

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, November 10, 2010 (Regular Meeting)

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Barbara Wright, Arboretum Foundation Board
- 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, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Absent:

- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Other Staff Present:

- Nancy Belcher, Arboretum Foundation
- Stephanie Brown, Seattle Department of Transportation
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Senior Planner
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Associate Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Planning & Development Deputy Director

WSDOT SR 520 Team Present:

Rob Berman, Planning Manager; Jenifer De Young, Environmental Manager, Katie DeLeuw, Communications Manager for SR520 Project, and Design Project Engineer Dawn Yankauskas (for Kerry Ruth, the Engineering Manager West Side); and Shane Cherry, WSDOT's SR 520 Environmental Mitigation Technical Lead

Members of the Public Present:

- Virginia Gunby
- Larry Sinnott, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
- Jorgen Bader

ABGC Staff: Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

Paige (AF); Donald (City); & Sandra (UW)

Joint Fundraising Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Della Balick

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sandra Lier

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

Michael (lead), Rick Nishi, Fred, Paige, Sandra & Tom

SR520 Technical Committee:

AF, David Graves (City), & Theresa Doherty (UW)

Barbara Wright, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. The WSDOT and SDOT representatives joined the meeting at 9:30 am.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael reported the ribbon cutting for the Chilean Garden was a great success. It was well-organized and well attended. Paige reported that 300-350 people were there and the Japanese Garden Maple Viewing event had 1,000 paid entrances. With an off-duty officer facilitating the Lake Washington Boulevard crossing, people moved safely between both sites. Opening the road to one-way traffic also helped manage the attendees.

MPIG hasn't met recently and there were no other reports.

Old/New Business

Budget: There were no new budget updates from the City, the University, or the Foundation. Several ABGC members made contacts with Seattle City Councilmembers requesting the City maintenance budget be restored to 2010 levels; however, no specific commitments were made by any Councilmembers to do so in this difficult budget session. ABGC members felt it important to remind City Councilmembers about the unique partnership in managing the Arboretum and discuss the importance of maintaining the important new gardens to encourage future private donations to the Arboretum.

Concern was expressed about the potential closure of Building 30 in Magnuson Park as the Arboretum Foundation holds its plant sales there. The revenue from these sales helps support the Arboretum and it was agreed that other sale venues need to be considered very soon.

ABGC January 12 Retreat: The ABGC usually holds its annual retreat in November of each year. However, due to the need to complete the mitigation process with WSDOT, the retreat is postponed until early 2011. All ABGC members agreed to reserve January 12, 8:00 am-3:00 pm for the annual retreat. Theresa volunteered to chair the retreat planning committee, with Donald, Jack, Fred, and Barbara assisting.

2011 ABGC Members: Iain is a UW appointee to the ABGC and his term expires 12/31/10; he has agreed to serve a second term. Kjris Lund is a Mayoral appointee and her term also expires on that date. Donald will work with the Mayor's office on that appointment process.

Comments on WSDOT Draft Mitigation report: WSDOT prepared a 25-page "SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project DRAFT Arboretum Mitigation Plan, dated November 3, 2010". ABGC members commented on the report prior to WSDOT team members' arrival at the meeting, and a number of comments were made:

Jack: wants the report to consistently use the same terminology about the Arboretum and make it clear that Foster Island and Marsh Island are part of the Arboretum. He also believes the design responsibilities are unclear.

David G: ABGC should carefully consider any ongoing needed maintenance costs before agreeing to take over any projects that are a result of mitigation

Paige: use “the Arboretum” throughout and not “WPA”

Sandra: use “Arboretum Master Plan” and not “Master Plan”

Paige: on page 18 add two items to the matrix: (1) traffic management and (2) enhance not just mitigate

Nancy: need agreement on what WSDOT will do in the future that isn’t tied to funds

Sandra: referred to page 13, “Noise and dust” and recommended following the City’s noise policy. WSDOT should develop a good communication path for the public to report noise problems during project construction

Barbara: haven’t yet discussed how resolution is reached; Theresa suggested that be determined in the Memorandum of Agreement

Barbara: ABGC should be part of design process; WSDOT must be sensitive about putting highway in this lovely park – the Arboretum has never been the same since SR 520 was originally built through the park and this new project aggregates this impact; the damage has been done and ABGC is trying to work with the damage; ABGC look closely at the language.

Sandra: WSDOT to attach ABGC Master Plan priorities to the document

Michael: at next meeting with WSDOT, they should bring all the attachments to the Mitigation Report

Jack asked if there are any missing Master Plan projects that should be added to the list. Michael responded that MPIG feels this is a complete list. Paige agreed. WSDOT has pulled projects that have nexus to the SR 520 project. Jack asked that this information be added to the report and that the “enhancement fund” wording also be added.

Next Steps: After today’s meeting with WSDOT, Barbara will ask for a new version, in track changes mode, incorporating today’s changes from the ABGC. She will request WSDOT to send this to ABGC for another review. She will forward the draft back to WSDOT once ABGC has completed its review and provided new comments. She appreciates the good input from ABGC members.

Site Tour of Ramps

Following a suggestion from Susan Black that a portion of the Arboretum ramps be saved as a view site, last week Michael, Donald, Paige, and Susan Black toured the ramps. Susan was especially interested in the westernmost “ramp to nowhere” that ends near MOHAI. The ramps have spectacular views over Union Bay; however, a view ramp would be located right next to a noisy and busy freeway. After the site visit, Susan is not as interested in this idea and Seattle Parks is not interested.

Along with the noise and proximity to the freeway, there are other reasons this proposal is not supported. ABGC has been adamant with WSDOT that the large concrete ramps be removed from the Arboretum and – the public would be surprised by a sudden change in this direction. The new bridge will add an extensive amount of new concrete to the area, as the lanes will be wider and the columns taller. The proposal would require a new environmental impact study. Saving these ramps would be a constant reminder of the original damage to the Arboretum from the SR 520 project.

The general consensus was: don’t spend time or money on this suggestion; and discuss new observation points at the WSDOT peninsula, Duck Bay, and Foster Island with WSDOT.

Arboretum Creek

Paige and Nancy met with Rob Berman and Shane Cherry, consultants for WSDOT, last Thursday, and had a good discussion on daylighting Arboretum Creek as part of the mitigation process. Shane stated that a goal of restoring the creek with habitat is achievable; restoring a fish run would be much more difficult to achieve. The resource agencies aren’t interested in spending the mitigation dollars on aquatic resources for fish run restoration. He will move forward with the creek design, but not with plans to restore the fish run.

David Graves, Fred, and Shane are also meeting to discuss wetland enhancement along the creek, as the State's resource agencies do support wetland enhancements. Paige suggested that the Arboretum Foundation could pay Shane for doing work for the Arboretum outside of his role as WSDOT consultant. Sandra and Paige have discussed this and Sandra is concerned this would be a conflict of interest and believes the Foundation should hire someone else. Michael added that all of the corridor should be studied before the Foundation undertakes this approach. Sandra and David G agreed and added that this needs a design team approach. Paige will go back to the Foundation Board and discuss this. She will report their decision at the ABGC's December meeting. Sandra asked that the minutes reflect the University would want its faculty and students involved in this process.

Public Comments

Larry Sinnott: He is a member of the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks' Board and stated that noise and dust during the deconstruction is a huge concern that must be addressed. He also suggested that a viewpoint be considered at the east edge of the lid.

Jorgen Bader: Page 11 of the WSDOT report reads a .9 acre impact; the actual amount is 3.7 acres. He referred to the old canal waterway and the MOHAI agreement and handed out a map of the area. The SR 520 project takes land from the Arboretum that had been part of the former Canal Reserve and the draft mitigation plan does not offer any replacement land for this taking.

Theresa attended a recent City University Community Advisory Council (CUCAC) [*whose purpose is to "advise the City and the University on the orderly physical development of the greater University area; to encourage the provision of adequate City services to the University and adjacent community and business areas; to assist the University and City in preserving the many positive aspects of the University's presence in the community; to review and comment upon potential adverse effects of removing aspects of University programs from the University campus; and to assist in the protection of the adjacent community and business areas from the adverse effects of University and City actions"*] and they urged that the UW replace the land that is being taken at MOHAI. The City had a 30-year lease, then the Port sold the land to the Arboretum. CUCAC insists this land be replaced.

WSDOT – Discussion of Draft Mitigation Plan

The WSDOT team joined the meeting at 9:30 am and included Rob Berman, Jenifer de Young, Katie De Leuw, and Dawn Yankauskas for Kerry Ruth. Today's focus is a review of the draft mitigation plan.

Schedule following today's meeting:

- Nov 15: ABGC members submit any final comments on the draft mitigation plan to Barbara
- Nov 16: Barbara will send the comments to Katie
- Nov 23: Katie will incorporate the ABGC comments and send a new draft to the ABGC
- Nov 29: ABGC and WSDOT will review the new version at the ABGC's special meeting
- Dec 1: City/Sound Transit Workgroup will meet
- Dec 1-15: WSDOT will post the draft mitigation plan on its web page and take public comment
- Dec 8: WSDOT will meet with ABGC for final review and approval of the mitigation plan
- Dec 22: WSDOT will submit the mitigation plan to the State Legislature

Barbara appreciates the amount of work the WSDOT team has expended to pull all the information together for the mitigation plan. Jack added that it is well organized and requested the next version be sent to ABGC members in track changes mode for more efficient reviewing.

Donald noted that earlier in today's meeting the ABGC reviewed the draft mitigation plan and made several edits. Topics included:

Traffic Management vs. Traffic Calming: ABGC members questioned WSDOT and SDOT's roles in these. Rob stated that SDOT is the lead for the traffic management, with WSDOT taking a back seat role. However, SDOT will not be the lead on any tolling.

Both WSDOT and SDOT must be collectively clear on the goals of the traffic calming efforts. Barbara asked that WSDOT add new language to the mitigation plan to clarify these roles, including tolling language.

Enhancement Fund: Memorialize in the report how the enhancement fund will work. Rob agreed to this request. WSDOT will add information to the report list and clarify how projects would slide into enhancement funds. Jack asked that the information be structured so State Legislators understand how the Enhancement Fund works.

WSDOT consult with ABGC

Include all attachments in next draft version

Keep Section of Ramps as Viewpoint: The ABGC will not pursue this proposal.

Reflect Passion ABGC Members Have Voiced: Include language about the damage to the Arboretum from the original SR 520 project and that the ABGC is trying to avoid more damage. Reflect the 40 years of effort spent trying to undo that damage. Include references to the loss of land in the Arboretum and traffic impacts from SR 520 to Lake Washington Boulevard. Jenifer suggested that a quote from the ABGC's comment letter to WSDOT could be included. Rob responded that WSDOT won't admit to past "sins" in this document, or state that it is making up for those. He suggested the language instead link back to the land.

Other comments/suggestions:

- Page 12: add language "wider and higher" and add language to describe access to the bridge
- Refer to as the "Arboretum" and identify Marshall Island and Foster Island as part of the Arboretum
- Page 17: references to "contribution" in A, D, G. Clarify the funding amount. Rob responded that the projects are not yet scoped so WSDOT used the word "contribute" as deliberately and specifically passive. ABGC asked that WSDOT remove the word "contribute" to projects and beef up the language on what it will do.
- Add "aquatic mitigation" references
- Add more language on the significance of the Master Plan. (Barbara will do this.)

(Suggestions were made for Pages 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. WSDOT staff made note of these for next draft version.)

Rob requested a letter from the ABGC by December 1 stating its participation in the development of, and its support for, the draft mitigation plan. Theresa volunteered to draft the letter and will circulate it to the ABGC by Nov 22. It will be reviewed at the Nov 29 ABGC meeting and finalized and approved at the Dec 8 meeting.

Scoping Process: Rob stated WSDOT must also get agreement with ABGC on the project scoping process. Dawn is now drafting a Memorandum of Understanding, which WSDOT hopes to have completed by the end of December. Paige noted the Arboretum Foundation Board must discuss and vote approval of a Memorandum of Understanding. She voiced concerns of the quick turnaround, as many people are out of town during the holidays. Rob responded that the process could possibly be pushed out to the end of January. Jenifer will confirm this.

Rob suggested that WSDOT wouldn't enter into a legal agreement with the ABGC, rather it would be with one of the three partners. Paige believes the partners must first agree, like they did on the Master Plan.

Stephanie noted that a Memorandum of Understanding won't require City Council approval; however, a Memorandum of Agreement, when it is developed, will.

Dawn spoke more on the scoping process. It may take until June 2012 to estimate project costs and then WSDOT and ABGC would discuss who will do which projects. Rob doesn't think any scoping funds will be spent until after July. Michael and David G noted that the City can move its part of the process forward sooner, with its staff doing the scoping and WSDOT paying the costs. The City requires any projects over \$200,000 go through a Request for Proposals process. Barbara agreed with Michael and David's approach, as the ABGC wants to keep momentum going on the projects. Rob responded that the MOU will help determine the next steps. Jenifer stated that Stephanie and the SDOT team can begin the traffic calming scoping as soon as they can schedule it. The scoping process will be discussed more at the Nov 29 special meeting.

Pedestrian Safety/Traffic Calming: Stephanie and the SDOT team have been working with WSDOT to develop a 2011 agreement for this work, which will be phased. The next steps are to work with the ABGC and determine what it wants or doesn't want. Jack asked Stephanie to send SDOT's priority list to the ABGC. Michael commented that if all the phases are to be done in 2011, the priority for completing the steps is not as critical. Paige urged that the public be well informed of these changes. Stephanie will prepare and send out a press release and possibly schedule the Mayor there to bring attention to the "slow down" of traffic. Jennifer Wieland of SDOT will attend the Nov 29 ABGC meeting to give an update report, as Stephanie will be out of town.

Traffic Management: SDOT wants to see how traffic calming measures on Lake Washington Boulevard work before making changes to traffic signal, etc. Paige asked that SDOT shorten the left turn traffic signal at Madison and Lake Washington Boulevard to discourage commuters from turning onto Lake Washington Boulevard. Stephanie and SDOT will evaluate this request, as re-routing the traffic may impact Martin Luther King Boulevard and Madison Street. SDOT will continue working with WSDOT in 2012 on traffic management in the area.

Meet with Tribes: Responding to a question from Jack whether WSDOT has met with the Tribes, Rob answered that WSDOT is trying to schedule a meeting. Paige suggested the ABGC schedule its own meeting with the Tribes and Barbara suggested ABGC representatives include Paige, Michael, Donald, Theresa, and her. ABGC will discuss this suggestion further at an upcoming meeting.

Barbara thanked WSDOT and SDOT for the new information and helpful discussions.

Public Comments:

Virginia Gunby: She has been involved in the SR 520 project for the past 13 years and has institutional memory of it. She thinks there is community discontent with what is happening at the ABGC with the mitigation plan and there should be community conversation about it. Montlake Boulevard traffic is affected by these discussions. Lands that were previously taken by WSDOT for SR 520 should be returned. The mitigation plan hasn't dealt with what will happen during construction.

Jorgen: The mitigation report is deficient.

Other Old/New Business

Approval of Minutes: **Dave T moved approval of the September 8 regular ABGC meeting minutes. Sandra seconded. The vote was taken and approved.** Jack abstained as he was absent on September 8.

Nov 29 Special ABGC Meeting: Is scheduled from 2:00-5:00 pm at Center for Urban Horticulture. WSDOT will bring a new draft of the mitigation report for discussion. The discussion will also include the enhancement fund. Stephanie and Jennifer of Seattle Department of Transportation will present an update report on Lake Washington Boulevard pedestrian safety/traffic management.

Dec 8 Regular ABGC Meeting: Is scheduled from 8:00 am-noon.

Retreat Committee: Theresa is lead for the retreat planning committee, which also includes Barbara, Donald, Fred, and Jack. They asked ABGC members to send suggestions for the agenda. Those invited include ABGC members and staff who regularly attend ABGC meetings, Christopher Williams, Tom Hinckley, other staff, and Foundation Board members. Sandy will send a draft agenda and minutes from the previous retreat to the planning committee.

Councilmember Contact re: City Budget Cuts to Arboretum: Since the last ABGC meeting, Paige has talked with Councilmembers Bagshaw, Clark, Rasmussen, and Burgess re: the City's 2011 budget cuts to the Arboretum. It doesn't appear likely these cuts will be restored.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair

Attachments to permanent file copy of minutes:

- Work Back Calendar – Arboretum Mitigation Plan and Public Comment Period, Dated Nov 10, 2010 (from WSDOT)
- Draft Mitigation Report, Dated Nov 3, 2010 (both clean file copy and copy with notes)