

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Amit Ranade

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. **Commissioner Holme moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the December 8 minutes, and the January 12 agenda. Commissioner Jackson seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed.**

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience – Segment #1

A number of audience members signed in to testify on the proposed siting of the Lower Woodland skatepark site. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to hold a public hearing at its January 26 meeting. The Chair requested Parks staff to send a flyer out to the surrounding neighborhood as notification of the public hearing.

Those who signed in to testify agreed to hold their testimony until the public hearing, with the exception of one designated speaker giving a three-minute summary of their concerns. A brief summary of that testimony follows:

Hans Bjordahl: He lives in the Green Lake area and spoke as the representative of the group. He distributed a handout to the Board and had previously written the Board with concerns. Their concern with the Lower Woodland skatepark is with the site and not the design. He and his neighbors support a skatepark in Lower Woodland and had followed the site selection process. They were aware that the triangle site and the chip site were the two sites being considered. They learned recently that a new site has been proposed, to the east of the chip site and within 100' of their homes. The discussion on the first two sites was very public and this latest proposal took them by surprise. This is the last open space in the area and couldn't be a worse site for a skatepark. He and the neighbors want to work with Seattle Parks to select the best site and want to be included in the site selection.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported on the following:

Move of Summer Nights Concerts to Gas Works Park: This will be discussed under new business.

Rain-related Events in Parks: A landslide occurred at 125th NE and Burke Gilman Trail earlier today. The slide covered the trail and was 15 x 20 x 4 ft high. Crews worked quickly to remove the slide debris.

Powell Barnett Park Chosen for Major Donation: Starbucks announced its decision to award \$450,000 to one park in the Puget Sound Region in 2006, in addition to their current Adopt-a-Park program. Powell Barnett Park was selected as the recipient. This major donation will allow for a complete renovation of the park. (For more information on Powell Barnett Park, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/powellbarnett.htm>)

Downtown Parks Task Force Draft Recommendations: Seattle Parks sent a news release and have posted the draft report on the Department's web site; over the next three weeks three public meetings are scheduled to get input, then the Task Force will meet again to finalize the report based on that input before submitting it to the Mayor. The Park Board will receive an update briefing in March. (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/projects/downtown.asp>.)

Aquarium Enjoys Record-breaking Crowds: During the eight days of Winter Fishtival (Dec. 26-Jan.2), the Aquarium exceeded last year's record-breaking attendance by 2,831 guests. This attributed to 2005 ending as another "highest attendance ever" year at the Seattle Aquarium, despite construction. (<http://www.seattleaquarium.org/>)

Aquarium/Pier 59 Piling Replacement Project: The pile replacements underneath the existing Aquarium are complete. The rest of the project is moving along and remains within budget and on schedule. (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/maintenance/Pier59/default.htm>)

Commissioner Holme asked about the completion date for this project. The Superintendent answered that the project will be completed in June.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Park: The park will open to the public this weekend. The plaza, stairs, walks, and terraces are complete. The lawn however, has to be left until this spring as the clay soil is waterlogged and therefore susceptible to compaction. For now, signs will be posted informing the public as to the reason the soil is currently covered in mulch. The dedication will be held sometime this summer after the lawn has a chance to establish and the park is looking its best. (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/pro Parks/projects/mlk.htm>)

Upcoming Events

Plymouth Pillars (formerly Boren Pike Pine) Park: The project is almost finished and the grand opening celebration is scheduled for **January 14, 2006, from 1:30 – 2:30pm.** (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/PlymouthPillarsPark.htm>)

Ballard Commons Park: The park opened to the public on Friday, December 30. Skaters have been using the new skate bowl non-stop since then, and it has already received a few rave reviews from the skate community. The grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting will be held on **Saturday, January 28, from 1:00 – 2:00pm.** [Note: The date has since been changed to early March.]

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience – Segment #2

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 testified.

Cathy Palmer: She is a member of the Wallingford Community Council, which recently convened a Gasworks Park committee. This committee was formed because of the City's recent announcement that it is moving the One Reel Summer Concert series to Gas Works Park without holding neighborhood meetings. The site was announced on December 24 — just before Christmas. City Council is now considering adding \$150,000 for lighting to accommodate the concerts. The community's concerns, as well as her own, include noise pollution, disruptions to the neighborhood, parking issues, increased traffic, and increased crime, including teen alcohol abuse. She distributed two drawings showing which portions of the park will be unavailable to the public during concerts and which areas will be unavailable at all times due to the staging area. Gas Works Park has landmark status and she requested Parks to work openly with the community. She asked that the Park Board take the community's concerns seriously.

Richard Haug: He is the landscape architect who designed Gas Works Park. He strongly opposes the use of Gas Works for the Summer Night concerts. He reminded the Board that the park is landmarked by both the federal and Washington State governments and that historic preservation includes more than buildings — it also includes the ambience of the park. He stated that you hear a great deal about the taking of private land for enterprise. In this instance, public park land is being taken and will be unavailable to the general public. The Gas Works Master Plan never foresaw this and he believes it is almost a criminal action. Gas Works is the focal view point of the area. There must be a better site to hold the concerts and he volunteered to work with Parks to find appropriate spot.

Oral Communications concluded.

Presentation: John C. Little Award

A celebration was held to honor the 2005 recipient of the Seattle Parks and Recreation winner of the John C. Little, Sr., Spirit Award.

Superintendent Bounds announced the winner as Tom Ostrom, Senior Recreation Programs Coordinator. The following information was shared with the Commissioners before the presentation:

“In addition to his countless honors and volunteer positions, John Little, Sr., served the community as a member of the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners from 1990 to 1997. In John's seven years on the Board of Park Commissioners, he is remembered mostly for his gentle judgment of how a proposed policy or new undertaking would be perceived by the people we serve, particularly by the young people. His sensitivity to the needs and the attitudes of youth was extraordinary. If the Board wanted a thoughtful, wise opinion on a subject, they turned to John.

John C. Little's motto was, 'In order to improve the life of all people, you must improve the life of young people.'

We created this award in his honor. To be eligible for nomination, the individual must demonstrate the following characteristics: mentoring youth; providing leadership in the community; making a difference in young lives; and going above and beyond the call of duty.

Those who nominated Tom cited the following reasons: 'Tom epitomizes what we think about Parks and Recreation. He has mentored and trained almost every coordinator and assistant coordinator in the department. He has a laid-back manner that serves him well in the department, people go to him for advice and as a confidant because he is a good listener, friendly, and understands the challenges of the line staff. Parks staff trust him — he is well respected and admired by his peers. Tom is very in touch with the morale of the organization. He is a constant and strident advocate for teens with the department and community. In addition

to his work with Seattle Parks, he has continually worked hard to help ensure that our youth acquire important values that can help guide future choices and decisions. Tom has mentored several at-risk youths to go on to become high-school graduates, some even choosing careers in parks and recreation.’

Tom has:

- Coached youth basketball and baseball for many teams throughout the city.
- Established SHACK, a teen program at the Southwest Community Center that was a grass roots effort to establish teen centers.
- Started a teen council to address teen issues at the Southwest Community Center.
- Piloted programs for teens at Golden Gardens Bathhouse.
- Helped sustain funding legacy of the STEP Environmental Stewardship program for at-risk and economically disadvantaged teens, with environmental training and practical hands-on work experience in neighborhood parks. He was able to come up with creative fundraising opportunities and has turned this into a Marquee program.
- Mentored staff in developing teen program opportunities funded through grant awards.
- Leveraged his advocacy with advisory councils and the community to obtain funds for teen programs.
- Has been instrumental for almost every hiring classification for recreation program staff throughout the Department.”

Superintendent Bounds described Mr. Ostrom’s contributions to youth, thanked him for a job well done, and presented the award. Mr. Little’s granddaughter, Brenda Little, thanked Mr. Ostrom on behalf of the Little family and presented him with a boxed pen and pencil set. She commented that, as the family was reviewing the nominations, they were struck by the similarity of Mr. Little’s and Mr. Ostrom’s qualifications. Mr. Ostrom thanked the Little family and the staff he works with, and stated he was honored to win this award.

The Commissioners added their congratulations and the presentation was followed by a hearty round of applause.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Washington State Department of Transportation SR520 Widening Project and Its Possible Impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum

David Graves, Seattle Parks project manager, gave a brief overview of this project as it relates to the Arboretum and introduced WSDOT staff members as follows: The Board received a written briefing from Mr. Graves and a verbal briefing from WSDOT staff.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This public hearing is being held at the request of the Board of Park Commissioners. No action is requested from the Board at this time by Seattle Parks & Recreation. The Board may decide to make a recommendation to the Superintendent, Mayor and City Council on the proposal at its January 26 meeting; it may decide to take no action at this time and schedule regular update briefings as the project moves forward; or it may make a recommendation in two weeks, schedule the update briefings, and make an additional recommendation(s) at future meetings

Project Description and Background

The project before the Board of Park Commissioners is the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. The project proponent is the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). As part of the public hearing, WSDOT will be providing an overview of the project alternatives. There are three alternatives; a new 4-lane structure with a variety of options, a new 6-lane structure with a variety of options, and a no action alternative. For both the 4-Lane and 6-Lane alternatives, the project limits extend along the SR 520 corridor from I-5 in Seattle to 108th Avenue NE on the Eastside (just west of I-405). The 6-Lane Alternative also includes minor improvements to eastbound SR 520 between I-405 and 124th Avenue NE.

Seattle Parks and Recreation is one of the many public departments and agencies which are working with and commenting on WSDOT's proposal.



Seattle – project limits (from WSDOT SR520 project website)

Public Involvement Process

WSDOT has held numerous public meetings, and briefed community groups, organizations, and public agencies. Additionally, WSDOT engaged Seattle Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation in a series of workshops looking at the issues and opportunities associated with the 6-lane alternative and the Arboretum, East Montlake Park, and McCurdy Park. Note that these workshops took place prior to the Pacific Avenue/Arboretum Interchange option's rise to the fore.

Issues

The purpose of the public hearing is to afford WSDOT the opportunity to brief the Board of Parks Commissioners on the status of the project, and provide an opportunity for members of the public and the Board to comment on the project. The below photograph shows the project limits, including the Pacific Avenue/Arboretum interchange option.



Project limits w/Pacific Avenue/Arboretum Interchange (WSDOT SR520 Project website)

The new alignment moves somewhat to the north. Construction will occur generally within the existing SR 520 right-of-way and north of the right-of-way. The central issue is the potential impacts to the Arboretum, and property owned by the Arboretum Foundation and the University of Washington. There are a range of impacts depending on the alternative (4 vs. 6-lane) and the various options within those alternatives including the Montlake vs. the Pacific Avenue/Arboretum Interchange. Potential impacts include:

- Pacific Avenue/Arboretum Interchange — this is a relatively new option that could be a component of the 6-lane alternative. WSDOT has also indicated that this could be a part of the 4-lane alternative. This option places a freeway interchange at Marsh Island with a bridge to the north over the island which would touch down in the Husky Stadium parking lot and align with Pacific Avenue. The southerly part of the interchange at Marsh Island would connect to Lake Washington Boulevard and allow traffic to go directly from the Pacific Avenue intersection south through the Arboretum. The interchange structure would be a large presence at the north end of the Arboretum and over Marsh Island; the increased traffic could affect the whole Arboretum, including the Japanese Garden.
- Structure width (shading of vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, and passive recreation areas) — The width of the structure will be significantly wider than what currently exists today. The existing 4-lane lane structure is approximately sixty (60) feet wide and there are no shoulders. The 4-lane alternative, including the bicycle pedestrian pathway, is approximately ninety-seven (97) feet wide. The 6-lane structure, including the bicycle/pedestrian pathway is approximately 133 feet wide; more than double what is there today.
- Loss of the MOHAI building — the building is owned by Parks and both the 4-lane and the 6-lane alternatives require the taking and demolition of the structure.
- Loss of McCurdy & East Montlake Parks – both the 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives involve the taking of McCurdy Park and a portion of East Montlake Park. Additionally, a stormwater detention pond may be located in East Montlake Park, which would take additional Parks property. The 6-lane alternative does include a lid over the highway west of Montlake Boulevard which could mitigate for the loss of park lands.

- WSDOT peninsula — the “ramps to nowhere” are actually located on property which is owned by WSDOT, not Parks. New interchange ramps could be located on the peninsula or they could be located over the water to the east. The location over land versus water involves trade offs which should be studied further

Schedule

WSDOT will provide an update of the project schedule at the public hearing. The project website indicates that “[t]he Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which will include analysis of the new 6-Lane Alternative design options, will be released in May 2006. This schedule adjustment will allow the project team to further develop and analyze the 6-lane design options and provide more detailed information to help decision makers choose a preferred alternative.”

Additional Information

If you any questions regarding the SR520 project, please call me at 684-7048 or e-mail to david.graves@seattle.gov.

WSDOT’s SR 520 Project Website is: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge>

Verbal Briefing

David Graves, Seattle Parks’ project manager, gave a brief review of the purpose of the public hearing. He then introduced three Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff members and distributed handouts to the Board.

WSDOT staff gave a Powerpoint presentation; a summary of the presentation follows:

John Milton, Project Director

Mr. Milton described WSDOT’s concerns with the current SR520 Bridge. He stated that the pontoon walls were built at less than today’s standards for windstorms. If it were being built today, the standard used would be to withstand 92 mph winds or what is known as the “20-year storm.” He described the bridge’s windstorm and earthquake vulnerability, as follows:

Windstorm vulnerability: in a major windstorm the exterior walls may crack; the near-shore anchor cables may break; the maintenance hatches are difficult to access; and the added weight of the wind makes the bridge float low in the water. A photo was distributed showing waves from Lake Washington being blown across the bridge and vehicles during high winds.

Earthquake vulnerability: in the event of a major earthquake, the column cap of the hollow column connection may crumble and the hollow columns which support the bridge may implode. Photos/drawings showed the vulnerable points of the bridge structures and previous earthquake damage to one of the columns.

He next described the base alternatives being studied by WSDOT and stated that both would be toll bridges.

4-lane Alternative: approximately 97’ wide with 2 lanes going each way, 4 shoulders, and a bike/pedestrian lane.

6-lane Alternative: approximately 133’ wide with 2 lanes going each way, plus an HOV lane going each way, four shoulders, and a bike/pedestrian lane.

In talking with the community, WSDOT has developed additional information and has looked at three Seattle alternatives: (1) the new Pacific Interchange; (2) add a second Montlake Bascule Bridge; and (3) remove Montlake Freeway Transit Stop.

He next reviewed the cost estimates:

Alternative	Cost	Construction Timeframe (Years)
4-Lane	\$1.7 – \$2.0 billion	Proposed Start: 2009 – 2010
6-Lane	\$2.3 - \$3.1 billion	New Bridge Open: 2013-2015
		Estimated construction end: 2015 – 2017

He listed the identified funding sources and amounts as follows:

2003 State Nickel Package	\$52 million
2005 State Transportation Partnership Package	\$500 million
2005 Federal Funding	\$ 1 million
Future Electronic Tolls	\$700 million
Total Identified	\$1.25 billion

The remaining funding to be secured is \$0.75 - \$1.85 billion. WSDOT hopes to secure additional federal funding.

The schedule is as follows:

Environmental Review: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is expected to be released in June 2006, and the 60-day comment period begins immediately after the release. WSDOT will then respond to the comments, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) will be released approximately a year later. WSDOT may announce its preferred alternative in summer of 2006.

Design: Preliminary Design work began in 2005-2006. In 2007, the right-of-way/utilities and the permitting process will start.

If funding is available, WSDOT will advertise for construction in 2009.

Marge Press, Environmental Lead, CH2M Hill

Ms. Press reviewed the Seattle Parks Workshops. The workshop participants were the WSDOT SR520 team, and representatives from Seattle Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation. Goals of the workshops were to: (1) Integrate the goals of Seattle Parks, the Arboretum, and the SR520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project; (2) Integrate the Arboretum Master Plan; (3) Reconnect East Montlake Park with the Arboretum; (4) Enhance and restore the shoreline habitat throughout all sites; and (5) Provide a safe and efficient circulation system for cyclists and pedestrians.

Next, the participants developed a concept plan for three areas: the East Montlake Park; Washington State lands; and the North Arboretum Gateway. WSDOT will reconvene this group and move the process forward.

She next described a chart that shows the net/gain loss of land to Seattle parks with both the 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives as follows:

<u>Bagley Viewpoint</u> :	0.06 acre loss in 4-lane alternative; 0.09 acre loss in 6-lane alternative
<u>Montlake Bike Path</u> :	Section of trail underneath SR520 would be lengthened by 55 feet in the 4-lane alternative and by 85 feet in the 6-lane alternative
<u>McCurdy Park</u> :	0.88 acre loss in the 4-lane alternative; 1.5 acre loss in the 6-lane alternative
<u>East Montlake Park</u> :	1.06 acre loss in the 4-lane alternative; 1.38 loss in the 6-lane
<u>Washington Park Arboretum</u> :	0.04 gain in the 4-lane alternative; 0.7 loss in the 6-lane alternative

Ms. Press showed maps showing the location of stormwater treatment wetlands and commented that the stormwater detention system would affect both McCurdy and East Montlake Parks.

Julie Meredith, WSDOT Engineering Manager

Ms. Meredith described the Pacific Street Interchange proposal and stated that this alternative has received the most press so far. She displayed a map showing the existing right-of-way, six lanes with the Pacific Street Interchange Edge of Pavement, and six Lanes with Pacific Street Interchange Limits of Construction. She described the various elements of the proposal, showed a number of drawings of the proposed route, and gave extensive descriptions of each.

In the Pacific Interchange alternative, there would be no direct access to Montlake from SR520. [Note: for more information on this proposal, see <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/Plans/DesignOptions.htm>.] The new north link station at the UW is located near the route proposed in this alternative and it is expected that 1,700 pedestrians per hour use this area.

Ms. Meredith stated that the factors considered in siting the interchange were Foster Island; the shoreline; Marsh Island; 110' vessel clearance; geometry of the roadway; waterfront activities — center and canoe house; Museum of History and Industry; north link station; Montlake pedestrian crossing; and the vista of Mt. Rainier. She gave a detailed description on each of these and stated that it is a very complex effort to balance all the above.

Next she showed the footprint of the current SR520 and the different alternatives and described a number of aspects of each footprint. She described several of the intersections and clarified that Pacific Street, which is 4-lanes when driving north to the interchange and 2-lanes when driving south, would run into Lake Washington Boulevard. She answered several questions to clarify information on the maps.

Traffic Analysis: The most detailed and statistical portion of Ms. Meredith's briefing was the traffic analysis and the estimated increases/decreases on a number of intersections. She showed three very detailed maps of the area with traffic analysis approach volumes for the year 2030. Maps of these three areas compared traffic figures for the following: (1) no build compared to base 6-lane alternative; (2) no build compared to Pacific Interchange; and (3) no build compared to the 2nd Montlake Bridge approach. The estimated increase or decrease in traffic for both options was listed at a number of sites.

Between Boyer and the intersection of Washington Park Arboretum, traffic volumes are estimated to go up 10 vehicles per hour, or 240 per day. This is based partially on the tolling aspect, which is expected to decrease traffic on the bridge. The bridge will be tolled 24 hours per day, with higher tolls during peak hours. Traffic engineers estimate that this will deter some drivers from using the bridge during peak hours. Some will delay their trips until later in the day, some will find alternate routes or modes of transportation (HOV or transit), and some won't make the trip at all. Ms. Meredith stated that some areas would experience increased traffic, while others would experience less. Commissioner Jackson asked what will stop drivers from using I-90 to avoid the tolls. Ms. Meredith answered that I-90 doesn't have the excess capacity to accommodate SR520 traffic.

Ms. Meredith asked the Board to review the information in the packets, which contains additional info on the following: Sound Walls in Seattle – 4-lane alternative and 6-wall alternative; noise levels in Seattle North of SR520 showing existing conditions and the no build, 4-lane, and 6-lane alternatives; noise levels south of SR520 showing existing conditions and the no build, 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives; and the Madison Park Bike/Pedestrian Connection. She also asked the Board to review the draft EIS when it is released.

She stated that WSDOT is working with three different Seattle committees: (1) advisory, which is community groups and neighbors; (2) technical; and (3) executive, which includes City Councilmembers Conlin and Godden, Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis, and Seattle Department of Transportation Director Grace Grunican. Parks is well represented on all three.

David Allen, SDOT City of Seattle Project Manager

Mr. Allen updated the Board on the overall City perspective on the project. The City has only taken a position on the project so far as to say that the preferred alternative is the 4-lane alternative. The City has not yet taken a position on the Pacific Avenue interchange option. He noted that it will be important for the City to speak with one voice when it comes to having an impact on project decisions.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. Twenty-one people testified. A very brief summary of their testimony is included.

Bob Mahon: He is the president of the Montlake Community Club and previously sent the Board written testimony. Montlake Community Club strongly supports the Pacific Interchange and opposes WSDOT's base six alternative for a number of reasons, including the likely impacts of each alternative on parks, the natural environment, and recreational opportunities. The Pacific Interchange is a more efficient way to move people, it connects Sound Transit's planned light rail station at Husky Stadium and SR520, and it will reduce traffic congestion. And from a parks perspective, there is little impact to the footprint of the Arboretum.

Ken Schubert: He is past president of the Montlake Community Club and a member of the Club's construction committee. He lives on 26th East and Boyer, next to the Arboretum. The Montlake Community Club is currently being renovated. WSDOT's 6-lane alternative would have an adverse impact on the Community Center, where the Pacific Interchange would have a positive impact. He travels Boyer every day and believes that traffic figures presented earlier were incorrect — the street cannot accommodate 240 more cars per day traveling on it. He urged that the new SR520 Bridge be built to last for 100 years. The Pacific Interchange is the best alternative for the Arboretum and for the people who live north of SR520.

Sandra Lier: She is past chair of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC), which is charged with the oversight and stewardship of the Arboretum. The ABGC is comprised of representatives from the City, University of Washington, Arboretum Foundation, and Washington State. The Arboretum is a city, state, national, and international treasure which charges no admission fees. She listed the ABGC's deep concerns over: (1) any expansion of SR520 that would take more of the Washington Park Arboretum's land or any of its trees and shrubs; (2) the Arboretum has a Master Plan, approved by City Council and the University, which is now being implemented. Its successful completion will be in jeopardy if careful attention is not paid to any SR520 expansion into the Arboretum; (3) the expansion of SR520 would entail the razing of the existing Museum of History and Industry, which would be a loss of space for Arboretum administrative functions; (4) noise impacts which would disturb the peace and serenity in the Arboretum, particularly if the connection with Lake Washington Boulevard East is renewed; (5) permanent removal of the connection of SR520 to Lake Washington Boulevard East is highly desirable to decrease traffic through the Arboretum; and (6) the visual impact of the proposed Pacific Interchange bridge and its impact on light and shadow over the waterfront trail. She stated that the ABGC has worked with WSDOT on mitigation for the 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives and now must work on the Pacific Interchange, as it appears to take more land from the Arboretum.

Jorgen Bader: He is the vice-president of Roanoke Bay Community Council which authorized him to testify tonight. The Community Council is adamantly opposed to the Pacific Interchange. Marsh Island is bird sanctuary and the new bridge would use three times the amount of space on Marsh Island than what is used now. Traffic engineers always under-estimate traffic impacts. The Arboretum cannot be replaced. He urged the Board to go look at the proposals at the Arboretum from a ground level. He asked the Commissioners to reject the Pacific Interchange alternative.

Doug Jackson: He is the president of Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, which is very concerned with this project. He hopes the Park Board is very concerned with the figures being given by the traffic engineers. This will be a huge project and be much larger and higher than what exists now. He questioned the accuracy of

traffic figures given for Lake Washington Boulevard. He asked the Board to be very care with the legacy of the Arboretum and Lake Washington Boulevard.

Marcia Baker: Her family uses the Arboretum every week and loves it. They favor the Pacific Interchange. She believes any of the plans will impact the Arboretum and that the Pacific Interchange alternative will expand opportunities to use the park because it would make 9 more acres of land available.

Jonathan Dubman: He stated that he flew back early from vacation to testify at tonight's meeting and loves the parks. The Thompson Freeway [proposed but not built resulting in the "ramps to nowhere"] would have devastated the Arboretum. Now there is an opportunity to do good things, such as adding bike lanes and dealing with stormwater runoff. Scars that were made by the previous generation can be healed with the Pacific Interchange alternative. This is a bold renewal of the Olmsted vision of a "string of pearls". He urged the Board to support the Pacific Interchange proposal.

Rob Wilkinson: He has lived in the Montlake neighborhood for 35 years. If the SR520 project could be done over, it wouldn't be placed through the Arboretum. However, it is there and is now in a major crisis. The community, after five-to-six years of working on a plan, have found one they like — the Pacific Interchange, that addresses transportation concerns and transit services. A portion of the tolls could go directly to the Arboretum and raise millions of dollars for the park. He strongly supports the Pacific Interchange.

Ron Butler: He lives south of the ship canal and commutes in both directions. He has been to many meetings over the years with the purpose of improving SR520. The Pacific Interchange is the best alternative for improving mobility. Diagrams can look massive and invasive, but over time this impression dissipates. He urged the Board to support the Pacific Interchange.

Larry Sinnott: He is a board member of the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks and a member of the Ravenna Bryant Community Association. The Park Board should expect a great deal of correspondence on this proposal. His hopes are that the Park Board has a thoughtful process and that this is the first of many public hearings, including City-Council sponsored hearings, as many citizens aren't aware of the project. Lake Washington Boulevard is park property and it is the Park Board's obligation to protect it. Lake Washington Boulevard averages 19,000 vehicles per day. A May 2002 WSDOT report showed that 30% of these drivers would not use Lake Washington Boulevard if they weren't headed for SR520. 1.2 million more people are expected to live in this area by 2030. He asked the Board to demand a reduction of traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard, and not an increase.

John Wott: He is a Professor of Horticulture at the University of Washington and was Arboretum Director from 1993-2005. The City and neighborhood worked through an Arboretum Master Plan which was approved in 2001. This was a major achievement. The Master Plan calls for traffic control measures — SR520 is already large impact to the Arboretum. He stated that Dr. David Mabberley is the new director of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), which includes the Arboretum. Dr. Mabberley could not attend the public hearing; however, his statement was previously e-mailed to the Park board. The vision for the UWBG is to be an international hub for plant education and teaching water and soil sustainability.

Matt Megan: He represented the Seattle Audubon Society and stated that he is disheartened by this project and "that we're going to be in deep trouble no matter what." He urged the City of Seattle to stand firm for mitigation for trees, plants, etc. He requested WSDOT to create a 3-dimensional model of the Pacific Interchange, which will have a dramatic and large impact. Birds and wildlife will suffer the most from this. Seattle Audubon opposes the Pacific Interchange.

Mason Bryant: He supports comments made by his neighbors who favor the Pacific Interchange.

Corrie Watterson: She is a Montlake resident and a student at the University of Washington. She stated that she loves the Arboretum and is doing her thesis on it. She favors the Pacific Interchange and thinks the pedestrian/bike trail will give more opportunities to people to enjoy the Arboretum.

Bill Mundy: He attended tonight's meeting to discuss another alternative and distributed a handout showing a tube that would run underground. This alternative has the endorsements of other community members and groups. This would eliminate the 110' high bridge called for in the Pacific Interchange. He requested that WSDOT include a detailed analysis of the tube in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Ted Lane: He is chair of the Roanoke Bay Community Council Transportation Committee. He thinks SR520 is a 50-year old bad design, is bad for parks, and concentrates traffic into one neighborhood. Don't add more lanes to an already bad design. He also urged that the tube alternative be studied and included in the Environmental Impact Statement. He listed the advantages as: (1) there would be no Lake Washington Boulevard interchange; (2) it would disperse traffic with many interchanges; and (3) it would open up a great deal of space. He urged WSDOT to analyze this alternative.

Sarah Reichard: She is a professor at the University of Washington and a member of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee. She is a member of the American Public Garden Association Leadership Council and visits public gardens all over the world. Seattle's Arboretum rates well against these other gardens. The Arboretum is a naturalistic landscape and increased traffic will result from the proposal. She teaches classes in the Arboretum and she and her students must already "run for their lives" to cross Lake Washington Boulevard. No amount of mitigation will make up for the impact the proposal would have on the Arboretum. She urged that the Board not endorse any action that increases traffic in the Arboretum.

Neal Lessenger: He is President of the Arboretum Foundation. The Board hasn't yet taken a position on the Pacific Interchange; however, it meets the following week. He had previously sent the Park Board a list of concerns on the project. He summarized informal discussions the Arboretum Board members have had as follows: the Foundation is particularly concerned that the proposed connection of SR520 to Lake Washington Boulevard East, as well as to the north via the new Arboretum Bridge, will bring increased traffic through the Arboretum. Lake Washington Boulevard was designed to carry 5,000 cars daily — it now carries 20,000. To add a new throughway from the UW campus over the north end of the Arboretum and feeding into Lake Washington Boulevard would push traffic volumes to new highs. Permanent removal of the interchange connection to the south in the proposed new SR520/Arboretum Bridge interchange would be highly preferable.

Claudia Deibert: She has lived in Montlake since 1962. She doesn't favor any damage to the parks; however, she thinks the best choice for the project is the Pacific Interchange.

Theresa Doherty: She is the University of Washington's Vice President of Regional Affairs. In October, the University's Board of Regents heard a briefing on the Pacific Interchange proposal. In early November the UW President wrote WSDOT that the UW would not support this alternative. The Regents concerns included: (1) traffic impacts; as the estimate was for a 49% increase in traffic at the Arboretum ramps; (2) traffic impacts on city streets through the University and into surrounding communities; and (3) the decreased space available to the University as the design would require significant use of University property.

Iain Robertson: He is a member of the Japanese Garden Advisory Council. The Garden is considered to be one of the 10 finest in the world, outside of Japan. He believes that most people in the audience tonight are present because of their values. He asked people to consider that one value is the illusion of mobility vs. the parks stability. He urged the Park Board to oppose any option that increases traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard, and adversely impact the Arboretum and Japanese Garden.

The public hearing concluded.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Holme suggested that each Commissioner formulate a list of questions to ask WSDOT staff and send to Parks staff. Parks staff will work with WSDOT staff to get answers to the questions and will post this information on the Board’s web page. <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard>. Parks staff also agreed to notify those at tonight’s meeting when the information is posted. The Commissioners will continue accepting testimony on this project.

Board of Park Commissioners’ Business

None.

New/Old Business

- Summer Nights at the Piers: The Superintendent stated that he had to make a decision on the site before the end of the year, as One Reel must sign contracts with next summer’s performers. The City believes that Gas Works Park will work as the location. City Council is scheduled to discuss and make a recommendation on the \$150,000 needed for lighting on January 23. Commissioner Pflaumer stated that she is disappointed that the Park Board was not included in the discussions. The Board agreed to write a letter to City Council stating its concerns and requesting that it be involved in any future decisions regarding the Summer Nights Concerts.
- SR520 Project: It was agreed that questions for WSDOT will be submitted to Parks staff in one week.
- Park Board Vacancy: Commissioner Ranade agreed to be on the interview panel for the interviews. These are scheduled for the afternoon of February 2, 2006, beginning at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Holme is the substitute.
- Ballfield Coordinator: Commissioner Holme asked whether the vacant ballfield coordinator position is scheduled to be filled. There are three positions, with two currently vacant. The Superintendent answered that the vacant positions will be filled.
- Lincoln Park Trees: Commissioner Holme asked about the citizen letter regarding trees dying at Lincoln Park and voiced his own concerns about the trees.
- Olympic Sculpture Tours: The Commissioners asked that Parks staff forward a schedule of tour dates for the new Olympic Sculpture Park.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____