



# FRIENDS

of the East Lake  
Sammamish Trail

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EXHIBIT NO. 69

January 24, 2018  
Hearing Examiner  
City of Sammamish

Subject: East Lake Sammamish Trail Inglewood Hill Parking lot – SSDP2016-00414

Hearing Examiner,

These are my comments on behalf of the Friends of the East Lake Sammamish Trail Regarding the Inglewood Parking Lot Shoreline Permit, SSDP2016-00414.

## **Public Comment on Shoreline Substantial Development Permit (SSDP) on ELST Inglewood Hill Parking Lot**

I am speaking today on behalf of the Friends of the East Lake Sammamish Trail, a grassroots group that has advocated for the ELST to be built and completed since our founding in April, 1999.

We express our support for King County's East Lake Sammamish Trail Inglewood Hill Parking Lot Shoreline Substantial Development Permit (SSDP2016-00414).

Although described as a "Parking Lot", in reality it is a trail head to a regional trail facility. As such it provides needed amenities such as restrooms, bike racks and a covered picnic bench along with 30 parking spaces.

This proposed parking lot/trailhead is consistent with elements of the State Shoreline Management Act and the Sammamish Shoreline Master Plan by:

- Recognizes and protects the statewide interest over the local interest.
- Is designed to take advantage of the views and access to a regional trail on public lands with the view towards the long term use of those public lands and recreational opportunities in the shoreline area.
- Protect the resources and ecology of the shoreline by habitat restoration the County will be doing by planting native plants and storm water treatment.
- Increasing public access to publicly owned areas of the Shoreline.
- Increases recreational opportunities for Sammamish residents and the general public in the Shoreline environment.

The trail, parking lot/trail head are also allowed and preferred uses in the Shoreline area in the City Shoreline Master Plan.

It provides a gently sloped access path, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which will allow families with young and old members, better and safer access to the trail without

having to cross the Parkway on foot. Because of recent projects in Sammamish, there have been very few entry points to the trail in our city.

Another big positive of the design of this parking lot/trailhead is a portion of it is built on top of the existing storm water detention vault and vault access road. By selecting a site that was previously disturbed the Project reduces the amount of new clearing and new impervious surface within the shoreline jurisdiction.

However, we are concerned about several of the recommended conditions of approval.

**Regarding Recommended Conditions of Approval 3:** *County is to identify any legally permitted structure they do not own or control on that parcel and shall identify where the Trail will be modified, narrowed or relocated to mitigate for conflicts with permitted structures.*

The city has already agreed that the County has provided adequate documentation of real property interest for this permit. These are legal disputes between the property owners and the County and does not include the City. Resolution of the ownership disputes is beyond the scope of both the HE's authority and the scope of concern for an SSDP application. Resolution of the ownership issues is a matter for a court to decide. Therefore, we believe this condition should be removed.

**Regarding Recommended Conditions of Approval 6:** *The Trail can be narrowed in locations to reduce required clearing and grading limits and preserving additional trees, we feel the County design of a 12' wide paved trail with gravel 2' shoulders, and 1' clear area on each side must be maintained for safety.*

First, since most of Chapter 21A.37 SMC does not apply, this condition is trying to impose restrictions that are not appropriate. Second, per the trail hearing we discovered that employing standard tree protection measures of a 5' clearing from the drip line would result in the removal of more trees, not less. Third, alternative measures under SMC 21A.37.270(7) can be approved by the Examiner in the context of an SSDP review and that the alternative measures proposed at the trail hearing by King County were considered appropriate by the hearing examiner. Finally, to the extent the purpose of this condition is to force the County to reduce the trail width, it is a mis-use of Chapter 21A.37 SMC.

It appears out of 24 trees both within and outside the clearing and grubbing limits, there are only 9 healthy viable trees and of that number, only 1 will be removed. Why would you narrow the trail at a trailhead to keep non-healthy trees? Unhealthy trees could fall and cause a safety problem. Keeping all the trees and narrowing the trail is also a safety problem as far as conflicts with other users on a busy regional trail, especially at a major entry point. We believe the County could mitigate this tree removal as they did in the 2.6 mile North Sammamish segment where they planted 1,150 trees and more than 11,000 shrubs. Their plan here is to replant 17 native and 15 non-native trees to mitigate for the 16 being removed as well as 129 native shrubs and 362 pieces of groundcover.

Narrowing the trail reduces safety and with multiple types of users: people on bicycles, roller blades, walkers, people pushing strollers, wheelchair users, etc. A narrow trail is not justified.

Mr. Alexander at the trail hearing noted that a 10' path with the volume anticipated would start at between a D and E level of service. Why would you build a new trail that will fail in level of service within a short time after completion?

We also have personal experience from using the Sammamish River Trail and Burke Gilman Trails that narrow parts of the trail, or older parts, built to the old narrow trail design, are not as safe and do

not allow the space needed with the volumes especially on summer weekends. In fact, sections of both trails have been widened for just these reasons. We have seen near misses and an occasional accident on these other trails and the 12' width plus shoulders are critical for a safe trail. We also need to look at future use. This area has seen unprecedented growth over the past 20 years and we need to plan for that. With a Sound Transit Station opening in Redmond, it's very conceivable that the volumes will increase during the week as well as some may choose to ride a bike to the station as part of their commute to work. There is no significant benefit from a narrowing of the trail to justify the reduction in safety.

Finally, **Recommended Conditions of Approval #9** we feel the length of effectiveness of the SSDP permit should be expanded from 5 to 7 years due to the trails length, it's complexity, the need for multiple permits from other jurisdictions, and legal issues.

Thus, Friends of the East Lake Sammamish Trail recommend that the Shoreline Substantial Development Permit for the Inglewood Parking Lot and adjoining trail be approved. It will be a great asset to allow users of all abilities access to the rest of the trail and provide habitat restoration and enhancement to the area. The part of the trail adjoining the parking lot will also be a consistent width with the other 2 sections of completed trail.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments.  
Sincerely,



Janet "Jan" Bird  
Lead Advocate for  
Friends of the East Lake Sammamish Trail