

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2005

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present: Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Jack Collins
Amit Ranade

Excused: Angela Belbeck
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson

Temporary
Leave: Joanna Grist

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A brief discussion was held on whether a quorum was present. With one Board member on temporary leave, three constitutes a quorum. **Commissioner Collins moved and Commissioner Ranade seconded that the minutes, the agenda, and the consent items be approved. The vote was taken and the motion passed.**

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bounds reported on the following:

Occidental Square Park Improvements at Pioneer Square Preservation Board: On May 4, Parks met with the Pioneer Square Preservation Board as the final step in applying for a Certificate of Approval for improvements to Occidental Square and Mall. This includes removal of 17 trees and the pergola. While a number of people still oppose removing any trees and removing the shelter in the park, the Preservation Board granted a Certificate of Approval by a 5-1 vote. An appeal to the Hearing Examiner is likely.

Schooner Wawona: The Superintendent gave an update on the ship Wawano, which has been moored at South Lake Union Park. The City hired Consultant Mike Vlahovich, an expert in historic vessel restoration, to determine the condition of the Wawona and assess possible alternative moorage sites. Mr. Vlahovich concluded the ship is not safe. The Superintendent sent a letter last week to Northwest Seaport asking that public access to the Wawano be discontinued. Northwest Seaport willingly closed access after learning of the recommendations. Media coverage has been straightforward and factual.

Chair Pflaumer asked if work is still being done on the ship and whether the ship can be moved in its current state. The Superintendent answered that the ship cannot be safely moved in its current condition and workers are

determining how to take the masts down and make it moveable. Chair Pflaumer stated that she had a phone call from Kay Bullitt urging that space be left at South Lake Union for the return of the ship when it is repaired.

Waterfront Streetcar Extension: Parks staff continues to meet with City, Port, and County staff to discuss the potential trolley car extension. The extension may significantly affect Myrtle Edwards Park and the bikeway. Chair Pflaumer is the Board's representative to the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) Board. At a recent meeting, she learned that SAM has offered to pay for the trolley car track and Superintendent Bounds agreed that SAM has made this offer.

Cascade Playground Dedicated: Hundreds of school children, members of the community, and park supporters joined Mayor Nickels, Councilmember David Della, private donors and Park staff on Wednesday, May 11, for the dedication of improvements at Cascade Playground. The event marked the completion of the playground renovation, which was funded by both the Pro Parks Levy and private donors Vulcan Inc., Harbor Properties, and PEMCO Insurance. The park underwent an eco-renovation that installed new earth-friendly landscaping, play equipment made of recycled materials, and new irrigation for the lawn.

Southwest Community Center and Pool Dedication: On Saturday, May 7, about 80 community members and Parks staff helped Mayor Nickels celebrate the grand opening of the renovated Southwest Community Center. This project was funded by the Community Center Levy, Pro Parks Levy, and Major Maintenance funds. Improvements included the addition of a teen center, computer room, a full-size gymnasium, and ADA improvements.

Pritchard Beach Funding Restored: The action taken this week by Seattle City Council restores funding for Pritchard Summer Beach Program. Parks staff members are now on a fast track to prepare for the reopening of the beach on June 25, which is the first Saturday after the Seattle Public Schools close for summer. This is great news!

Mount Baker Rowing and Sailing Center Expansion: Seattle City Council appropriated \$300,000 toward the \$1.2 million expansion project. A clear picture of costs and project status has been refined with the Project Manager. The Advisory Council asked for \$400K from Real Estate & Excise Tax (REET) funding, of which \$300K was approved. This funding helps to keep the project on track and makes the final fund raising goals more attainable.

IAC Projects: The Department recently learned the results of a couple of funding requests to the Washington State IAC fund (<http://www.iac.wa.gov/iac/default.asp>). Parks applied for \$300,000 for the South Lake Union project and will receive \$182,000. An application for \$300,000 for the Lower Woodland skate park received no award. The skate park is the IAC's first alternate for funding. Although it is unclear why the anticipated funds were not granted, the cause may be due to amendments to legislation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Homer Harris Park: A dedication ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 14, with a program scheduled for 11:00 am. Construction of the park is complete and is already seeing a lot of use by families picnicking and people enjoying views from the benches. Artwork installation, coordinated by the Seattle Parks Foundation, will be ongoing through this summer.

City Hall Plaza: The new City Hall Plaza will be dedicated on Saturday, May 14.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Two people signed up to testify.

Jim Anderson: Mr. Anderson is a member of Natural Spaces in Ballard and spoke against the Department's proposal to replace the grass at Loyal Heights Playfield with synthetic turf. He asked that the Department put this back on the table for further public discussion before a final decision is made. At the last public meeting 10-1 attendees were concerned over this issue. Neither the Joint Athletic Field Development Plan or the Pro Parks Levy mandate synthetic surfaces over natural. After the Downtown Seattle area, Ballard has the smallest amount of open space in the City. Don't rip up grass and put down plastic. Ballard residents want grass! He believes the Department has already made the decision on this and asked again that it be put back on the table for public input.

The Board of Park Commissioners has scheduled a public hearing on this project for its July 14 meeting, to be followed by a discussion and recommendation to the Superintendent at its July 28 meeting.

Larry Sinnott: Mr. Sinnott has testified previously to the Board on the SR 520 project. He is a member of the Board of the Friends of Olmsted Parks. The Board is concerned about current traffic in the Arboretum and WSDOT's future plans to re-build the SR520 ramps in the Arboretum. He discussed the impact the negative impact this project will have on the Arboretum. Lake Washington Boulevard, which runs through the Arboretum, is park property — not a city street. He briefly discussed current and future traffic statistics for the area.

The Chair asked if Friends of Olmsted Parks is putting forth a recommendation. Mr. Sinnott answered not at this time; however, the organization feels the ramps are unnecessary and will continue to monitor the project closely.

Commissioner Collins, in a comment related to the Friends of Olmsted Parks, commented that he visited the top of the water tower at Volunteer Park this week and several of the exhibits are damaged and need repair. Mr. Sinnott will notify Friends of Olmsted Park members. Parks staff member Donald Harris stated that the Department has several replacement pieces and staff will also check the exhibit.

Briefing: Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan Implementation

Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Manager of Property Management & Acquisition Services introduced himself. He is also the Superintendent's representative to the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC). He also introduced the other presenters:

- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks Pro Parks Levy Development Manager (Duck Bay Shoreline Improvements)
- Jerry Ernst, Consultant and Project Manager for the University of Washington (Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan)
- David Goldberg, Seattle Parks Project Planner, (Madrona Terrace Project) and
- David Graves, Seattle Parks Senior Planner (SR 520 Project)

The Board received both written and verbal briefings. The Chair apologized that few Board members were able to attend tonight's meeting to hear these briefings.

Mr. Harris gave an overview of the 70 year history and timeline of the Arboretum. For a brief summary, see <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/history.htm>. In 2001, the Master Plan was adopted, which sets the stage for the projects that the Board is being briefed on tonight. Mr. Harris reviewed the Arboretum Master Plan goals, which include: education, exhibits display, conservation, visitors' services, recreation uses, safety, and enhancing pedestrian access. Challenges facing the Arboretum include the lack of a number of amenities: restrooms, drinking fountains, and benches, and a need to consolidate the parking areas. The Arboretum encompasses 230 acres and has the finest

collection of temperate woody trees in the world. Seattle Parks owns the land and maintains the infrastructure, while the University of Washington owns and maintains the plant collections. The Arboretum Foundation is the primary fundraising source.

Duck Bay Shoreline Improvements Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

Project Description and Background

The Duck Bay Shoreline improvement project was the first large project to be completed at the Arboretum following the adoption of the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan. The Duck Bay project is located at the north end of the Arboretum along the shoreline of Lake Washington's Union Bay. Duck Bay contains one of the largest and most significant wetlands on the lake. The area provides habitat for federally listed (threatened) species such as Chinook salmon and nesting bald eagles. This wetland is part of a popular canoe route, and has a heavily used pathway system along the 1,700 linear feet of shoreline within the project area. The general intent of the project was to restore the eroded shoreline to improve habitat for wildlife and fish, and to provide views and access for park users, including for people with disabilities.

The project is located on a former landfill and marsh area. This created the need for the design to include structural elements and earthwork features that required geotechnical engineering analysis for the bridge as well as the shoreline and pedestrian trail regrading. The consultant, Anchor Design, conducted a program of drilled soil borings and limited exploratory excavations to establish underlying soil types and their engineering characteristics relative to the planned construction. Anchor Design determined appropriate pile types and embedment depths for bridge support, and evaluated the potential for re-use of excavated soils in construction of the re-graded paths.

Pathways were relocated and rebuilt, primarily to provide ADA access. The pedestrian bridge to Foster Island was also replaced. To maintain habitat improvements, carefully located viewpoints and water access points are now in place, encouraging park users toward appropriate locations. Canoe *landing* is permitted at newly installed landing areas, but no boats may be launched in the park.

Public Involvement Process

Three public meetings were held starting in early 2000. The public process was completed in late 2002.

Budget

\$1,230,000 SPIF (Shoreline Park Improvement Fund). The project was completed within budget.

Schedule

Planning: early 2000 – October 2002; **Design:** October 2002 -June 2004; **Construction:** July 2004 -November 2004; **Opening Dedication:** April 2, 2005

Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers

Michael Shiosaki reviewed the information in the written briefing. The Master Plan Implementation includes 30 projects estimated to cost \$59 million. Representatives from Seattle Parks, University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation discussed the projects and then prioritized them. Duck Bay is the first of these major projects to be completed and was paid for by Shoreline Park Improvement Funds — mitigation for the West Point treatment center. The orange netting placed around the project will be there for approximately two years to keep birds from damaging the areas. For more details, please see: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/maintenance/arboretum.htm>

The Chair asked if there is a loss of parking spaces from this project and Mr. Shiosaki answered that some parking spaces are going away in this area, but there is no net loss of parking overall in the Arboretum. Four new canoe/kayak landings or haulouts were included in the project.

The Board thanked Mr. Shiosaki for the briefing.

Washington Park Arboretum Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

Project Description and Background

The development of an Arboretum-wide Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan was identified as a high priority project in the Arboretum Master Plan Implementation Plan adopted in February 2004 by the Arboretum Foundation, the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and the University of Washington College of Forest Resources. The Plan is intended to guide all future interpretive and wayfinding work in the Arboretum. The University of Washington provided funding and project management for the Plan. The Plan was developed with guidance from an Advisory Group consisting of representatives of all three Arboretum partner organizations, and under the direction of the Arboretum Master Plan Implementation Group and the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC).

Public Involvement Process

As part of the research in developing the Plan many individuals and organizations were interviewed who are involved with interpretation and wayfinding at the Arboretum or who have an interest in or may be affected by these efforts. Those interviewed included: members of the maintenance and gardening crews for both the UW and City, staff involved with adult education and children's programs at the Arboretum, the manager of the Seattle Parks environmental education centers, University faculty in botany and forest ecology, Arboretum neighbors, Arboretum docents and volunteers, representatives of the Japanese Garden, a representative of Friends of Olmsted Parks and a representative of the Seattle Audubon Society.

Two public open houses were held as part of the Plan development process. The first was held on August 3, 2004, and the second on October 21, 2004. Both open houses were held in the evening at the Graham Visitors Center in the Arboretum. Invitations were mailed to 2400 households in the vicinity of the Arboretum, in addition to 350 people on the Arboretum public interest mailing list. A press release was utilized to announce each open house, and an announcement was posted on the Arboretum web site. Four signs announcing each open house were placed at strategic locations within the Arboretum.

Approximately 40 people attended the first open house. They were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding stories to be told, ideas to be interpreted, areas in need of improved wayfinding, favorite places and educational program opportunities. Approximately 30 people attended the second open house. Interpretive themes and wayfinding concepts were presented at the second open house and comments were solicited. Interpretive and educational programs were encouraged, and there was a strong preference for simple unobtrusive graphics and signage.

Issues

The Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan establishes a set of Guiding Principles for the development of interpretive and wayfinding elements at the Arboretum. It identifies key interpretive themes and the locations where those themes can be most appropriately interpreted. It includes a Style Guide which identifies categories of signage, sets standards for materials, color and construction and includes templates for the most common sign types. The Plan also includes information regarding wayfinding and interpretation technology.

Budget

The Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan was prepared for a total project cost of just under \$135,000. The Plan did not include the construction of any permanent signing or exhibits, although a mock-up prototype was developed for review prior to approval of the Plan. It is anticipated that signing and exhibits will be constructed as part of future Arboretum projects, and that they will be guided by the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan.

Schedule

The Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan project began with a meeting of the Advisory Group in March 2004. Consultant advertising, submission of qualifications, short-listing, interviews and selection occurred during April, May and June. A consultant team lead by The Lehrman Cameron Studio, in collaboration with Cascade Interpretive Consulting, was selected to prepare the Plan. They began work in July and completed the Plan in January 2005. The Plan was approved by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee on February 2, 2005.

Additional Information

The entire Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan, as well as the Executive Summary are available at the following web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa>. Prepared by Jerry Ernst, Project Manager for the University of Washington.

Parks and Recreation Contacts:

Michael Shiosaki, Phone: 615-0823, Email: michael.shiosaki@seattle.gov

Donald Harris, Phone: 684-8018, Email: donald.harris@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers

Jerry Ernst distributed a colored version of the Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan to the Board for review. He explained that he is an urban planner and architect and was hired by the UW to assist with implementing the Master Plan. The University also funded the six-month preparation of the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan and hired him to manage the design portion of this plan. Lehrman Cameron was then hired as the consultants and designed the plan. To do so, they interviewed a large number of interested citizens and held two public meetings where attendees were asked such questions as what stories the signage should tell about the Arboretum, their favorite place in the park, and to name the areas that are difficult to find.

He next displayed two large poster boards containing the various design elements included in the plan. The Superintendent commented that in the past, there have been some controversies over the signage posted in the Arboretum. Commissioner Collins (the Board's representative to the ABGC) commented that many of the existing signs are of inconsistent design. This new system is designed to inform and be unintrusive — allowing park users to find information if they are looking for it, but the signs won't "jump out" at park users. Mr. Harris compared the wayfinding plan to the electronic systems used in museums to point visitors from exhibit to exhibit and describe the exhibits. No funds have yet been earmarked to install the signage and wayfinding elements.

Commissioner Collins asked if Seattle Parks could use these ideas in other parks. A brief discussion followed. These are guidelines and will be used by various builders and architects as projects are completed in the Arboretum.

There was a brief discussion on memorials in the Arboretum. The Chair mentioned that she is especially interested in any changes to the roadway. Staff commented that the only changes to the roadway will be behind Donald Graham Visitor Center.

The Board thanked Mr. Ernst for the briefing.

Madrona Terrace Project Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a briefing for information purposes only.

Project Description and Background

The Arboretum Master Plan “Renewing the Washington Park Arboretum” was adopted by City Council and the University of Washington Board of Regents in May 2001. The University, City and the Arboretum Foundation are working together to implement the priority projects identified in the Implementation Plan. The Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee prioritized the Madrona Terrace project because of its visibility and its ability to fulfill the primary elements of the Master Plan - conservation, education and recreation. This is a 12 +/- acre area located on the hill across Lake Washington Blvd. from the Japanese Garden. It is south of the existing overlook and north of the intersection of Lake Washington Blvd. and Arboretum Drive. The Portico Group led development of the schematic design for improvements. The Arboretum Foundation will use the schematic design to secure funding for final design and construction.

Project Objectives - The project objectives will improve the southern entry to the Arboretum by renovating existing Arboretum features and developing new elements that are recommended in the Arboretum Master Plan. Proposed elements include:

Renovate a 40,000 square foot rockery designed by Otto Holmdahl in 1938 at Lake Washington Blvd. and the south entry to Arboretum Drive.

Establish “eco-geographic” exhibits that offer educational and recreational experiences for visitors to immerse themselves in accurate, naturalistic recreations of forest communities of the world including: Southern Oregon/Northern California; Cool Mediterranean, Chile, South Africa/Australia./Tasmania, New Zealand, and China. Build a 300 square foot education shelter and adjacent displays to interpret the nearby plant communities of cool, winter-rain regions of the world.

Construct a new 30-space parking lot at the Madrona Terrace near the south end of Arboretum Drive, to support a new education shelter.

Identify locations for signs and interpretive elements that are consistent with the approved wayfinding and interpretation plan.

Schematic Design - Portico developed a schematic design based on the master plan, reducing the number of geographic areas and enlarging the size of the project to create more intensive environments. The following is a narrative walk-through of the gardens and woodlands of Madrona terrace. It provides an experiential description to accompany the attached graphics.

South Entry Arrival and Parking – The south entry at Arboretum Drive and Lake Washington Boulevard is marked by the restoration of the rockery designed by Otto Holmdahl in 1938. It has been transformed by sweeps of color and texture formed by plants native to central Chile. A new entry sign directs the visitor to parking concealed within the shrubs and grasslands of the eastern Australian collection. The small scale parking lot models environmentally sound design through its permeable surfacing, adjacent swales for collecting rainwater and surface water run-off and deciduous trees that provide summer shade.

Southeastern Australia – Visitors slow their walk as they enter this exotic garden of unusual color and texture unfamiliar to the common Northwest gardener or botanist. The varied leaf forms alone let you know you are within an unusual plant community unlike anything you have experienced so far. The broadleaf evergreen shrubs take on an assortment of juvenile and mature forms and shapes. Foliage varies from needle-like leaves of the *Leptospermum*, to feathery finely divided compound leaves of Acacias, as well as shiny, waxy stems and foliage of *Drimys*. Graceful Eucalyptus groves frame the garden offering a striking contrast to the brilliant red blooms of the *Grevillea*.

Pacific Rim Meadows and Preview Gardens – Families regroup and head to the sunny meadow across Arboretum Drive where they meet friends and gather for a weekend picnic. The perimeter path surrounding the meadow is popular for strollers and visitors interested in the plants along the shrub border. The border changes with the seasons and serves as preview display gardens showcasing sun-loving plants from the five geographic regions. Along the perimeter walk, paths are marked by monuments, leading to each of the naturalistic geographic garden displays.

An interpretive shelter and terrace nestled beneath Douglas fir and madrona trees marks the midway point around the meadow. Distant views down the Hydrangea slope lead to Azalea Way below and into the East Asian woodlands. The interpretive shelter provides cover in inclement weather. In accordance with the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan, interpretive displays are integrated into the design of the structure reflecting the botanical character of the collections and offers information on each of the five geographic regions. Here at the shelter, the visitor realizes the slight mound of the meadow, and irregular band of edging represents a large scale map of the Pacific Rim where the origin and entry into the geographic regions are noted by stone markers. From the center of the circle, one can glimpse the interpretive waysides within each of the geographic collections.

Cascadia-Siskiyou Mountains – The gardeners and scientists in the group are eager to explore the loop trails through each of the geographic regions; the children join them for the 20 minute loop through Cascadia, where they can climb through the broadleaf evergreen and coniferous forest to the lookout, situated at the high point of the Arboretum. Cascadia is represented by a diversity of plants associated with our native Madrona found from Washington to its southern reaches in the Siskiyou Mountain range of southern Oregon and California. Plants are displayed in a natural setting of layered vegetation. The lookout at the edge of the clearing offers opportunities to sit, capture the sun, and take in extended views of both the Holmdahl rockery to the south and the Chilean collection to the south and west.

Central Chile – The loop trail winds its way down to the renovated Holmdahl rockery where a display of florific plants from central Chile are sited to capture the southern sun. Seasonal displays of color and olfactory stimuli bring visitors to this part of the garden throughout the year. Despite the changes in grade, the path is accessible to all. An interpretive wayside provides a place of respite and an opportunity to learn the origin of these plants in Chile and why they are so well suited to this sunny, dry location in the Arboretum. Several members of the group decide to wander through the signature tree groves of the coniferous Monkey-puzzle trees back to the meadow while the rest of the group continues on to explore the woodlands and glades of eastern Asia.

Eastern Asia – Loop trails through the Asian slopes reveal a range of primary temperate forest associations found around the Pacific Rim: coniferous forests, mixed conifer and deciduous woodlands, and deciduous forests. Several hikers in the group comment on the familiarity of the woodlands as they notice a tapestry of native conifer – Douglas firs, western hemlocks and western red cedars – woven throughout an Asian woodlands composed of Japanese maples, dogwoods, spruces and pines. Tree trunks support the twining vines of roses, *Antinidia* and *Sinofrancheti*, as they reach to the sky for light. A shaded seating area amidst a thick ground plane of woody shrubs and groundcovers provides the opportunity to relax and enjoy the sights and sounds of the woodland before ascending the path to two of the favorite Asian collections, the Paper-bark maple grove and Hydrangea slope. A stairway adjacent to the Hydrangea slope provides a direct connection for several of the group to return to the shelter and meadow. The terraced ascent offers views downhill to the ponds adjacent to Arboretum Creek below. A secondary pathway near the wayside offers an opportunity during the return visit to explore the lower route toward Arboretum Creek to walk among poplar, alders, and willows that inhabit the wet valley below.

New Zealand – Trail markers indicate where the final trail sequence meanders its way across the western slope toward the New Zealand collection and the existing Overlook. Children gravitate toward the garden beds with whimsical forms of evergreen shrubs and grasses. Tropical palm-looking cordylines with sword-like leaves and an explosion of multi-colored foliage blades of flax invite close inspection and observation. The variety of plants displayed in the gardens range from the high alpine regions of New Zealand to the coastal shorelines. The number of species and array of broad leaf evergreen shrubs entice the horticulture visitor and gardener as they imagine the potential uses for each in local garden settings.

A continuation of the trail through the New Zealand garden links the visitor back to parking across Arboretum Drive or back to the meadow. As the sun slips behind a cloud, visitors convince themselves it's time to leave the collections and return to their families waiting for them in the meadow – they make plans to return soon, knowing whatever the ages or impulses are of the day, the new gardens of Madrona Terrace promise more exploration and fun.

Public Involvement Process

Public involvement has been a consistent part of this project beginning with the development and adoption of the Master Plan. The Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee also held two workshops during 2003 to develop implementation priorities for the plan. Schematic design benefited from two charrettes involving staff and community stakeholders; and two public workshops.

Issues

- **Fundraising Target**: Final design and construction is contingent upon the Arboretum Foundation's fundraising efforts.
- **Curatorial Concerns**: The UW Curatorial Committee is developing recommendations for collections and specimens to be relocated and/or propagated, the costs for doing this and the schedule.
- **Maintenance & Operations**: UW and Parks are addressing funding for maintenance and operations. A portion will likely be funded through endowments established by the Arboretum Foundation as well as other sources.

Budget

The Implementation Plan estimate was \$4,210,981. The area of improvements increased during schematic design. The Portico Group estimated that implementing the schematic design would cost \$6,474,933 in 2004 dollars. This is a \$2,263,953 or 54% increase. The Arboretum Foundation's fundraising target is \$6,000,000, which includes \$4,200,000 in project costs and \$1,000,000 maintenance and operations endowments, as well as administration.

Schedule

Implementation of this project is contingent on the Foundation's ability to raise funding for final design and construction.

Additional Information

The Schematic Design Report can be reviewed in its entirety at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/arboretum.htm>. David Goldberg, Project Planner, can be reached at david.goldberg@seattle.gov.

Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers

David Goldberg next briefed the Commissioners on the Madrona Terrace and Southeast Entry project. He commented that this is both an exciting and important project and pointed out the area on a large map of the Arboretum. He reviewed the information sent to the Commissioners in the written briefing. Mr. Harris commented that UW staff inventoried every tree and carefully developed this plan. The Chair asked if the UW held a public hearing. Mr. Harris commented that the project is part of the adopted Arboretum Master Plan, which went through an extensive public process.

Mr. Goldberg stated that the Arboretum Foundation will head the funding for this project. The Chair asked if the meadow is a priority and Mr. Goldberg answered that it is a priority and is tied to a number of other projects. Commissioner Collins commented that the strategy is to take an under-developed site and turn it into a showcase. Mr. Goldberg next discussed the complexity of securing all the plantings that will be needed for this project. Choices are to grow the stock from seeds, buy from nurseries, or use genetic seed stock. Of course, growing the plants from seeds requires a much longer planting time than buying plants from nurseries. Tree removal will be a gradual process, as many of the plantings will need the over story of existing trees as the new plants are developing. The SR520 project is a major concern at this time; however, staff members anticipate that interest in the tree removal will increase as this project moves forward. This project has many stages, which will be implemented in incremental stages which are being planned in a very strategic manner.

The Board thanked Mr. Goldberg for the briefing.

Update Briefing: SR520 Expansion Project

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

The following briefing on the status of the State Route (SR) 520 Expansion project is for informational purposes only. As the design of the project coalesces through the Federal and State NEPA/SEPA Environmental Impact Statement process, future action by the Board will likely be required.

Project Description and Background

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has determined that portions of the SR 520 Bridge are approaching the end of their useable life and it is time to replace the aging structure. The State legislature has so far allocated \$500 million for the project, far less than the amount necessary. As you know, SR 520 travels through/over the Arboretum, McCurdy Park and Montlake Playfield. Design options are in flux as WSDOT is completing their screening process prior to issuing the Draft EIS for review and comment. Preliminary studies indicate potential impacts to the following Parks/Park properties, with the issues highlighted below.

Washington Park Arboretum

The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)

McCurdy Park

Montlake Playfield (submerged lands)

Bagley Viewpoint

There are three main options for the expanded SR 520; 4-lanes, 6-lanes or 8-lanes. Within the 4 and 6-lane options are several variations with different off-ramp and bus stop configurations. The 8-lane option is a challenge because there isn't the capacity on Interstate 5 to handle the additional traffic and the increased width has some significant impacts to private property. However, the 8-lane option is being pushed on the Eastside based on the increase in capacity. The most feasible options are the 4- and 6-lane versions which almost fit within the existing right-of-way. In all the options, the roadway moves to the north with potential impacts to submerged lands owned by Parks adjacent to Montlake Playfield, Foster Island, Marsh Island, MOHAI and Bagley Viewpoint. An additional twist is/was the "High Bridge" option proposed by the Montlake Community. ¹ Simply stated, the High Bridge is a more elegant span which flies over Portage Bay, Montlake Boulevard, and MOHAI with the interchange located in the area of the current Arboretum ramps and direct access to the Montlake Boulevard, Pacific Avenue intersection. The High Bridge has potentially more significant impacts to Parks property and raises serious 4(f) considerations.

Section 4(f) is a provision of the Federal Highways Act which provides that public park land, such as the Arboretum, can not be used for a highway project unless there "[i]s no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land...." It is likely that SR 520 will be expanded and lands adjacent to the existing roadway will be used because there is *no feasible and prudent alternative* available. However, this use will be minimized and replacement park land will have to be provided consistent with the provisions of the Initiative 42 (I-42). I-42 requires that when park land is used for non-park purposes an equivalent amount of land must be provided for park purposes. If the High Bridge option survives, subsequent analysis will be required and additional information will be provided.

Public Involvement Process

WSDOT is the lead agency for the project and has been holding a series of meeting and open houses with agencies, impacted communities and the general public. Once WSDOT chooses their preferred option, Parks will have a better

¹ By the time of the Parks Board briefing, WSDOT will have completed the screening process and reported back to the Montlake Community as to whether or not the High Bridge is a viable option and if it will be carried forward as an option in the Draft EIS.

sense of the opportunities for enhanced park connections, for which there will be a separate public process. It is not expected that Parks would begin any sort of public process until late in 2006 or early 2007.

Issues

Since the likely options are either the 4-lane or 6-lane configuration, the issues identified below will be based on these configurations. Note that with either of these options the roadway is significantly wider because it would be built to current standards which include both inside and outside full width shoulders, wider lanes, a separated bicycle lane on the north side of the structure and eight to ten foot high noise walls.

Washington Park Arboretum

Impacts to the Arboretum in the area of Foster Island are potentially significant as the highway moves northward. However, the expansion of SR 520 also presents some opportunities. By raising the highway up in the air there is the opportunity to visually reconnect Foster Island to the rest of the Arboretum. At Foster Island, the bottom of the highway will be approximately forty (40) feet above the ground. The challenge will be the programming of that space since it will be difficult to grow plants and there are potentially safety concerns.

The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)

MOHAI is planning to move at some point in the future. However, the expansion still takes the structure and its uses/function would have to be relocated some where else.

McCurdy Park

Since the expansion of the highway is to the north, either option takes all of McCurdy Park for construction. Some area may be returned to Park usage after completion. However, this is also an area where WSDOT is looking to site a storm water detention pond. The pond would be designed to look like a natural wetland.

Other Park Impacts

Montlake Playfield (submerged lands)

There are no direct impacts to the Playfield. However, Parks owns some of the submerged lands to the north of the Playfield where columns, footings, etc. may be located.

Bagley Viewpoint

With the 4-lane option, approximately half of the viewpoint would be lost. In the 6-lane alternative, the majority of the viewpoint would be lost, but it could be replaced on a lid over the highway.

There are also non-Parks issues associated with the project such as wetland and riparian habitat impacts and impacts to Native American sacred sites.

Budget

There will potentially be budgetary impacts, depending on the option chosen by WSDOT. However, the costs of any park improvements may be born directly by WSDOT as part of the 4(f) compensation or paid to the City of Seattle as mitigation identified in the EIS. Future briefing(s) will provide more information regarding budgetary impacts.

Schedule

As it stands today, WSDOT may have a preferred alternative by fall 2005 and the Draft EIS will be issued by the end of the year, likely on December 31, 2005. Construction is not expected to begin until 2010/11.

Additional Information

Contact info: David Graves, AICP, Senior Planner, Major Projects & Planning, Seattle Parks & Recreation, ph.: 206.684.7048, david.graves@seattle.gov

Additional information is available on WSDOT's project website at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge>

Verbal Briefing/Commissioner Questions and Answers

David Graves next reviewed the written update briefing the Commissioners received on the SR520 project. Mr. Graves had just left a Montlake community meeting on this project. The Montlake community came up with an option referred to as the “High Bridge” option, which gets rid of the Montlake ramps and connects to the UW parking lot where the north link transit station will be located. He displayed a large map and outlined what the high bridge proposal could look like. WSDOT has screened this option and it will carry forth as a technical appendage, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that the option will make it into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is due out by December 30, 2005. Mr. Graves then described the high bridge proposal and some of its impacts to the Arboretum.

However, there are a number of concerns with the height of the bridge. The concrete structure would be 150-200’ wide, and vegetation cannot grow underneath without being irrigated or transforming the area into a wetland.

Advantages: Foster Island would no longer be separated from the Arboretum by the freeway, as it is currently. The “ramps to nowhere” that currently exist would be removed. Another advantage of the high bridge is that the Museum of History and Industry would not be demolished.

Board members asked a number of questions on the impacts to the Arboretum. Mr. Graves commented that he is not a transportation planner but, looking from a transportation mobility (which include buses and links to the north link station) viewpoint, the high bridge is the best option. That is not to say, however, that this option will survive the EIS. The high bridge plan would have the greatest negative impact on the Arboretum and there are other wetlands and areas that would be affected by it.

The Chair asked where runoff will be directed. Mr. Graves commented that grades is one of the biggest issue driving the design of the bridge. WSDOT plans to move the stormwater back to land and not run into Lake Washington. The Board was previously briefed on the six-lane option. Commissioner Collins stated that he previously thought the high bridge option for the span was the best option, but no longer thinks so.

Commissioner Collins commented that the positions taken on the SR520 project by the UW, City of Seattle, and the Arboretum & Botanical Garden Committee might well be different. The Superintendent commented that Parks is working at the meetings with WSDOT on this project to figure out and focus on what makes the most sense for the parks and then determining how to make that happen.

The Board thanked Mr. Graves for the update.

Briefing: Pro Parks Levy

This briefing was postponed to a later meeting.

Board of Park Commissioners’ Business

- None

New/Old Business

- ❖ **Seward Park Vegetation Management Plan (VMP)**: Commissioner Collins asked what will happen next with the Seward Park VMP. He complimented Superintendent Bounds on the letter that was sent to concerned citizens regarding the Plan. The Superintendent stated that the wording of the Plan is being re-defined to refine the definition of “hazard” trees. The definition will reflect (1) trees with potential negative impact on people and property and (2) trees that show signs of unhealthiness. Commissioner Ranade asked if any trees

have fallen in Seattle parks. The Superintendent answered yes, that two years ago a huge maple trunk fell on a picnic shelter at Carkeek Park. A group of day camp kids had just left the site a short time earlier to go to the beach. A couple years earlier, a large cottonwood limb fell at Matthews Beach on a summer day with no wind. The cottonwoods and big leaf maples have a wide span and are the greatest concern. These are the primary trees of concern at the perimeter at Seward Park. In the interior, the biggest concern is trees that have already had limbs broken in winds.

Commissioner Collins commented that members of the public have written the Board requesting the trees be left as habitat trees. They don't want to see the tree removal become a logging operation and the Superintendent stated that would not happen. The Chair commented that Parks is carefully re-writing the Plan. After the revised plan is available to the public and if the Board receives significant input to do so, it will hold a public hearing. Commissioner Collins commented that the Board has already heard from a number of citizens opposed to tree removal through letters and e-mails. He believes a public hearing should be to hear new points of view and different perspectives and doesn't feel a public hearing would garner new points of view. However, he will certainly participate if the Board determines a public hearing is warranted.

- ❖ Commissioner Collins recently attended the alternative fuel rally and is interested in parking spots that have outlets designated for electric cars.
- ❖ Commissioner Collins suggested that Parks offer a 15-minute presentation on its health and recreational opportunities to the King County City Managers/Administrators. He believes that Parks facilities that are regional draws, such as the Zoo and Aquarium, be brought to the forefront of a larger audience. The Board and Superintendent held a brief discussion on this suggestion.
- ❖ Commissioner Ranade will be out of town for the May 21 Central tour and for the May 26 Board of Park Commissioners' meeting.
- ❖ Chair Pflaumer recently observed anti-gay graffiti on the Volunteer Park Tennis Court signs. Parks staff will be notified.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____