

Letter from FSOP President

SPU's Combined Sewage Overflows Project

Recently, an issue has come to our attention that seems to pit environmental health against Olmsted parks' integrity. Seattle Public Utilities is at the beginning of a 5-year plan to reduce sewage overflows into Lake Washington, Lake Union, and Puget Sound in order to comply with Clean Water Act requirements, which will involve installing underground water storage tanks. Currently, SPU is proposing locating several of these tanks underground in parks and green spaces along Lake Washington Boulevard.

Over a century ago, when Seattle planned its sewage and storm system, a combined system was chosen. This means that both stormwater and wastewater use the same pipes underground. Most of the time, this is an effective way to manage the water. Problems arise, however, during periods of wet weather, excessive stormwater overwhelms the system and untreated sewage flows into our local waterbodies.

In order to reduce outflows of untreated sewage (called Combined Sewer Overflows, or CSOs), Seattle Public Utilities will build large underground tanks that will store the overflow water until there is room in the system's pipes to handle it.

Unfortunately, city parks are often viewed as the most efficient and cost-effective locations for these underground tanks. The city already owns the land, and they are often very near the end of the pipe systems, which is the most efficient place to put them.

FSOP has been working with Seattle Public Utilities personnel to determine how to minimize the proposed tanks' impacts on parks and green spaces, CSO tanks must be installed on Parks' properties. An SPU presentation at our October board meeting explained one project and how it might impact Seward Park. At our November meeting we heard a presentation about a proposed tank near 48th Avenue South and another on park land adjacent to Alaska Street.

The board's main concern stems from the impact the
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GIS Project Grant Funded

The National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), a national advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., has announced that it has been awarded a \$235,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation for its Olmsted Brothers Designed Boulevards, Parkways and Park Systems GIS Mapping project.

Conceived by FSOP, the project will produce an online interactive map-based portal for information about local Olmsted Brothers projects. It is the first phase of a larger project that will eventually encompass Olmsted Brothers-designed projects across the United States. This phase, to be completed by June 2012, will cover Olmsted projects in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

The project's overall goal is to make our Olmsted legacy widely accessible and to inspire broader understanding and deeper appreciation for its enduring contributions to our lives.

Visitors to the NAOP website will be able to click on a location to connect to digitized documents, including landscape and parkway plans, archival records, landscape preservation documents relating to the location, and NAOP's online advocacy and technical guidance materials. The information will be available to the public free of charge.

FSOP will be involved in project planning and scoping, assisting with field verification and community outreach support, and through sharing our knowledge of local Olmsted boulevards, parkways, and parks. FSOP members who are interested in being involved should contact the board via email, at friends@seattleolmsted.org.

Capitol Campus Brochure

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a copy of FSOP's brochure about the capitol campus in Olympia, which explains how the Olmsted Brothers designed the campus, describes the elements of that design, and includes a self-guided walking tour of the campus.

Our thanks go to the League of Women Voters of Washington, the League of Women Voters of Thurston County, Daughters of the American Revolution, the National Association for Olmsted Parks, and the Washington State Department of General Administration, who all joined FSOP in sponsoring production of the brochure.

tanks' aboveground air intake pipes, exhaust stack, access hatches, fan noise, and electrical boxes might have on the quality of users' experiences on a Park property.

Additionally, the board is concerned that park land has been identified for these utilities because it appears to be the least complicated solution, requiring less interference with private property or disruption of city streets. There may be other, equally acceptable locations that could be used in place of park land.

The board has asked Seattle Public Utilities to work with us to minimize the impact on park properties. They have agreed to update us on their design plans at future board meetings. SPU has asked for one FSOP board member to serve as a liaison and attend public planning meetings to give feedback as the design process continues.

I encourage you to attend one of our upcoming board meetings to hear an update from the SPU staff. They are scheduled to talk about the North Henderson CSO Reduction Project at our January 3rd board meeting.

We look forward to working with Seattle Public Utilities to find solutions that allow the CSO project to move forward and protect our waterbodies from pollution while still protecting the integrity of our Olmsted parks.



FSOP President

SR 520 Update

Although several of our concerns about the design of new State Route 520 Bridge Replacement Project have been addressed, the problem of high traffic volumes through the Arboretum remains a troubling issue.

The difficulty arises from the intersection at 24th Avenue East and East Lake Washington Boulevard. There, traffic that has exited from westbound 520 will be able to turn left and travel through the Arboretum, making it, in effect, a primary arterial when it should be preserved as a park boulevard and secondary arterial.

In a white paper completed this fall, "Arboretum: Traffic Management," the Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392 workgroup outlined its reasons for leaving the intersection at 24th Avenue East and East Lake Washington Boulevard unchanged. They argued that, "Even with the left turn open, traffic through the Arboretum would be less than a No Build configuration. [And] Widening Montlake Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard would introduce more affects on adjacent

property." (www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8E175813-9970-40CD-987B-61DEB2C3E23C/0/ArboretumTrafficMgmt.pdf)

FSOP disagrees with this decision and disputes the basis upon which it was made. First, the lower traffic number is based on the presumption that traffic would be able to continue to exit off of the Highway 520 ramps that already exist and funnel traffic into the Arboretum. Second, while the widening of Montlake Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard to accomodate increased traffic traveling to and on Montlake Boulevard would affect adjoining properties, we feel the impact on the properties is less than the tremendous impact this traffic would have on an irreplaceable public asset, the Arboretum.

In October members of the FSOP board met with Lynne Sebastian, a mediator who is facilitating the Section 106 process, which addresses the preservation of historical resources. As part of any federally funded highway project, historic resrouces must be considered and protected to the extent possible.

We asked that the Bagley Viewpoint at Delmar Drive East and 11th Avenue East be maintained as that area is reconfigured. We reiterated our concern about traffic turning left onto Lake Washington Boulevard from 24th Avenue East. We also asked that the boulevard median on Montlake Boulevard, just north of the intersection with Lake Washington Boulevard be widened to match the median farther north and planted with similar plantings, to maintain a visual connection between the two boulevards.

FSOP has written a letter to Governor Christine Gregoire citing our objections and encouraging her to consider Alternative A in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This alternative addresses traffic impacts on the Arboretum more effectively and also has less environmental impact on the aquatic resources adjacent to the highway.

The Washington State Department of Transportation continues to refine the project's design and hopes to submit a final Environmental Impact Statement for its preferred alternative in 2011. More information can be found on the project's website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/default.htm.

Seattle Parks Projects

by Kathleen Conner, Parks Liaison to the FSOP Board

Work on the first phase of **Jefferson Park** is finished and the park is now open to the public! This phase includes a new play area, tennis courts, Olmsted-inspired path system, and landscaping. A grand opening celebration will be held next spring. Planning is underway for Phase Two, including improvements to Jefferson Playfield turf and lighting. Construction for the Beacon Mountain water feature is planned for 2011.

The **Queen Anne Boulevard** project funded in the Parks and Green Spaces Levy continues improvements to the historic boulevard. This project entailed additional signage, new sidewalks, and landscaping in three areas:

- On the north side of West Fulton Street, between 8th Avenue West and 9th Avenue West
- In the triangle at West Smith Street, 1st Avenue West, and West McGraw Place
- In the triangle at 8th Place West and 7th Avenue West

An interesting map at the project website (www.seattle.gov/parks/pro Parks/projects/queenAnneBlvd.htm) highlights the route of Queen Anne Boulevard, which is composed of several different streets that link together to form a ring around Queen Anne Hill.

Seward Park has a new play area and trail development is underway. For the naturalistic play area at the entrance of the park, materials included reclaimed cobbles from an old storage yard in the park. These cobbles are granite, sandstone, and basalt. The main, mile-long trail through the woods in the upper part will be called Sqebeqsed (pronounced “skuh-BUHK-suhd”), which is what the Duwamish tribe called the Seward Park area, as recorded in the 19th century by T.T. Waterman, an expert on local geographic names. In Lushootseed, the Duwamish’s language, it means “the noses,” which refers to the ends of the park that resembled noses when the peninsula flooded seasonally and became a temporary island.

Seattle Parks just purchased the old Capehart Housing site in **Discovery Park**. Design is underway for the 24-acre site to restore the natural habitat with meadows, thickets, and understory vegetation. The project cost is estimated at \$1.5 million.

Golden Gardens Park will have a new play area in 2011. The design is complete and construction will begin next spring. The play area will be located east of the Bathhouse.

There are a variety of funding sources for these

projects, including the Parks and Green Spaces Levy, Pro Parks Levy, Neighborhood Matching Fund (requires neighborhood fundraising and volunteer time), and capital funding for major maintenance projects.



Walking tour of the Gateway to Chile Garden, Washington Park Arboretum. Photo courtesy of Joan Hockaday

Gateway to Chile Garden Opens

The last walking tour of the year took place on October 16th in the new “Gateway to Chile” display garden at the Washington Park Arboretum. The garden opened to the public officially the next day.

The Gateway to Chile garden is one part of the Pacific Connections Garden, a 14-acre portion of the Arboretum that will feature forest displays from Chile, China, New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific Northwest.

The Gateway to Chile garden features Chilean trees and plants, such as the monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria arucana*), Chilean fire bush (*Embothrium coccineum*), and *Hydrangea serratifolia*.

The display garden spills down the slope to Lake Washington Boulevard. Close to the boulevard, the Holmdahl Rockery, designed by John C. Olmsted, has been uncovered by the removal of severely overgrown plants and replanted with Chilean species.

On our walking tour, led by Andy Mitton and Jason Henry of The Berger Partnership and Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation Senior Capital Projects Coordinator, we learned about how the display gardens’ plants are picked to represent their native forests and because they are well-suited to conditions in Pacific Northwest gardens. The designers also take special care not to introduce plants that could become invasive species.

More information about the species planted in the Gateway to Chile can be found online at www.arboretumfoundation.org/bulletin/documents/gatewayplants.pdf



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Membership Information

The Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to raising the awareness and protection of Seattle's Olmsted park and boulevard system. We depend on members' dues and donations to support our efforts. Dues for individuals are \$25/year and households \$50/year, which helps defray program, newsletter, and mailing expenses.

Address Correction Requested

More information about the CSO Project

The Genesee Basin and North Henderson Basin Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) projects have the most potential to affect Olmsted parks and parkways because of their proximity to Lake Washington Boulevard and numerous Seattle parks and green spaces along Lake Washington.

Information about the CSO project can be found on the Seattle Public Utilities website at www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Drainage_&_Sewer/Keep_Water_Safe_&_Clean/CSO/CSOReductionProjects/index.htm. You can sign up for project updates by going to www.seattle.gov/lists/cso-genesee.htm for the Genesee Basin and to www.seattle.gov/lists/cso-northhenderson.htm for the North Henderson Basin.

Questions or comments about the project can be sent to the Genesee Basin project team at SPU_GCSO@seattle.gov and the Henderson Basins project team at SPU_HCSO@Seattle.gov.

CSO Meetings

Seattle Public Utilities is holding public meetings regarding its plans for siting the Combined Sewer Overflow reduction project tanks. They invite the public to come and learn about the alternatives that are being considered, provide feedback, and ask questions.

The next two meetings about the Seward Park and Martha Washington Park area (the North Henderson Basin) will be held on **Tuesday, December 14th**, from **6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** and on **Wednesday, January 19th**, from **6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** Both meetings will be held at the Rainier Community Center, 4600 38th Avenue South.