

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, May 09, 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

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Excused:

- Della Balick, Arboretum Foundation Board President
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Other Staff Present:

- Hillary Burgess, UW Intern
- Barb DeCaro, Seattle Parks, Natural Resources Acting Manager
- Theresa McEwen, Seattle Parks Volunteer Coordinator
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Deputy Director

Washington State Department of Transportation Team (WSDOT) Team

Rob Berman, Planning Manager; Kerry Pihlstrom, Engineering Manager West Side; and Katie DeLeuw, Communications Manager for SR520 Project

ABGC Staff: Jeanette Geiger, Seattle Parks

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 & Barb DeCaro

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Roger Williams

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Rick Nishi

The meeting was held at Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum. ABGC Chair Theresa Doherty called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. **The minutes from the April 11 meeting were approved as presented.**

SR 520 Discussion

Term Sheet

Rob Berman, Kerry Pihlstrom, and Katie DeLeuw of the WSDOT SR 520 team presented an updated version of the Term Sheet that includes all previous ABGC comments. Due to a full meeting agenda, a copy of this new version will be sent electronically to ABGC members for additional review and comment. Comments should be routed to David Graves, Seattle Parks Department before the June 13 ABGC meeting. An updated version will be brought to the July ABGC meeting, with a goal of completing by end of summer.

Construction Update

Rob discussed the results from the April Seattle Community Design Process. Issues that emerged were:

- When looking from Laurelhurst, does the 90' navigational marker on the bridge appear to be in the middle of the view of Mt. Rainier or to the right or left of the view?
- How bright is the water view sentinel lighting?

The next outreach meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 19, at Seattle Preparatory School. Additional information and feedback from the outreach meetings can be found at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/I5ToMedina/scdp.htm>.

WSDOT TIFIA Loan Update

Earlier this year WSDOT applied for a \$200 million federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan, which would provide funding to construct the north half of the West Approach of the bridge, including a bike path, and would tie into Montlake Boulevard. Project planning for that part of the project is well underway. WSDOT will be notified in June whether the application is successful; however, the team is confident it will be. The TIFIA funds will be available in the fall.

The next step in the project is the west approach design and outreach on the Portage Bay Bridge proposed designs. The south side of the bridge at the west approach is not funded at this time.

Enhanced House Bill 2814:

Earlier this year, the State legislature passed Enhanced House Bill (EHB) 2814 which reads in part:

The legislation allows WSDOT to launch critical work necessary to keep the floating bridge project on schedule and on budget. It also prevents WSDOT from constructing any element west of the floating bridge until 'the Legislature has authorized the imposition of tolls on the I-90 floating bridge and/or other funding sufficient to complete construction of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program.' These restrictions expire on June 30, 2014."

Construction of the west approach is delayed while these restrictions are in place. Full funding is expected to be in place in July 2014 when the language from the HB2814 expires.

Donald asked whether the TIFIA funding is for both construction and mitigation. WSDOT responded that anything they build will be mitigated.

Responding to a question from Paige on how long an interim bridge or the old bridge on the south side must remain in place, WSDOT answered it could be a long time. Construction on the north side of the western approach should begin in 2014; construction to the south side, depending on funding, may begin in 2017.

Jack asked if the funding source will be written into the agreement and WSDOT stated it will incorporate the ABGC's work with the work being done by WSDOT. The result should be a better Arboretum when construction is complete.

Fred asked when drawings of the interim bridge will be available for study. WSDOT expects this information to be ready in fall 2012.

Paige observed there are many elements to negotiate between now and this fall and asked about the timeline. WSDOT responded by this summer WSDOT will see the TIFIA mitigation signed off and will know what mitigation is left to consider. Having this information will allow WSDOT to set a new timeline. Rob stated WSDOT now needs to establish a subgroup to work with WSDOT on the design construction documents.

Rob next presented information on topics from the Seattle Community Design Process. The information boards and extensive written comments are available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/I5ToMedina/scdp.htm>.

Working area boards

- [Connections](#) (pdf 12.1 mb)
- [East Lake Washington Boulevard](#) (pdf 751 kb)
- [Lid operations and maintenance](#) (pdf 374 kb)
- [East Montlake Shoreline](#) (pdf 593 kb)
- [East Montlake Park](#) (pdf 2.52 mb)
- [Canal Reserve](#) (pdf 2.86 mb)
- [Montlake Boulevard East](#) (pdf 794 kb)

Seattle Community Design Process – How it connects

The next outreach meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2012, and will include discussion of the Portage Bay Bridge. The June and July meetings will focus on connections and healing the ecological areas around the project.

SR520 Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit and Network

Connecting the gaps and transitioning into Montlake and Burke Gilman Trail.

Bicycle and pedestrian mobility was considered in both the Montlake and the Capitol Hill/Roanoke Park areas. The Montlake neighborhood is the intersection of the proposed SR 520 path, City of Seattle designated routes, and the Burke Gilman Trail. The Technical Coordination Team (TCT) studied options for connecting these systems through both on-street and off-street facilities for bikes and pedestrians. The TCT also examined opportunities to improve existing bicycle and pedestrian connections at the E Roanoke Street/I-5 overcrossing and across the lid at 10th Avenue. Several recommendations were identified, and these should be considered by WSDOT and the City of Seattle as the Historic District negotiations (Section 106 process) proceeds.

Eastlake Washington Boulevard Baseline Design

Montlake Boulevard East north of Lake Washington Boulevard is designated as part of the historic Lake Washington Boulevard, is a state transportation route, and serves regional and multi-model connections. Montlake Boulevard near SR 520 and the Ship Canal is a busy crossroad of activity for local and regional travel. Rob reviewed two options shown on the board: A. shows separate east/west with retaining wall; and B: shows level access to the parking and lid line.

Paige believes any separation would be positive; however, studies show that the wider the boulevard, the faster traffic will go. Rob then reiterated the need to work with a subgroup to have serious options ready by the fall.

Baseline-Shoreline

Construction was moved back from the shoreline. Option A shows a stepped abutment, while Option B has a larger setback.

Maintenance Facility

A maintenance facility is needed to service the ventilation of the lid. It will house employees, with a road to access the facility. The design, which is not yet final, shows a couple of options for the maintenance facility's location and access. There is no support for locating the maintenance facility on top of the lid.

HOV On/Off Ramp Options

Bioswale options include construction of a wetland or retention pond. The wetland option increases parking from 15 to 30 spaces. Comments support the functioning wetland option.

Canal Reserve Property

This area buffers residents from SR520. Rob pointed out elements of Option A, which is a proposed path adjacent to the off-ramps and Option B, a proposed path up onto the lid.

West Approach to the Bridge – Site Conditions

Potential arch treatment and shoreline elevations were shown. As with the four-lane alternative, the new roadway structures over the Arboretum wetlands and waterways would be more visible than the existing SR 520 due to increased height, greater roadway depth, and eight-foot-high sound walls on both sides of the roadway. The six-lane alternative's heights, profiles, and column spacing (proposed 250 feet apart vs. existing 100 feet apart) would be similar to the four-lane alternative. The removal of the unused R.H. Thompson Expressway Ramps and the wider column spacing would open up views at water and ground level. The west-to-south ramp to the Arboretum would pass under the highway at about 15 feet above the water.

Jack commented that people using the bridge will only be on it for a few minutes while residents and Arboretum visitors will look at it 24 hours a day. Those who are impacted the most should have the most input to the final design.

Dave asked how the Eastside public process compared to the Westside process. Rob and Kerry answered that both processes have been extensive and are very similar.

Theresa thanked the WSDOT Team for attending the meeting. At the June 13 meeting the ABGC will decide whether to have a separate meeting with WSDOT or extend several upcoming meetings to complete the Term Sheet.

Budget Updates

Arboretum Foundation:

Paige reported the Foundation has a deficit of \$230,000 for 2012 and must cut its budget. The annual plant sale has been held at Magnuson Park's Building 30 for the past few years and the space was unavailable this year. The sale, held at Graham Visitors Center, had lower-than-hoped-for attendance and did not meet financial expectations. SR 520 was also closed and publicized parking constraints at GVC may have kept shoppers away.

There was no damage to the Arboretum and only a few vehicles parked on the grass. The 2013 sale is uncertain, as Building 30 will again be unavailable. Sara and Fred offered the Center for Urban Horticulture as

the plant sale site, and reported very successful events have been held there. Paige will discuss with Sarah and Fred.

City:

Donald reported that Acting Superintendent Williams recently announced an 8–10% budget cut is being proposed by the City Budget Office. Seattle Parks is now considering reductions.

Barb reported that Mother's Day is the Japanese Garden's most highly-attended event. Parking went well, with only a few instances of visitors parking on the grass. City staff provided traffic control and the Arboretum Foundation loaned signs.

Barb also reported that a new Acting Natural Resources Manager was chosen through a formal interview process. The position will be a six-nine month assignment. Leah Tivoli was the successful applicant and will begin attending ABGC meetings in June. Paige thanked Barb for her support of the Arboretum and voiced concern at the number of turnovers in this position. Barb assured the ABGC that the Department's commitment to the Arboretum is strong and will not change.

University of Washington:

Sarah announced good news! For the first time in four years, the UW Botanic Garden will not take any cuts. The University has resumed interviews for the director of the UW's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences. Tom Hinckley, who will retire this summer, has been the acting director. Sarah was recently asked to serve another three years as director of the Center for Urban Horticulture and accepted.

Sarah and Fred reported a recurrence of vandalism at the Pacific Gardens. Last year, members of a UW fraternity were punished for damaging the same plants that incurred the recent vandalism. Fraternity members have not admitted the damage; however, suspicion is leaning in that direction. A police report was filed, a press release went out to the media, and UW student services will be involved in the investigation.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Update

Michael reported good news:

New Zealand Garden: The bid will go out in June, after being delayed by the bus turnaround design, and construction is tentatively scheduled for June-July. Fred reported most of the plants have survived in the greenhouse and are doing quite well. The plant propagation was successful.

Proposed Totem Donation: At the April ABGC meeting, Paige reported that Jim Sulsic, Seattle Center Foundation chair, offered a totem pole for installation in the Arboretum. He has since rescinded the offer, due to the recent plant vandalism and voiced concerns of the totem's safety. Paige will continue discussions with Mr. Sulsic and ask him to reconsider.

Graham Visitors Center Front Desk Remodel: Michael reported this project is under way and more complicated than originally thought. Parks staff The city is in the process of obtaining permits and work should begin in July. Electrical upgrade will be included. Major Maintenance monies and Levy funds will fund the project. Andy Sheffer is the project manager and will be looking at plans for a patio expansion of 20-30 feet to the north.

Gateway to Chili Garden: The garden is slow to fill-in. There is some funding available for additional plants and ground cover. There needs to be additional time to allow the plants to establish and fill-in the areas.

Pacific Connection Garden: Trees were removed for upcoming construction.

Music of Trees Art Installation: This is being coordinated by CUH staff and is planned for a September installation.

Lake Washington Boulevard Lighting Project: Michael reported that Seattle City Light is once again moving forward with the lighting project along Lake Washington Boulevard. The project was delayed due to City Light bid complications and the delay also impacted Seattle Department of Construction's (SDOT) crosswalk installation and traffic calming on Lake Washington Boulevard. SDOT needs two weekends in July/August to accomplish the crosswalk work and will coordinate the schedule with Parks and Arboretum staff.

Old/New Business

Mayoral Vacancy: There is a mayoral-appointed vacancy on the ABGC, following the resignation of Kjris Lund. Theresa asked ABGC members to send names of potential candidates to Sandy.

Fence Removal at North Madison Park: Michael reported the most recent public meeting on the fence removal and new elements to be added went well. Area residents who attended were positive toward Parks' proposal for the removal and new landscape features.

City Council Annual Briefing: The ABGC presents an annual update on the Arboretum to City Council's Parks and Neighborhood Committee. Parks staff will work with Council staff to schedule the briefing. Jan Bultmann, legislative aide to City Councilmember Bagshaw, was at this meeting and suggested Powerpoint as the most effective way to update the Council.

2012 Work Plan: Theresa recently led an update of the ABGC's work plan. The plan will now be reviewed on a quarterly basis (July, October, January, and April.)

Upcoming Ballot Issues: If Propositions 1 and 2 are passed, there will be some monies available, including \$1.3 million per year for regional acquisition and trails. Dave Towne will monitor the 2012 bond proposals, including the seawall and libraries. There is a movement to place a bond for parks maintenance and operation on the 2014 ballot.

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

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair