

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes

Via Zoom – November 10, 2021

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is a Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the University of Washington, and designated by Seattle City Council Ordinance 65130, approved December 27, 1934, and Ordinance 116337, approved September 8, 1992.

Voting Members

Arboretum Foundation

- Jane Stonecipher, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Jenny Wyatt, Arboretum Foundation Board President

City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- David Graves, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
- James Fearn, Mayoral Appointee

University of Washington

- Sally Clark, University of Washington, Director of Regional and Community Relations
- Christine Owen, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director
- Ken Yocom, Professor, College of Built Environments

Other Staff Present:

- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Wendy Gible, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director
- Lisa Chen, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Unit Manager

Standing Committees

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Jane Stonecipher & Jason Morse

City: David Graves (lead) & Kim Baldwin

UW: Ray Larson/Wendy Gible

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Ray Larson

Call to Order

Sally calls the meeting to order at 9am. The ABGC, staff, and presenters introduce themselves. Sally calls for approval of the October 13, 2021 and September 8, 2021 meeting minutes, David moves, Jane seconds, and the minutes are approved.

WSDOT SR520 Update

Dawn reviews the topics that will be addressed during their presentation. They will answer the questions ABGC prepared throughout the presentation. Cassie will provide updates on Section 106.

SR520 Rest of the West

I-5 Express Lane Project is underway and will be complete in 2023 and will provide HOV access from the Eastside to the South Lake Union area.

Portage Bay Bridge/Roanoke Lid Project will start in 2024 and complete in 2030.

Jon Vannoy reviews the schedule for the Montlake Project schedule. Currently, midway through construction of new bridges.

- Recently demolished Montlake Boulevard;
- Shifted Montlake boulevard and 24th Ave E onto the lid and demolish old 24th Ave E.
- Put 6" aggregate on SR520 roadway to protect it.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Tunnel – In advance of shifting Montlake onto lid, they built a tunnel under Montlake Boulevard to connect the trail access from Lake Washington Boulevard to the Montlake playfield.

Trees along Lake Washington Boulevard – Agreement reached with Arboretum about Simonii Poplars. The updated design for the future permanent bike path along Lake Washington Blvd identifies 8 trees for removal. They will coordinate with UWBG staff to allow them to get some clippings prior to their removal in a few weeks.

Bridge construction progress – only have 3 drilled shafts for the bridge remaining.

Eastbound SR 520 closed – Nov 2, 4, 9, and 11 nights. Closing to pour concrete and complete columns.

Temporary Eastbound on-ramp removal – this facilitated moving motorists off Montlake and provided access to SR520. This will be removed in 1st quarter 2022.

Montlake Bridge – Closures on the weekend Nov 19-22 for more work and removal of 24th Avenue. WSDOT will offer a pedestrian shuttle on Saturday & Sunday from 6am to 8pm.

Montlake Bridge – Northbound closed nightly; Nov 15 to Nov 18. Bicycle and pedestrian access will be open. Northbound closed with detour to I-5 and southbound will be reduced to 1 lane.

Project overview: Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project

The project consists of the Portage Bay bridge replacement and creation of a new lid. There will be a lot of bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the new lid. The date was pushed out to 2031 to ensure the schedule will not overlap with the construction schedule for the Montlake project and Roanoke lid.

Timeline: Late 2022 will advertise the Request for Qualifications; January 2023 for Request for Proposals; Award contract in late 2023 with construction starting in 2024. This project will take 6 years to complete.

WSDOT/Seattle Parks Coordination

Multi-property transfers between SPR and WSDOT; opportunity to throw in payment for North Entry. Complexities with appraisals with WSDOT peninsula – needed for staging. WSDOT will have to re-plant where construction structures are located in the shoreline area. They will need to retain plant establishment for 5 years. Dawn reviews the timeline for this agreement. Hoping to have approval to move forward on this agreement in Spring 2022.

North Entry Conceptual Design – WSDOT will not need to do wetland mitigation in the WSDOT peninsula which frees the space for park uses. Roles and responsibilities will be a separate agreement. Funding will go to SPR but the details will be in a separate agreement. Section 106 will work with ABGC and tribes for landscape design.

Could a small amount of funds be released to allow ABGC to start design work? For efficiency, WSDOT would like to release all the funds at one time after City Council has approved the agreement between SPR and WSDOT. Jane requests that they could have an alternate funding process if the timeline for releasing of funds gets postponed.

WSDOT peninsula close to Lake Washington Boulevard and near staging areas could be released earlier than 2030.

It would be great to see a graphic of which portions of the WSDOT peninsula are going to be provided to SPR earlier and WSDOT replanting area. Dawn says they are updating the shoreline permit and will be able to have better graphics and details then.

Will staging for Portage Bay impact the WSDOT peninsula? Yes, WSDOT will retain the area for staging until 2030-2031 and the Portage Bay/Roanoke Lid projects are complete.

Cell tower plantings are dead. Ray asks if there is a plan to replace them. Jon replies, they have an incentive plan with Graham Construction to address certain projects to get the plants replaced. Timeframe is coming up soon, but he will follow-up with specifics.

Foster Island Trail and undercrossing – landscaping under the highway on Foster Island will be completed toward the end of the Montlake project. WSDOT interested in being included in celebration of work completed.

Section 106 commitments

- Foster Island signage: working with Tribes, SPR and UW to create 3 interpretive signs discussing ethnobotany, Foster Point - connectivity of villages by water, and Marsh Island traditional plants and animals.
- Ethnographic exhibit: ongoing conversations with partners about interactive/interpretive exhibit ideas;
- Install during waterfront trail work in 2022. Plant labels in English and Lushootseed.
- Lynn Street interpretive signage for Montlake Historic District. Cassandra will send it over so they can review. Play area is scheduled to install next year and will install interpretive sign at the same time.

The ABGC requests WSDOT continue providing notice of closures.

Follow-up with WSDOT in Jan/Feb to check-in on city progress and gauge timing for next update.

Update on Berger's North Entry design; David will send it around to folks.

ABGC discussion on SR520

Foundation received a legal opinion and an argument could be made for escalation. David says there will be 2 agreements for the transfer of the WSDOT peninsula. The Settlement Agreement will need to encompass all partners.

Position the WSDOT legislation as a win to City Council members.

Rachel to draft letter and send to Sally, Items to highlight in a letter to WSDOT:

- New diagram that shows WSDOT peninsula with plantings and how they will manage them, which areas will be turned over sooner?
 - How ABGC can be helpful in advocating for the funding/City Council action.
 - What happens on Boyer and Interlaken once the temporary ramp is removed? Boyer could become a serious traffic jam.
- Follow-up: Check-in with SDOT in Jan/Feb to determine how they will be mitigating traffic.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

Arboretum Foundation

- Japanese Garden: Nov 30 Japanese Garden closed for the season. Operating agreement is in the planning stages. Scheduled for summer 2022 City Council.
- Tsutakawa Gates – They are considering putting them in similar location to original; original gates were part of City arts collection; City Council will need to approve acceptance of gift to the City. Looking to get this through summer 2022 City Council.
- Engaging with lobbyist to provide funding from state legislature for visitor attitude study; to provide community inventory of how best to serve the region. Jane thanks ABGC members for advice.
- Virtual Gala on February 10; Art of Nature is the theme. UWBG team is considering how to integrate it as a theme for the whole year. There is funding for some art programs in the Arboretum.

University of Washington

- Storm damage and downed trees – 3 big trees fell down by the GVC; arborist will be very busy. Clean up on these trees takes resources away from plantings.
- Shout out to SPR staff for supporting the efforts of the Arboretum staff.
- Body recovered along Lake Washington Boulevard; provided staff with resources.
- Signage – Is UW involved with the interpretive signage? Christine Kenney at the UW is involved but it is not a holistic approach. Do signage well to ensure a coordinated effort.
- Ken says the College of Built Environments are hosting an exhibit in Gould Hall about Kubota Gardens, called Smooth Stone. He will share event information as it comes up.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

- Continue to nudge permit process along for Waterfront Trail and the budget cycle continues.

Old/New Business

Meeting in December – SDOT and King County Metro coming for RapidRide discussion.

Upcoming updates on SDOT and Boyer; and North Entry updated design.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 9:57 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair