

Washington Park Arboretum Environmental Education Center Pre-Design Study

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Pre-Design Study?

Pre-design studies are done at the conceptual stage of a project to analyze space requirement issues, identify constraints and opportunities of the proposed site, and analyze projected cost estimates for construction. The pre-design phase occurs after some funding is available, but before the design phase has really begun.

This pre-design study includes: site analysis, programming needs, a traffic study, and construction cost analysis.

Additional elements include: an integrated site plan with the Graham Visitors Center, recommendations for LEED Gold and Living Building Challenge for the building itself – solar panels, capturing roof runoff, a green parking lot design that helps to filter contaminants from the parking lot before the water enters Duck Bay, improved circulation, better visitor experience, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Why are you building the new Environmental Education Center? What is the purpose of the new facility?

The proposed Environmental Education Center (EEC) helps fulfill the [Master Plan](#) vision, by broadening the educational opportunities at the Arboretum for all, and provides an educational programming facility to meet the growing demands of the community.

The education programs have outgrown the current capacity. This new facility will replace the existing inadequate greenhouse that is currently used as a classroom and provide space to meet current educational program needs, as well as allowing the youth and adult education programs to expand. The desired goal is to serve 20,000 children and adults annually from diverse communities across the region, educating students in non-academic classes, including:

- education programs for pre-kindergarten through high school students,
- youth education programs outside formal school contexts,
- adult education programs,
- professional education, volunteerism and educator training,
- general visitor education.

What is included in the proposed Environmental Education Center?

Program elements for the proposed EEC include:

- Classroom space – Fiddleheads preschool program, field trips, summer camps, teen programs, family and nature programs, and the adult education program. Currently these classes use the existing old greenhouse much of the time. The existing greenhouse is not insulated,
- Teacher work space – currently the teachers share a portion of the maintenance barn
- Storage space for materials
- Multipurpose space – flexible-use space for educational programs and expanded rental space
- New restrooms
- Outdoor covered space
- Café
- Expanded parking per the Master Plan
- Relocated greenhouse facility

Will there be a place to get a cup of coffee and a snack?

Yes. The pre-design study includes having a café where one could get a cup of coffee and a snack, or a cup of soup.

How will the center be funded?

Funding for the pre-design study is being provided by all three partners – Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), University of Washington Botanic Gardens, and the Arboretum Foundation, and with private gifts and grants. SPR is managing and coordinating the pre-design study. We anticipate that the planning, design and construction phases will occur at a later time, once funding has been secured. Future funding may include philanthropic support from private donors.

In addition, UW Botanic Gardens is a self-sustaining program and the rental of the facility is crucial to its funding model. The multipurpose room could be rented out for events, weddings or community meeting space; a rentable multipurpose room will provide some funding support to the Education programming and building maintenance.

What are the impacts to parking? Will you be expanding parking?

The parking lot will be expanded per the Master Plan, to accommodate approximately 100 cars and 4 bus spots near the Graham Visitors Center and the new EEC. With the new layout, we can integrate storm water management techniques that will help to clean the runoff before it enters Duck Bay, while also creating an educational component.

How will the location for the new Environmental Education Center be decided on?

The Master Plan shows a location for the EEC to the west of the Graham Visitor Center across Arboretum Drive. Over the last 18 years since the Master Plan was adopted, the decision was made to not relocate Arboretum Drive, but to use it as a pedestrian and biking route. Following this decision, the proposed location for the EEC was to be near the Graham Visitor Center (on the east of Arboretum Drive).

This location:

- Provides a better visitor experience,
- Does not disturb/impact the collection,
- Provides a safer pedestrian walking route on Arboretum Drive.

Will there be impacts on the collection? Are you removing any trees?

Throughout the pre-design, planning, design and construction, the health of Seattle's flagship public garden is our top priority. There will be impacts to some trees with the three options under consideration. We are working very diligently to ensure that the impacts to the collection are minimal. We are working closely with curatorial and horticultural staff to minimize impacts to the collection by identifying, marking and protecting important and valuable specimens that may be in the future construction zone. We will relocate as many plants as we are able and propagate as many as possible that cannot be moved.

The EEC is being sited near the Graham Visitors Center to create a close campus feel between the two buildings and to lessen potential impacts to the collection.

What is happening to the Pat Calvert Greenhouse?

All three options proposed in the pre-design study relocate the Pat Calvert Greenhouse to a new location, with better sun exposure, closer proximity to the Graham Visitors Center, and create a better campus feel to the site.

Where will the volunteer programs, such as the Plant Donations Nursery, be located?

Not all volunteer programs will be impacted, those that are will be relocated with the proposed new greenhouse and nursery locations.

Are you moving the beehives managed by Puget Sound Beekeepers?

Yes, however, under beekeeper supervision, the bees will be relocated to a sunnier spot.

How much is this going to cost?

At the end of the pre-design phase, we will have a rough order of magnitude cost estimate that the UW Botanic Gardens and the Arboretum Foundation will use as a target goal for their capital campaign.

What is the timeline for construction?

Construction will occur after funds have been raised to pay for the new facility. We anticipate that fundraising may take a few years.

What are the next steps?

UW Botanic Gardens and the Arboretum Foundation will spearhead a fundraising effort to raise capital and endowment funds for the proposed EEC, as well as support for its educational programming. Under a long-term lease with the City of Seattle, the UW Botanic Gardens will manage the new facility and operate its educational programs.

Who designed the Arboretum?

Seattle Parks and Recreation initiated work in the Arboretum in 1920. Frederick Leissler, Seattle Parks and Recreation Landscape Architect, created a plan in 1934, which was later augmented by the Olmsted Brothers in 1936. The Works Progress Administration, ca. 1938, built many elements in the Arboretum. The Washington Park Arboretum Historic Review document, published September 2003, prepared by BOLA and Karen Kiest, contains an assessment of the site that identified various historic landscape and built elements that would potentially be subject to Landmarks review and approval.

How do I learn more about the project?

We are hosting a public meeting on Wednesday, December 5, 2018 from 6:30-8:00 pm in the Graham Visitors Center where representatives from Mithun and the three Arboretum partners will be on hand to discuss site considerations and take feedback and questions. Additional information can be found on the project webpage: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/current-projects/washington-park-arboretum-environmental-education-center-predesign-study>

Is there a place I can send written comments? Who do I contact?

Written comments can be sent via email or by letter. Comments given at the public meeting and those submitted in writing are all weighted equally.

Susanne Rockwell, Interim Planning Manager
Seattle Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development Division
800 Maynard Ave S, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98134-1336

Email: susanne.rockwell@seattle.gov

Phone: 206.684.7133