosophies are complementary, but only to a point. Since the primary responsibility for implementing the projects listed in both documents has been with the Department of Transportation rather than the Department of Parks and Recreation (as it is in King County), it is not surprising that the emphasis has been on the "connections" rather than the "green." Although there are many trail segments where a park-like feeling has been achieved, there are others (such as Interbay) where the trails are anything but park-like in character. This is an area in which there is a major opportunity for improvement on future projects.



### 3. Even though the expansion of the trail system has created green connections among many parks, and the past two park levies have included funds for trail expansion, the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation has been somewhat ambivalent about the role of trails within parks.

The Olmsted Plan used scenic boulevards to create a seamless park system that was greater than the sum of its parts, and boulevards are an integral part of several of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, including Seward Park, the Arboretum, and the necklace of parks that extends the length of Lake Washington Boulevard. Although several parks have excellent trails within them (Green Lake, Seward, and Alki come to mind), there seems to have been no system-wide effort to define how trails are to be incorporated within parks, or to ensure that trail users can enter and exit parks easily from the trail system. There are many examples of this problem at major parks including Magnuson, Discovery, Gasworks, and others.

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*At right, one section of the connection between Ballard and Golden Gardens - green, but fenced in.*

**4. It may be necessary to invent new types of green connections to meet the needs of different types of park users and to fill gaps in the urban trail system.**

The first and second editions of Bands of Green helped to set the stage for development of Seattle’s Bicycle Master Plan, but it has now become clear that those reports did not adequately address the needs of the full spectrum of potential trail users. Because the author was enamored of the concepts in the Olmsted Plan, Bands of Green assumed that arterials designated as boulevards or parkways could serve as the primary green connections among parks where there are no opportunities to create off-road trails. While the City Department of Transportation has done a fine job of improving many of the routes proposed as boulevards and parkways for use by bicyclists, it has become clear that those routes are primarily used by experienced bicycle commuters, rather than recreational users. Furthermore, a growing body of research shows that while the number of bicyclists who are willing to ride arterial routes (the “fast and fearless”) are increasing, their numbers are dwarfed by those who tell researchers they would like to ride for pleasure and exercise, or for errands, but are dissuaded from doing so by concerns about safety on routes that are heavily travelled by cars and trucks.

Since urban areas like Seattle are heavily developed and have a limited number of corridors that can be converted to off-street trails, the search has been launched for a new type of route that can provide a sense of security for those we might describe as “willing but worried,” a demographic that includes children, older adults and inexperienced riders, and is estimated to be five times larger than the group of riders willing to ride on arterial routes.

Portland, Oregon, Berkeley, California and Minneapolis, Minnesota are among a growing list of American cities that have developed a new type of connection that takes advantage of existing streets to

create “bicycle boulevards” or “neighborhood green streets” that favor bicycles and pedestrians over motorized vehicles. In general, these routes are created by using a combination of simple and relatively inexpensive techniques:

- Existing neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes are selected and signed;
- Stop signs are turned to halt traffic on arterials that cross the route;
- Traffic diverters are installed to discourage through traffic, while still allowing residents to reach their homes by car.

These devices are described in detail in *Fundamental Bicycle Boulevard Planning and Design* by Lindsay Walker, Mike Tressider, and Mia Burke, and in a seven minute video available at:

<http://www.streetfilms.org/portlands-bike-boulevards-become-neighborhood-greenways/>

see also:

<http://www.streetfilms.org/portland-or-bicycle-boulevards/>

Portland has improved on the basic concept by incorporating natural drainage features and plantings within the various traffic diverters and safety islands created along the routes. These features not only reduce drainage problems, but provide greenery that helps to define the route as a “neighborhood green street.” Portland and other cities that have created bicycle boulevards have found that they significantly increase the frequency of bicycle use in the areas they serve. Some cities are now expanding their networks of bicycle boulevards city-wide to bring them within a half mile of every residence.

## 5. There is growing interest in developing “Bands of Green” plans at the neighborhood level.

Our interviews with stakeholders revealed that the basic ideas that shaped Bands of Green have taken hold in neighborhoods across Seattle, and community organizations and even a few major employers are developing their own plans to create green connections at a finer grain than the regional and city-wide perspective. We identified four significant plans that have been developed thus far:

- i. The Lake to Bay Loop is being planned by a coalition of groups led by SPF to link Lake Union Park and the Olympic Sculpture Park;
- ii. Seattle Children’s Livable Streets Project will provide \$2.5 million in pedestrian and bicycle improvements in NE Seattle (see Appendix 1);
- iii. Beacon Bikes, a community group on Beacon Hill, has created plans for a network of bicycle boulevards to connect the newly expanded Jefferson Park to the Chief Sealth and Mountain to Sound Trails

(see <http://www.beaconwalksbikes.org/index.html>);

- iv. Ribbon of Parks Association, a neighborhood group in Southeast Seattle, is working to create green connections between Othello Station and nearby underutilized parks

(see <http://othelloneighborhood.org/othellopark.aspx>)



*At right, pedestrian and cyclist share the waterfront in West Seattle’s Alki neighborhood.*

In all likelihood there are other community groups that are developing similar plans at the neighborhood level that are not yet evident to those we interviewed.

These four plans all share several important characteristics:

- They each contain elements from Bands of Green;
- They each seek to create safer routes by transforming streets or boulevards as neighborhood green streets.
- They each create green connections between parks, recreation centers (and in three of four cases, schools).



## KEY CHALLENGES

Our work has revealed a host of opportunities to move forward to implement many of the key concepts and projects in Bands of Green. There is support at City Hall, among the City departments, within county government, and among neighborhood groups and civic organizations. Nevertheless, there are several key barriers that must be overcome to realize the opportunities before us:

1. **Resources are constrained at every level of government**, making it more difficult to accomplish projects. Even when funds are available for capital projects, city departments may lack the staff capacity to move forward.
2. The **technical and political challenges** confronting many of the Bands of Green projects are daunting, and will require both ingenuity and tenacity to overcome. The regional trail system in Seattle still has gaps because it is challenging, expensive, and time-consuming to transform an urban landscape in which so many stakeholders have vested interests.
3. A **political backlash** may be taking shape among automobile and truck drivers who perceive they will be inconvenienced by the City's efforts to make room for bicycles on the City's arterials, and by those who perceive the City's recent policy decisions aimed at getting people out of their automobiles to be somewhat heavy handed.

## ROLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fortunately Seattle Parks Foundation has an array of potential tools to deploy to meet these challenges. During the past decade, the Foundation has developed its capacity to play several roles:

- Fundraiser and Philanthropist: SPF has raised more than \$25 million in private funding for park projects during the past ten years.
- Advocate: The Foundation has led the charge for public funding through the City budget and two voter-approved levies.
- Researcher and Planner: SPF has made investments in research to discover best practices nationally and uncover new ideas taking shape at the grassroots level.
- Innovator: The Foundation has been inventive in its approach, defining new methods of working in partnership with government agencies, community groups and private partners.
- Catalyst: SPF has served as the instigator for several projects that could never have happened without its leadership, such as the lake to Bay Trail and the Cheshiahud Loop.
- Diplomat: The staff and Board of the Foundation have worked effectively behind the scenes to negotiate agreements that were critical to its achievements.
- Fiscal intermediary: The Foundation has been willing to share its financial management skills and credibility to help neighborhood groups secure and manage the resources to plan and complete projects.

Here are our recommendations about how the Foundation can best use these capacities to accelerate the progress toward implementing Bands of Green. We suggest the Foundation:

### 1. **Play a leading role in the introduction of neighborhood green streets as a new type of green connection between the people of Seattle and their parks.**

We suggest that SPF partner with Seattle Children's and one or more community organizations in Southeast Seattle to create demonstration projects that illustrate how neighborhood green streets should be developed to connect parks, schools and other key destinations. This initiative could not be more important or timely: it will leverage Seattle Children's financial commitment for bicycle improvements; introduce a new type of green connection that will broaden the spectrum of trail users; provide a new tool the City can use to reduce conflicts about bike lanes on arterials; and provide SPF the opportunity to set a high standard for the level of "green" that will be incorporated in future City bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Summaries of the potential demonstration projects are found in Recommendation 5.

### 2. **Expand the Neighborhood Parks Program to provide fiscal sponsorship , technical assistance and fundraising support to community groups working to develop and implement their own local Bands of Green plans.**

The Foundation has done an extraordinary job of helping neighborhood groups plan and complete projects that have substantially improved more than two dozen neighborhood parks and playgrounds. By revising its guidelines to encourage trail projects, the Foundation could provide the catalyst for community groups like the Ribbon of Parks Association and Beacon Bikes to take on the implementation of Bands of Green projects in neighborhoods throughout the City, and broaden the constituency for the Foundation at the grassroots level.

**3. Work with City Departments to craft a Memorandum of Understanding to define the actions each partner will take to: i) Improve the park-like character of the regional trail network, boulevards, and linear parks; ii) incorporate trails within parks; and iii) incorporate natural drainage improvements and other green infrastructure in future trail and boulevard projects.**

Like any large municipal government, the City of Seattle is organized along certain functional lines, and these “silos” make it difficult to achieve the best results for the community as a whole. The system of green connections the Foundation is seeking to create requires the full cooperation of many city agencies, particularly the Department of Transportation, the Department of Parks and Recreation, Seattle Public Utilities and the Mayor and Council. In the current political context at City Hall, there is no shortage of good will toward the goals the Foundation is seeking to achieve; what is missing is cooperation and coordination among the agencies, all of whom are under pressure from declining budgets and competing priorities. In that environment, the Park Foundation may be able to act as the catalyst for better coordination among City Departments around Bands of Green projects. The Foundation could attempt to achieve this objective by taking the lead in committing to raise funds and provide advocacy for certain projects in return for the Mayor and Council’s agreement to develop a memorandum of understanding with the Foundation committing the key City departments to certain actions to advance the cause. (A similar agreement was crafted for Lake Union Park.)

**4. Work with the Port of Seattle to improve the sections of the Regional Trail Network on their property.**

The Port of Seattle has a well-publicized goal to become “the greenest Port in the World,” and they control key properties that are

within or adjacent to the regional trails network, including major sections of the Interbay and Duwamish Trails. This would suggest that there may be a major opportunity to enlist them as a full partner in transforming the “grey” sections of those trails. There are many potential advantages to the Port in such a transformation:

- It would provide their employees with better routes to bicycle or walk to Port facilities.
- In combination with bicycle rentals, the refurbished trails would provide tour ship passengers with green connections between the terminals, and destinations such as the Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Center, Lake Union Park, Fisherman’s Terminal, and many others.
- It would enhance the Port’s reputation and its image as a good neighbor.



**5. Seize every opportunity to assist the City in filling the gaps in the regional trail network within the city.**

This final section of our report provides a summary of the missing links in the City portion of the regional trail system and suggestions about the roles SPF could play to help fill those gaps. In light of the significant costs associated with the capital projects that will be needed to provide these trail improvements, the ability to leverage public transportation funding will be essential.

**Missing Links in the Seattle Portion of the Regional Trail System:**

**Burke-Gilman Trail**

**Description:** The “missing mile” in the Burke-Gilman Trail is the most notorious missing link in Seattle’s portion of the regional trail network. This section runs along 45th Street Northwest from 9th Avenue Northwest to 15th Avenue and then along Shilshole Avenue Northwest and railroad right-of-way to the Chittenden Locks. Although funding has been secured to construct the trail in this corridor, development is tied up in court due to the opposition of a relatively small number of property owners in the area who fear that the trail will conflict with their current industrial activities.

**Potential Solution:** During our stakeholder interviews, City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw suggested a possible compromise in which the trail would be developed along the east side of Shilshole Avenue rather than in the rail corridor on the west side of the street.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The Foundation may be in a position to provide the diplomacy necessary to test the efficacy of Councilmember Bagshaw’s suggestion by meeting with property owners, city officials, and affected stakeholders.



**Interurban Trail**

**Description:** The City continues to search for the best means to connect the completed sections of the trail with one another via city streets.

**Potential solution:** Improve the route selected as a “neighborhood green street”.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The Foundation could provide seed funding for a community-based effort to plan and implement the improvements required.

### **Burke-Gilman Trail to Ravenna Park**

**Description:** A short segment of Ravenna Place Northeast is a missing link in the route that connects the Burke Gilman Trail to Ravenna Park, Colman Park, and Green Lake. It is also a significant contributor to the frequent accidents that occur involving trail users and motorists at the intersection of NE Blakeley Street and 25th Avenue Northeast.

**Potential Solution:** The City is currently planning a reconfiguration of this segment to slow and discourage through traffic and “green” the streetscape. The project has also been identified as a high priority by Seattle Children’s livable neighborhood streets initiative, although their proposed solution would be more dramatic than what the City has proposed, closing the street to southbound traffic.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** SPF could partner with Seattle Children’s and the City to determine the best solution and speed its implementation. Diplomacy and a share of funding may be required. An added benefit of the project is that it would improve safety and access to Ravenna Park for the residents of a major new senior housing project adjacent to the project site.

### **Burke-Gilman Trail—Neighborhood Access**

**Description:** The Burke-Gilman is the original spine of the regional trail system, and it is used on a daily basis by more people than any other segment of the system. However there are many neighborhoods along the route where residents have difficulty accessing the trail because of grade changes, vegetation, or the difficulty of safely crossing major arterials.

**Potential solution:** Seattle Children’s is piloting an effort to create neighborhood connections to the Burke-Gilman as part of its Livable Streets Initiative.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** As part of the partnership proposed in recommendation #1, the Foundation could help to publicize Seattle Children’s projects as examples of projects that could be replicated in other neighborhoods throughout the city.

### **Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop**

**Description:** The creation of the Cheshiahud Trail illustrates both the challenges and opportunities inherent in creating safe, continuous, and attractive trails within a complex urban landscape where conflicting uses have been present for more than a century. Thanks to the Foundation’s partnership with the City, the Loop trail has progressed from a concept advanced in Bands of Green 2006 to a route that is recognized in City policy and beginning to take hold in the public’s consciousness. Each day, portions of the trail are used by hundreds of pedestrians and cyclists. These trail users are the nucleus of a coalition capable of bringing the changes that will be needed to realize the trail’s full potential. There are a number of missing links in the ten-kilometer trail:

- i. **Westlake:** It took many years and extraordinary efforts by the City to create the segment of the trail that runs along Westlake from the Lake Union Park to the newly developed trail approach to the Fremont Bridge. Those efforts produced a trail, but there can be no doubt that it is not the best result that could have been achieved if the level of public interest and support for trails that could be mobilized today had been present at the time the work was done more than a decade ago. Our fieldwork showed that the trail along the Westlake corridor is too narrow to serve both pedestrians and cyclists, and most of the latter simply ride through the adjacent parking lot, which is neither safe nor indicative of the type of trail experience the Foundation wants to achieve.



**Potential solution:** The advantage trail advocates have in working to improve this section of the trail lies in the fact that the City owns all of the right-of way between Westlake Avenue and the businesses that are located along the lake shore. By reconfiguring the use of the space (and reducing parking) the City has the potential to expand the trail, plant trees and groundcover to give Westlake a boulevard character and reduce the amount of impervious surface surrounding Lake Union.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The creation of the trail as it is represents a significant accomplishment by SPF, yet in its current state it is an unfinished product, in contrast to the gleaming park at South Lake Union. To bring the Trail to an acceptable standard will require tenacious advocacy over several years.

ii. **Mallard Cove:** Private residential developments on the east side of the lake shore between E. Roanoke and E. Hamlin Streets blocks the trail and sends trail users on a steep uphill climb through alley ways to continue their journey.

**Potential solution:** City officials and trail advocates have been searching for a solution for many years. The proposals that have emerged, including floating bridges, have all been both expensive and controversial. The ultimate solution will probably be to incorporate the trail as a condition of permits for redevelopment of the Mallard Cove complex. In the meantime, better signage should be incorporated and greater attention given to alternative routes (such as Eastlake).

**Potential Park Foundation role:** Advocacy will be needed to keep this missing link on the City's list of problems to be solved.

iii. **Fairview:** Safety improvements are needed at the intersection of Fairview and Fairview, and the character of the trail as it passes the houseboat community needs to be improved with more rational parking, better signage and improvements to the series of small parks along the route.

**Potential solution:** The City has allocated funds for the safety improvements and construction is planned during 2011. Additional design work and funding will be needed for improvements in the sections of the trail that lie north of that project.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The Foundation could provide technical assistance and seed funding to help the Fairview community plan improvements to the trail and shoreline parks.

### Ship Canal Trail

**Description:** Completion of the Fremont Bridge project and a recent extension of the trail to the west bring the Ship Canal Trail to within sight of the Ballard Bridge. The trail is blocked at this point by chain link fences topped with barbed wire, and alternate connections in this area are both difficult and dangerous.

**Potential solution:** Through years of negotiations with the Burlington Northern Railroad, the City has finally secured access for the trail to continue beneath the Bridge to connect with Fisherman’s Terminal and the Bands of Green routes to Discovery Park and the central waterfront via Interbay. This link is a key connection for the entire regional trail network. Funding has been secured to extend the trail under the Bridge, and construction of that project is slated for 2011.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** There have been many false starts on this project during the past decade, due in large part to the difficulty of reaching a final agreement with Burlington Northern. If problems emerge again, the Foundation may be in a position to help broker a durable agreement that will enable the project to finally move forward.

### Ballard Bridge

**Description:** The Ballard Bridge was not designed to accommodate bicycles or pedestrians in large numbers, but it has become a key link in the entire Inland Waterways Open Space Network and badly needs to be upgraded. There are serious safety problems on the Bridge itself, and along the routes used to gain access to the Bridge.

**Potential solution:** The ultimate solution can only be achieved by incorporating bicycle and pedestrian improvements in a future capital project to upgrade the entire structure. In the interim, safety improvements are urgently needed.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** If the Foundation is successful in convening City Departments in the task force envisioned in recommendation #3, that forum could provide a vehicle for bringing immediate attention to the safety problems on the Bridge and its approaches.

### Interbay

**Description:** The Interbay Trail is a key link in the regional trail network and a major commuter route for those traveling downtown from the northwestern parts of the city. It has the potential to be one of the most significant segments of the entire network of “green connections” the Foundation is trying to create, linking the new waterfront park with the entire Inland Waterways Open Space System. Presently, however, the route is a “band of grey” for most of the way, consisting of an asphalt path between chain link fences.

**Potential solution:** Much of the route is owned or controlled by the Port of Seattle, which has announced its intention to become “the greenest Port in the world.” The Port has plans to redevelop portions of the Interbay corridor, and there is the potential to incorporate major trail improvements in the context of redeveloping the area.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** See recommendation 4.

### The Central Waterfront

**Description:** The integrity of the regional trail network depends on the quality of the trail connections along the central waterfront.

**Potential solution:** Incorporate high quality trails as an integral part of the new Waterfront Park.

**Potential park Foundation role:** Participate in planning activities for the Waterfront Park.

### Lake to Bay Trail

**Description:** The proposed Lake to Bay Loop Trail will link Lake Union Park, Seattle Center and the Olympic Sculpture Park. The concept plan is complete, and funding for the Thomas Street overpass has been secured.

**Potential Solution:** More detailed planning and additional funding is needed to complete the concept.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The Foundation has been and should continue to be the catalyst for this project.

### Alki/Duwamish Trail

**Description:** There is the potential to create a continuous trail from Alki Point along the Duwamish to connect with King County's Green River Trail to Kent and beyond. Several missing links must be filled along the way, which will require close cooperation between the City, the County, property owners and community groups.

**Potential solution:** Specific solutions are needed to bridge the gaps that exist just south of Spokane Street, within the South Park neighborhood, and at the southern boundary of the City.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** If the Foundation is successful in creating the task force described in recommendation 3, it should seek to direct that group's attention to the opportunities along the Duwamish, and serve as an "honest broker" in bringing City and County officials together to fill these missing links.

### Chief Sealth Trail

**Description:** The City has succeeded in creating the central sections of the trail in City Light right of way from east Beacon Hill to near Kubota Gardens. Conceptual plans are being developed to extend the trail through the East Duwamish Greenbelt to link up with the Mountain to Sound Trail; to the west across I-5; and to the south to connect with the City of Renton and the Cedar River Trail. Each of these will require major capital funding and intergovernmental cooperation, and the solution of major technical challenges. There is also a need to improve the existing trail in several ways: by improving signage; by regrading some sections that are too steep for most bicyclists; and by working with City Light to allow tree-planting and the installation of public art along the route.

**Potential solution:** The extension of the trail through the East Duwamish Greenbelt can be accomplished in cooperation with the State Department of Transportation, which controls the property. Although plans for the trail extension have been developed, the State's concerns about security are leading to a design that is less than optimal, with chain link fences along much of the route. The County is very interested in making the connection to the Cedar River Trail, and would welcome the opportunity to work with Seattle to accomplish that goal. The extension across I-5 will require a major capital investment.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** There is an urgent need for the Foundation to become involved in the negotiations between the City and the State regarding the character of the trail project as it passes through the East Duwamish Greenbelt to assure that it is a "band of green" rather than a band of grey. The Foundation may also have the opportunity to help spur discussions between the City and King County about the best ways to link the trail to the Cedar River Trail.



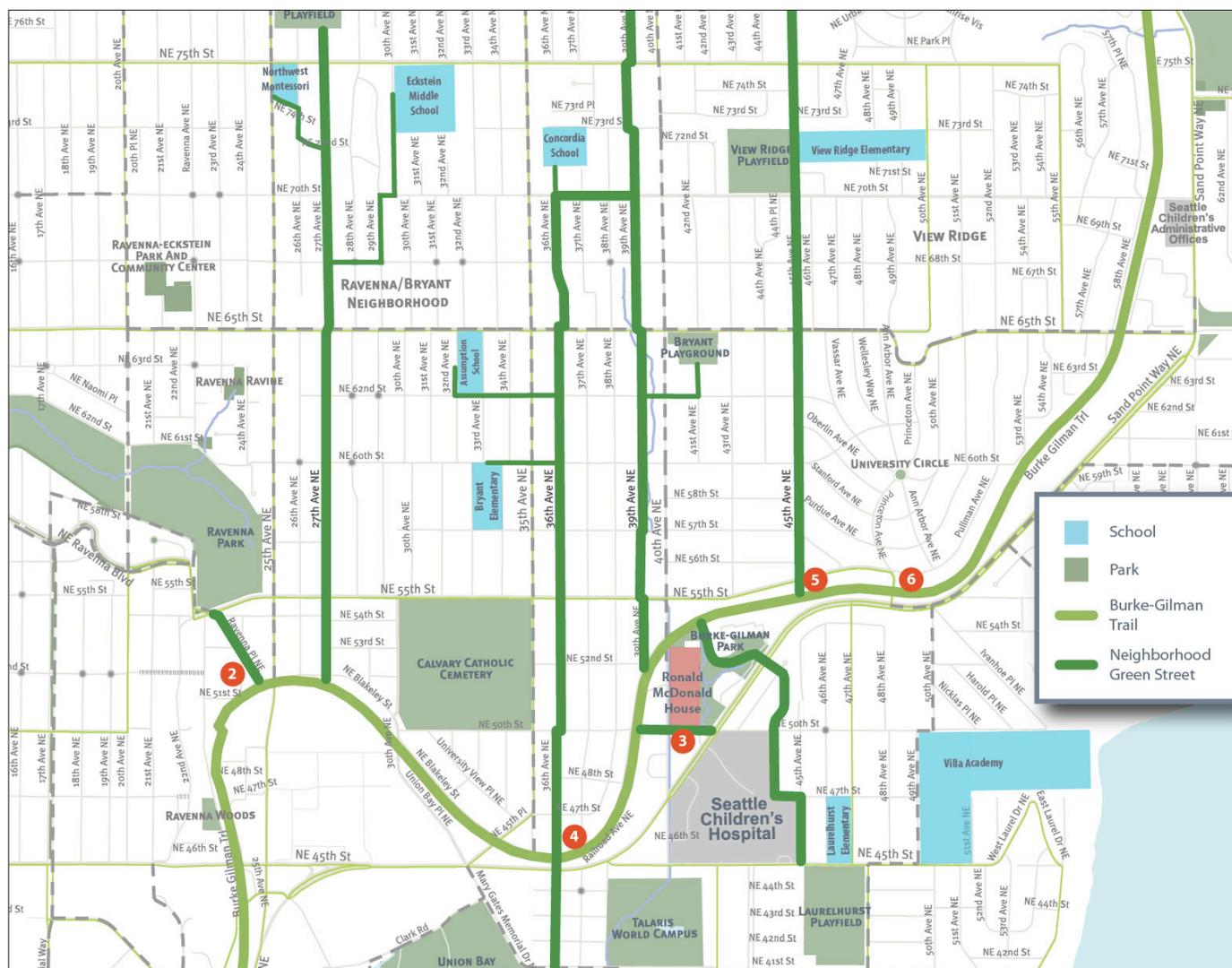
### **Lake Washington Boulevard/Arboretum**

**Description:** Although an on-street route, Lake Washington Boulevard is one of the most heavily used “green connections” in the City. However the safety of bicyclists along this route is in question at many points. The Arboretum is especially difficult, because the boulevard is narrow and heavily traveled by automobiles.

**Potential solutions:** Near Seward Park there is a single sign telling motorists that bicyclists have the right of way on the boulevard. If that is indeed City policy, there should be more than one sign along the route. There is also a need to address the specific challenges within the Arboretum. Although the City has signed an alternative route to the east, the popularity of the Arboretum as a destination requires that pedestrians and bicyclists should also be granted routes within the Arboretum itself, without having to compete with the traffic on the Boulevard. Recently the Arboretum Foundation has been giving greater attention to this issue and has developed conceptual plans for trails within the park.

**Potential Park Foundation role:** The Foundation should monitor the Arboretum Foundation’s plans and provide support when appropriate.

Seattle Children’s Livable Streets Project, NE Seattle Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements.



*Improvement efforts for the Livable Streets Project focus on improving access to the Burke-Gilman Trail and increasing the safety at major arterial crossings.*

*For more on the Seattle Children’s Livable Streets Project, see:*

<http://construction.seattlechildrens.org/livablestreets/>



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