

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes

Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/abgc/>

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is a Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks Department, and the University of Washington, and designated by Seattle City Council Ordinance 65130, approved December 27, 1934, and Ordinance 116337, approved September 8, 1992.

The ABGC is closely monitoring the WSDOT SR520 project for impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum. Please see <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/520.htm>

Meeting Location: Graham Visitors Center, June 13, 2012

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Property Manager

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Asst. Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Associate Director
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Excused:

- Della Balick, Arboretum Foundation Board President
- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Other Staff Present:

- Hillary Burgess, UW Intern
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Senior Project Planner
- Leah Tivoli, Seattle Parks, Natural Resources Acting Manager
- Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks, Project Planner
 - Berger Partnership: Jason Henry, Principal, and Andy Mitton, Associate
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Deputy Director

ABGC Staff: Sandy Brooks, Seattle Parks, ABGC Coordinator

Public: Rainer Metzger, UW Student, Montlake community

Washington State Department of Transportation Team (WSDOT) Team

Rob Berman, Planning Manager; Kerry Pihlstrom, Engineering Manager West Side; Rachel Patterson, Communications Manager for SR520 Project; and Mahlon Clemens, Urban Design Lead

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

AF: Paige Miller; **City:** Donald Harris; **UW:** TBD

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Della Balick

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams
Michael Shiosaki & Leah Tivoli

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Roger Williams

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Rick Nishi

UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; **UW:** Theresa Doherty & Fred Hoyt

The meeting was held at Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum. Several members were delayed and ABGC Secretary Paige Miller called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

SR 520 Discussion

The WSDOT SR 520 team attended this meeting to discuss the Term Sheet and give an update on the design process. The team included Rob Berman, Kerry Pihlstrom, Mahlon Clements, and Rachel Patterson.

Term Sheet/TIFIA Funding/Phasing

At the June 13 ABGC meeting, WSDOT and ABGC members discussed the Term Sheet. Kerry stated it is still being clarified, with an end-of-summer completion goal. WSDOT is determining how the recent federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) funding will impact project phasing. Paige responded the ABGC is concerned with the delay in completing the Term Sheet. If the lids aren't built until later in the future, WSDOT will leave the older concrete bridge in place much longer than previously anticipated, resulting in six functioning lanes to Montlake – and three ramps in and out of the Arboretum. This could last from one to five years and it is unknown how it would impact the waterfront trail, shoreline, and north entry projects, as well as the rest of the SR 520 mitigation. Kerry clarified that WSDOT will remove two of the three ramps, but may keep the eastbound ramp for a longer period of time.

Iain asked if this would keep traffic funneled into the Arboretum and Kerry agreed that it will. When the two ramps are removed with TIFIA funds in 2014, the area can be re-graded and the wetland and peninsula mitigation can move forward; however, a sliver of property in that area must be maintained for SR 520 staging. It may be that the TIFIA funds will also remove the third ramp; this won't be known until the end of 2012. Paige asked that it be resolved very quickly due to the impacts on other projects.

Responding to a question from Fred about the Foster Island area being built as a “split level” roadway of new and old, Kerry agreed with his description. She added the old bridge is vulnerable and WSDOT is committed to its replacement. She gave a brief description of the construction sequence, with the work being completed as funding is secured. Paige observed that the future of the I-90 tolls (which would help fund the SR 520 project) are politically sensitive and may be difficult to implement. The “easy” SR 520 project funding has already been found and she is concerned how future phases will be funded.

Design Process

Rob Berman and Mahlon Clemens next presented information on the design process for the SR 520 corridor between I-5 and the Portage Bay Bridge. The next Seattle Community Design meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 14. [See <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/I5ToMedina/scdp.htm> for boards and other materials presented at that meeting.] Rob stated a public open house is scheduled for July, where WSDOT staff will review feedback from the public and the most recent design.

Today, Rob and Mahlon are reviewing the overall concept; the canal reserve property which is owned by the UW; stormwater facility area; area under the bridge; the operating and maintenance facility; and Lake Washington Boulevard, which is the hottest topic for public.

Rob and Mahlon set up a number of boards with drawings (1-4 below) and described each. ABGC members commented on the designs and asked a number of questions.

1. Montlake Area – Draft Concept Plan diagram. Key element is connections.
2. Canal Reserve: Option B path on lid, move southwards, connect green all way there
3. E. Montlake Park – Baseline Design, constructed wetland concept
4. Stormwater

Comments/Questions

- Iain asked if the intent is for the wetland area to be unfenced; Rob agreed it is.
- Per Rob, there are currently 200 parking spaces at Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in McCurdy Park. All will be removed as the MOHAI building is demolished as part of the SR 520 project. Parking at East Montlake Park could be increased by 30 spaces but neighbors are concerned with increased traffic in the area. After MOHAI moves, WSDOT will perform a parking study and better determine parking needs. Jack noted the public good carries some extra weight in these determinations.
- The new SR520 bridge and roadway will require an operations and maintenance facility, which will have at least six employees. WSDOT has looked at various locations, with the berm being the most likely spot.
- Rob and Mahlon next described the East Montlake shoreline baseline design, including Option A Stepped Abutment, Transit/HOV off-ramp option, and Option B with a larger setback. Iain asked about the buffer lids at East Montlake Shoreline. Mahlon responded they measure approximately 200' on both sides of the roadway. Iain asked whether the buffer might be reduced if the HOV lane widens; Kerry stated the roadway width will not increase and WSDOT will try to reduce the lanes, if possible.
- Paige asked where buses will first be visible when they cross lanes. Rob responded they would be visible from about 24th Ave. Plantings, grasses, fencing, etc., will be added to buffer that visibility.
- Lid models: Michael noted the area under the bridge will be about 300' wide; having a model at the next meeting will help explain how various components will work. Iain asked if the lid can be built in different levels, similar to Freeway Park. Rob responded it is possible and will be looked at in the next design phase.
- Iain stated WSDOT has a couple possibilities with vents and operating facilities at the bridge area, and he would like to see some options that are dramatically different. Michael requested the area be designed so it isn't bunker-like and so the parking, vehicles, etc., aren't the first thing you see looking towards the Arboretum.
- There is a concrete wall where the lid is and Fred stated it is a struggle to determine what to do in the area. A boardwalk had been considered; the WSDOT team stated it would be a tough sell to fund building some type of structure for people use.
- Iain believes the smaller the area is under the bridge, the better. Fred agreed, as it would be difficult to find a use for any space underneath the bridge. WSDOT staff noted the design includes 11' of head room under the bridge.
- Iain appreciates the level of study presented today.
- East Lake Washington Boulevard Baseline Design. Trees on the south side of the Boulevard will remain. These trees are expected to live another 20-30 years and will be replaced as they die.
- Trees at the MOHAI area will be removed and the area re-planted.
- Residents in that area have asked the new median to extend as far south as possible. The median may also be moved several feet further out from houses. Paige recommended that some breaks be included in the median to allow people to turn around and help reduce traffic jams.
- Michael asked the design team to consider the entrance into the Arboretum and how it will be designed. Andy from the Berger Partnership stated the Arboretum has distinctive Olmsted elements of columns, stone walls, and the stone cottage. These and elements of the Montlake Bridge may be used in the entrance design.
- Iain asked if the lid will also reflect some elements of the Arboretum and Michael asked if the lid will include trees. Rob and Mahlon commented that the details of who designs the new park areas and who maintains them is still being worked out.
- Jack believes the design is going in the right direction of a greener and more narrow roadway.
- Stormwater Facility Wetland Concept. Iain suggested using plants to help clean the water.
- Canal Reserve area. After viewing the concept drawing, Theresa asked if some trees will be removed to create a green and open space, rather than having trees only in the area. Fred asked that the space be designed as a visual and psychological connection of the Arboretum, UW, and Center for

Urban Horticulture. Iain asked if the trees and grassy areas can be reversed to help with the connections referred to by Fred.

- Iain asked if water can be directed to the old Canal. Berger staff stated this is an interesting idea. It would help treat stormwater runoff sooner, like a bioswale, and could be combined with the trail project.
- Theresa asked if the north entry will have new parking spaces; it will.

Berger staff and the WSDOT team will attend the July 11 ABGC meeting and asked that two hours be scheduled to continue the discussions. They will bring models for the lids, updates on the design, and latest version of the Term Sheet. Jack asked that the Term Sheet be sent to ABGC members at least three days prior to the meeting.

Kerry recognized the ABGC is concerned with the funding phases. WSDOT is very supportive of the ABGC projects and doesn't want to leave the ABGC unhappy. However, the scale and fine tuning has increased since the beginning of the project and WSDOT must determine how best to deal with that.

Approval of Minutes

Jack moved, and Donald seconded, approval of the May 9 ABGC minutes as presented. Motion was approved, with Iain abstaining.

Jack thanked Jeanette Geiger of Seattle Parks for taking minutes for the meeting. He noted it can be difficult to step into a committee meeting and take accurate notes on complicated discussions. Theresa will send Jeanette a letter of thanks.

Budget and other Updates

Arboretum Foundation:

Paige reported Craig Trueblood will be the incoming Arboretum Foundation Board president, effective July.

City:

Leah reported former Arboretum crew chief, Paul Smith, has returned to the position after a leave of absence, and one Parks position is vacant. The Parks Department has submitted its 2013 budget proposals to the mayor and is now under a cone of silence until the mayor announces his proposed budget in late September.

Steve Alley has proposed a sister city arboretum relationship be set up between Seattle and Kobe, Japan. Paige received the same suggestion on her recent visit to the arboretum in Chongqing, China. Jack suggested further discussion at the July ABGC meeting. Donald recommended Paige and Leah check with the Cities' Sister Cities program prior to the discussion.

University of Washington:

Fred reported Acting Dean of the School of Forest Resources, Tom Hinckley, is retiring in June and Steve West will temporarily fill the position. An offer has been made to a candidate from Wales (Thomas DeLuca) to fill the position.

Fred and other staff from Center for Urban Horticulture are working with Iain Robertson's landscaping students to freshen the landscaping around Graham Visitor Center parking lot. The students have developed a number of good ideas.

At its May meeting, ABGC members learned of \$43,000 in vandalism at the Gateway to Chile garden, and UW staff are working with Seattle Police Department (SPD.) Recently an anonymous donor reimbursed the \$43,000. This is the second time the garden has been heavily vandalized – both times were during the Cinco de Mayo holiday.

Jack understood that the UW had a good idea of the vandal's identity and he doesn't want the matter dropped. Following discussion, **he moved that the ABGC write a letter to the mayor to express its concerns about the vandalism of the Chilean Gardens. Paige seconded. Iain made a friendly amendment, accepted by Jack, to include the significance of the trees as well as the monetary value, and that this letter would be in addition to Fred's ongoing efforts with SPD.** Fred will forward the police report and case # to Paige for inclusion in the letter. The letter will ask SPD to increase its security of the area, especially near the Cinco de Mayo celebration, and will cc: Acting Parks Superintendent Williams and ABGC members. **The vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**

Fred also reported the Arboretum Overlook area was heavily tagged with graffiti, staff have found animal parts at the Arboretum, and there were three recent break ins at the Graham Visitors Center.

Totem Pole Donation

Nothing new to report at this time.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Update

Andy Sheffer gave a number of project updates. MPIG has been revisiting the high priority implementation projects. He referenced the ridge top trail, bridge reconstruction at the ravine, methods to reinforce the hierarchy of trails, and ways to better highlight the George Tsutakawa sculpture. A biomass of plantings will be installed at Gateway to Chile, the New Zealand forest transplanting is nearly complete, and the New Zealand contract bid will be advertised on June 20. Parks staff are working closely with City Light and Seattle Department of Transportation on the Lake Washington Boulevard lighting and traffic-calming projects. Expected completion dates for both projects are end of September.

Berger staff are doing excellent work with WSDOT and the Tribes, as they dovetail the north entry and multi-use trail projects with the SR 520 design. As part of the interpretive and wayfinding project, 12 new signs have been installed and maps and placards are now available at the new Pacific Gardens.

The north patio at Graham Visitors Center is being extended by 12 foot, with new patio tables being added. The building's electrical system is being replaced and a new coffee area is being installed in the lobby. Fred added that the crews have been giving Arboretum grounds a really good cleaning and removing dumpsters, concrete, etc.

Potholes are being repaired on Foster Island Drive; however, this is a temporary fix. Parks staff will again approach the Broadmoor Community Club on their previous offer to fund ½ of the costs for re-paving the road. A sticking point is that Broadmoor residents don't want a stop sign at the intersection of Arboretum Drive and Foster Island Drive, while the ABGC partners do want this traffic-calming element. Paige reported City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen had lunch at the Arboretum recently and he noted how well kept the Arboretum appeared.

The wetland and multi-use trail survey is now complete; this information will assist Berger in moving ahead with these projects. The SEPA and Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) is being submitted. Paige questioned moving ahead with this step, as funding for the West Side is not yet secured. Andy responded that, while it is unknown if WSDOT will fund the project, it will fund the design and securing the permits is part of the design. Paige asked whether regulators might determine that because WSDOT funded the project designs it must also fund the project. Andy stated this is a good question and he will go back and review.

Old/New Business

City Council Annual Briefing: Donald reported the windows of opportunity to brief City Council are July to mid-September or in 2013. The Council will focus on the 2013 budget from mid-September through late November. At its July meeting, ABGC members will determine the focus of the presentation.

ABGC Vacancy: Rainer Metzger, UW Landscape Architect program, and interested citizen voiced interest in the vacant mayoral position. Teresa will follow up and report back at the July meeting.

ABGC Member to be on Leave: Iain Robertson, representing the UW, will be on leave beginning with the October ABGC meeting through the July 2013 meeting. UW representatives will work to find a temporary replacement. ABGC members will miss his expertise, especially during the SR 520 discussions.

July 11 Meeting: ABGC members should expect this meeting to last from 8:30-11:00 am, with two hours scheduled for the WSDOT SR 520 segment.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair