

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION expressing the position of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee regarding the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

WHEREAS, the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee has been in continuous existence since 1934 and acts in an advisory capacity to the City of Seattle and the University of Washington, with seven members, three appointed by the Mayor of Seattle, three by the President of the University of Washington, two appointed by the Arboretum Foundation and the seventh member appointed by the Governor of the State of Washington; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Park Arboretum is Washington State's official State Arboretum and contains internationally recognized woody plant collections and North America's largest collection of Oak species, of *Sorbus* and of Maples, and major collections of hollies, conifers and camellias, which collections have international significance for conservation and research; and

WHEREAS, State Route 520 has been, since its completion in 1963, and continues to be to this day, a blight on the Washington Park Arboretum, creating noise and visual intrusions into the park, encouraging cut-through traffic along Lake Washington Boulevard in much higher volumes than was originally intended for the boulevard, disturbing the serenity of the Japanese Garden, and affecting the passage of people and wildlife between Marsh and Foster Islands and the remainder of the Arboretum; and

WHEREAS, a new Master Plan for the Arboretum was adopted in 2001 that was the culmination of five years of planning work undertaken by Seattle Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington, the Arboretum Foundation, community groups and members of the general public and was approved by the Board of Regents of the University of Washington and the Seattle City Council, and that will guide improvements to the Arboretum for the next 20 years, including many specific projects to enhance the physical and natural characteristics of the Arboretum such as increasing habitat diversity by restoring the natural function of Arboretum Creek and the northern shoreline; and

WHEREAS, the northern part of the Washington Park Arboretum, together with other lands included in the University of Washington Botanic Gardens, contains the largest freshwater wetland complex of its type in the Seattle region, and the Master Plan, in conjunction with the existing wetlands, including the restoration, enhancement, and creation of new wetlands by restoring the ecological and wildlife function of the former garbage dump surrounding

existing SR Route 520 ramps, and creating a Pacific Northwest Marshland collection along the shoreline of Union Bay; and

WHEREAS, implementation the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, as currently proposed in the existing Draft Environmental impact Statement, will forever compromise the aesthetic setting, biological diversity, educational opportunities, and physical connections for people and wildlife within the Washington Park Arboretum:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDEN COMMITTEE THAT:

The Committee cannot endorse any of the alternatives currently proposed by Washington State Department of Transportation in the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) due to the profound negative environmental impacts the project would have on the Washington Park Arboretum.

The Committee is convinced that the preferred alternative chosen must be consistent with the following:

- The structure should minimize the impacts on the Washington Park Arboretum, especially including the Japanese Garden and Foster and Marsh Islands, and other adjacent and nearby parks such as East Montlake and McCurdy parks;
- The structure should have the least number of travel lanes possible;
- The structure width should be the minimum necessary for safe passage;
- Any structure should be designed to have the least amount of coverage and shadow impacts on park land below;
- Clear, open, and safe access for people and wildlife under the structure must be provided to reconnect severed components of the Arboretum; and,
- The structure should permit more efficient and effective public transit.

The Committee supports further investigation of proposals including the Union Bay Alternative (sometimes known as “the Arboretum Bypass” put forward by citizen Craig Dalby), and the Green Alternative, put forward by a citizen group called Parks Open Space Advocates, which may be superior to all alternatives studied in the EIS, because they may:

- Enhance rather than further degrade the Arboretum, and may result in the net gain of valuable wetland habitat;
- Provide integration of cross-lake transit with public transit and the potential to connect light rail across Lake Washington;

- be a graceful engineering solution; elegant and a source of civic pride; and,
- Achieve balance in the distribution of impacts to surrounding communities.

We believe such additional alternatives deserve full consideration by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Adopted by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee, the _____ day of March, 2007 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2007.

Chair, Arboretum and Botanical Garden
Committee

ATTEST:

Secretary, Arboretum and Botanical Garden
Committee