ESSB 6392 Arboretum Mitigation Plan Public Comment Summary – Dec. 20, 2010

After the release of WSDOT's draft Arboretum Mitigation Plan on Dec. 1, the public was invited to provide comments between Dec. 1 and 15 by e-mail, online survey, mail, or in person at the Dec. 1 ESSB 6932 Workgroup meeting. A total of 34 comments were submitted, including:

- 11 through an online survey.
- 13 by e-mail.
- Seven verbal comments at the Dec. 1 Workgroup meeting.
- Three hard-copy letter comments.

Of the 34 total comments, seven were submitted by community organizations and 27 from individuals.

The descriptions below provide high-level summaries of the comments submitted on the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. These summaries may not represent all the perspectives received on a particular topic, but instead highlight the major themes. The full comments as submitted to WSDOT are included in Appendix H of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan.

Findings from the Arboretum Mitigation Plan will be included in the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project final environmental impact statement, expected to be released in spring 2011.

Community organization comments

Five community organizations provided formal comments on the Arboretum Mitigation Plan.

Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (2 letters)

- **Traffic management and calming:** Supports restricting the left turn from southbound 24th Avenue E. to Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Traffic management - tolling:** Supports tolling in the Arboretum as a mechanism to reduce traffic, while stating this may not fully address the problem.
- **Environmental effects:** States that 6-Lane Alternative Option A in the 2010 supplemental draft environmental impact statement (EIS) has less effects on wetlands and over-water shading, and therefore does not support the preferred alternative as currently defined.

- **Land use:** Concerned with proposed land acquisition in the Arboretum.
- **Project design:** Concerned with wider bridge at Marsh Island.

Madison Valley Merchants Association

- **Traffic management and calming:** Opposes plans to eliminate all vehicle travel through the Arboretum, while acknowledging the value of traffic management.
- **Community and neighborhood effects:** Concerned with potential effects to businesses in Madison Valley from restricting access through the Arboretum.

Ravenna Bryant Community Association (2 letters)

- **Funding:** Concerned with phasing due to lack of full funding.
- **Land use:** Supports returning the WSDOT peninsula to Arboretum ownership .
- **Traffic management and calming:** Supports restricting the left turn from southbound 24th Avenue E. to Lake Washington Boulevard. Suggests WSDOT continue to develop improved new strategies to reduce traffic through the Arboretum.
- **Traffic management – tolling:** Suggests SDOT and WSDOT continue to evaluate options for tolling Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Public involvement and coordination:** Suggests continued involvement of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) in the I-5 to Medina project.

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners

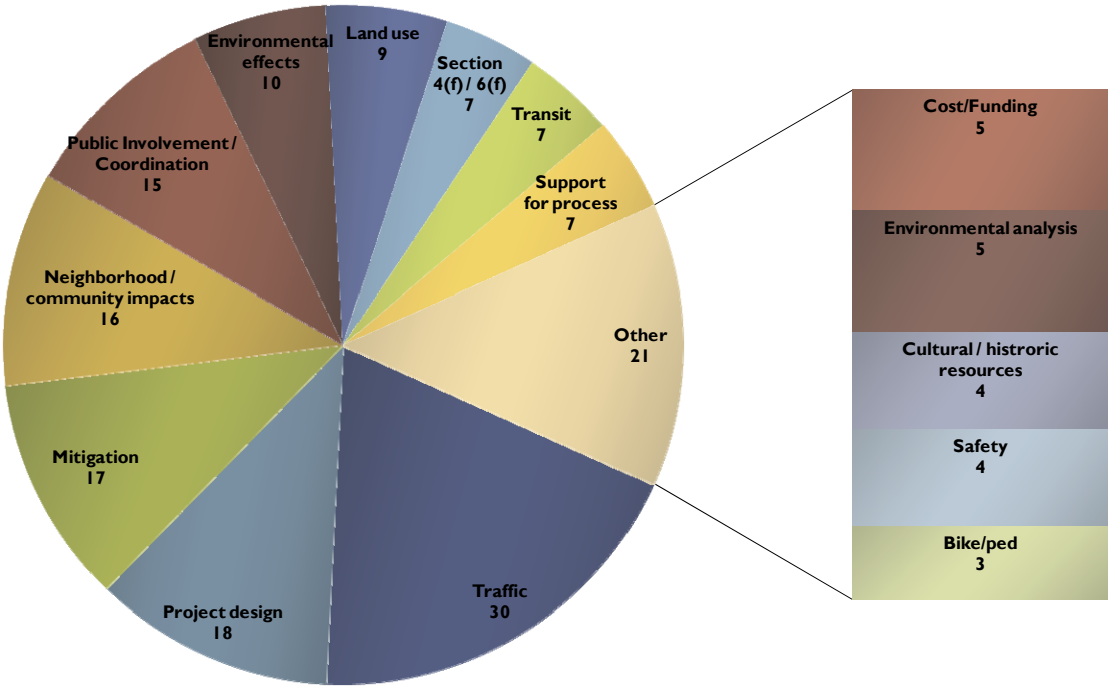
- **Land use:** Supports returning the WSDOT peninsula to Arboretum ownership.
- **Traffic management and calming:** Opposes traffic patterns that affect the quality of boulevards, or cause additional noise, safety or pollution concerns. Supports restricting the left turn from southbound 24th Avenue E. to Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Public involvement and coordination:** Commends the ABGC for working with WSDOT to develop the Arboretum Mitigation Plan and encourages further coordination through implementation.

Sierra Club

- **Land use:** Supports returning the WSDOT peninsula to Arboretum ownership.
- **Traffic management and calming:** Suggests evaluating a lowered speed limit east of Montlake Boulevard where SR 520 crosses Foster Island. Supports restricting the left turn from southbound 24th Avenue E. to Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Traffic management – tolling:** Supports tolling Lake Washington Boulevard.

Key areas of interest

Comments covered a wide variety of topics and opinions and are described in further detail by category below, listed in order of frequency. These quantities and summaries include comments from both individuals and community organizations. Multiple comments from the same respondents are counted separately. The chart below depicts the categories and frequency that they were addressed.



Traffic (30 comments)

Individuals commenting on the Arboretum Mitigation Plan often addressed traffic congestion and volumes in the Arboretum. They expressed concern about the existing volume of traffic on many nearby arterial streets, such as Montlake Boulevard, 23rd Avenue E. and 24th Avenue E., and Lake Washington Boulevard E. through the Arboretum. Several individuals had concerns about congestion as a result of project designs.

Traffic management and calming (23 comments)

Respondents commented on traffic management and calming strategies that could potentially slow traffic and/or reduce traffic levels in the Arboretum. Many people encouraged restricting the left turn on 24th Avenue E. or the left turn from 24th Avenue E. into the Arboretum on Lake Washington Boulevard. Others reiterated the original intent of the Lake Washington Boulevard as a quiet park street, and urged reduction in traffic through the Arboretum. A few individuals expressed a desire to see specific plans showing how traffic from the existing Lake Washington Boulevard ramps will be rerouted. Some residents near the Arboretum requested that potential traffic calming

measures be extended to include all of E. Lake Washington Boulevard, where many residences are located.

Traffic management - tolling (9 comments)

Individuals responded to the topic of tolling in the Arboretum with a number of viewpoints, both in support and opposition. Some respondents opposed tolls for access to or through the Arboretum. Several other comments suggested that WSDOT assist SDOT in completing a tolling study to analyze the viability of tolling through the Arboretum or at the 24th Avenue E. left turn.

Project design (18 comments)

Respondents offered suggestions to project design elements, such as narrowing lane widths, extending the Montlake lid and including noise walls in the design. Several expressed appreciation for certain design aspects already incorporated into the preferred alternative, such as removal of the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps. Others also commented on the proposed height and/or width of the new SR 520 bridge.

Mitigation (17 comments)

Many respondents encouraged fulfilling and implementing the mitigation plan, and specifically suggested WSDOT return the WSDOT peninsula to Arboretum ownership as mitigation. Others argued that not all of the mitigation for the project could take place in the Arboretum, and encouraged coordination with University of Washington on other sites, such as the Bryant Building site. Still others focused on mitigation measures for nearby residents who will also be affected by the project.

Neighborhood and community effects (16 comments)

Neighborhood and community members articulated concerns about the project, particularly relating to property effects or potential effects due to construction of the project as planned, such as noise and pollution. One Madison Valley business leader voiced concerns about access and effects to small businesses and families in the area. Other individuals wrote with concern about access between various other neighborhoods, such as Broadmoor, Leschi, Seward Park, Sand Point, and Laurelhurst.

Public involvement and coordination (15 comments)

Respondents addressed future coordination and implementation of project and mitigation plans. Some individuals described skepticism about the process and coordination to date, as well as a lack of clear decision-making roles. Others suggested future coordination, such as collaboration between WSDOT and SDOT on a tolling study and between WSDOT and UW to engage students and faculty involved in mitigation and academic projects. Several individuals agreed that further coordination would be needed between the ABGC and WSDOT to define and agree on the scopes of mitigation projects. Several individuals, particularly residents near the Arboretum, felt that their voices were not being heard and that while WSDOT was working with some groups such as the ABGC, they had no opportunity to influence the project.

Environmental effects (10 comments)

These comments focused on potential effects to the environment in and around the Arboretum, such as effects to wetlands, shading of water and plants, noise, the visual environment and pollution. Respondents also expressed concern that project plans and operations would have effects on the natural environment and wildlife.

Land use (9 comments)

Several individuals discussed WSDOT's land use resulting from the original construction of the SR 520 corridor, and insisted the WSDOT peninsula be returned to the Arboretum in response to the project's future effects. Some people expressed gratitude for the proposed removal of the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Others commented that they do not want to see any disruption of the waterfront trail.

Sections 4(f) and 6(f) (7 comments)

Some respondents offered solutions to address Land and Water Conservation Fund Section 6(f) or Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) regulations, suggesting replacement properties such as the Bryant Building site or the WSDOT peninsula. One respondent noted that no additional Section 6(f) resources should be affected. Another individual reiterated the Section 6(f) federal regulation and its implications, noting that WSDOT had a legal requirement to limit Section 6(f) effects.

Support for the process (7 comments)

Several respondents expressed appreciation of WSDOT's work and the extensive coordination with SDOT and the ABGC during development of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. Several people acknowledged the thoroughness of the plan and openness of the process.

Transit (7 comments)

Some respondents noted concerns with plans for transit service changes, particularly the locations of bus stops around the Montlake Boulevard area. Another respondent offered the idea of providing a shuttle to Leschi and Madison Valley.

Cost and funding (5 comments)

Respondents addressed the cost of various aspects of the project and mitigation plan, as well as funding sources. Some expressed concern that if the project were to be phased or did not receive full funding, environmental measures would be eliminated.

Environmental analysis (5 comments)

Some respondents suggested WSDOT further evaluate components of the project, such as traffic, through the forthcoming final EIS. One individual mentioned updating the Cultural Resources Discipline Report from the supplemental draft EIS to include the new preferred alternative design features and updated traffic analysis. Another described the purpose of environmental analyses, such as mitigation plans and environmental impact statements.

Safety (4 comments)

Respondents emphasized the importance of safety in the corridor, and noted their concern about safety issues, especially related to 23rd Avenue E. One person noted that re-routing traffic would cause dangerous local traffic in small neighborhood streets.

Cultural and historic resources (4 comments)

Individuals commented on the cultural significance of the Arboretum as a gem in the city and a key piece of the Olmsted legacy. They also noted the historic nature of several surrounding neighborhoods, and the cultural importance of the park and recreational area. Some respondents emphasized the importance of keeping closures of pedestrian trails through Foster Island and Marsh Island to a minimum.

Bicycle and pedestrian mobility (3 comments)

Some respondents described the importance of bicycle and pedestrian connections and safety in the Arboretum. One individual specifically mentions the intersection of Lake Washington Boulevard and Foster Island Drive. Another suggests making Arboretum Drive an official bike route.

Seattle City Council

On Dec. 13, 2010, WSDOT and SDOT briefed the Seattle City Council regarding the ESSB 6392 efforts, including the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Planning and Financing findings and Recommendations Report and the Washington Park Arboretum Mitigation Plan. At the meeting, council members asked a number of questions related to Arboretum mitigation and received verbal responses. Topics included:

- Tribal coordination and resources related to Foster Island, including historical information and future plans for the site.
- Land ownership transfers.
- Noise reduction.
- Traffic management and calming.

The council also emphasized the need for WSDOT to clarify the possibility to restore the area currently used for the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps (the WSDOT peninsula) to be more compatible with the Arboretum.

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Governor Christine Gregoire
State of Washington

Date: December 1, 2010

Subject: State Route 520 – Adverse Impacts to Washington Park Arboretum

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FSOP) have concerns about the Preferred Alternative for the new SR520. Early in the planning process, you promised our organization and other community groups advocating for the preservation of the Washington Park Arboretum that the project would not have a significant negative impact on the Arboretum, which is one of the crown jewels of Seattle's legacy of Olmsted Parks and Boulevards. However, by allowing a left turn from the west-bound Montlake off-ramp onto 24th Ave. E. (across the lid), with a second left turn onto Lake Washington Boulevard, the preferred plan adds significant freeway traffic to the Arboretum and fails to honor that promise.

It is our understanding that plans to re-locate the south-bound bus stops on Montlake have resulted in more impetus to allow left turns onto Lake Washington Blvd. Transponder tolling on the left turns could mitigate this impact somewhat, but would still represent an adverse impact on the Arboretum. As a result, while FSOP is committed to supporting whichever alternative bridge and highway design has the least adverse impact on the Arboretum, we cannot support the Preferred Alternative in its current form.

We implore you to review previous comments submitted by FSOP Board Member and SR 520 Mediation Panelist Larry Sinnott, dated September 23, 2010. To summarize Larry's comments, "Alternative A" in the SDEIS has significantly less impact on wetlands and over-water shading as well as a less impacting way of routing Madison Park traffic back through the Arboretum, while not requiring a new EIS.

We urge you to direct WSDOT to revise the Preferred Alternative to eliminate any freeway traffic from entering the Arboretum. Please do not sacrifice our Arboretum for such questionable gains in transit performance.

Sincerely,
FRIENDS OF SEATTLE'S OLMSTED PARKS

Brooks R Kolb

Brooks R. Kolb, President

cc: King County Executive Dow Constantine,
Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn
Seattle City Council
Rebecca McAndrew, Army Corps of Engineers
Jack Kennedy, Army Corps of Engineers
Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation
WSDOT
Michael Grady, NOAA

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Douglas Jackson

Donald Harris

Gretchen Hull

Nancy Keith

Anne Knight

Kate Krafft

Carla Rickerson

Virginia Wilcox

Governor Christine Gregoire
State Legislators

Wed 15 Dec '10

Re: Comments on SR 520 Transit Planning / Financing Report and Arboretum Mitigation Plan

Dear Governor and Legislators,
Never did two separate reports need more coordination than these, but the most reasoned solution is not the goal here, just more rubber stamps on a bad compromise. Our Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FSOP) representatives have been directly involved in SR 520 planning since the Translake Study through to the Mediation and Legislative Workgroup sessions. Please consider our comments on the latest documents for the SR 520 Bridge Rebuild.

The Transit Planning to put buses directly into the eastbound (inside) bus/HOV lane is the very fundamental flaw of this Preferred Alternative. This choice to weave across currently congested, and projected to be congested in the future, southbound Montlake Blvd to turn left onto the new Montlake lid, instead of weaving across a tolled, and potentially free-flowing, outside bus HOV on-ramp from the existing quarter clover-leaf, really defies common sense! This is the foundation upon which all of the added impacts to the Arboretum are built; three more lane widths at Marsh Island (more concrete/cost, more over water shading, more shoreline impacts, cuts off tip of WSDOT peninsula needed to trade for takings), major return of cut-through traffic through the Arboretum (via historic Lk Washington Blvd) after construction. Not only is this bad transit planning, it is absolutely disastrous for the Washington Park Arboretum because of compounding problems.

The first compounding problem is the forced left-turn from southbound 24th Av (on the lid) to Lk Washington Blvd. Because there are no real arterials from 24th/23rd Av back to Madison Park and Madronna if they are forced to <u>right-turn toward Montlake Blvd</u> (Alt A in the SDEIS had a better solution). Another bite out of the Arboretum.

The second compounding problem is moving the southbound bus stop at Montlake. Removing the existing bus-island and moving the stop to the

Hop-in Grocery parking lot makes the above mentioned 24th Av right-turn even more problematic during the peak hours, thus forcing the left-turn at 24th. Another bite out of the Arboretum.

The third compounding problem is the removal of HOV access from northbound 24th Av/Montlake Blvd to eastbound SR520. This Preferred Alternative removes this access to the quarter cloverleaf and forces that traffic to go eastbound on Lk Washington Blvd and there to make a left-turn onto the lid to access the eastbound bus/HOV ramps. Another bite out of the Arboretum.

All of the above is your current transit planning, and all of the above do more and more damage to the WP Arboretum, which is totally against the intent, if not the letter, of provision 4F of the Federal Highway Act. All the more reason these should not have been worked on separately.

There is a bright note in the construction planning. During construction the new street light at the end of the westbound 520 off-ramp at Montlake Blvd will have a southbound left-turn (exactly like Alt A in the SDEIS). Because of removing the existing 24th Av bridge to MOHAI and construction of the lid, work trucks will have to be able to make this left-turn. Madison Park and Madronna residents will then turn-left to Lk Washington Blvd, and the cut-through traffic mentioned above would have no reason to go through the Arboretum (the Preferred Alt has 25% more traffic through the Arboretum in the PM peak than Alt A). If this configuration were made permanent, then almost all of the Arboretum mitigation is un-necessary! Of course you would have to send the buses around the quarter cloverleaf, like they do now, and rebuild the bus-island. This would save both cost of construction and cost of mitigation.

Transit reliability is tremendously compromised without the second bascule bridge. The second draw-bridge is not discussed in either report. What could be more fundamental to transit planning than reliability? What could be more fundamental to impacts on the Arboretum than better alternatives to the automobile? The "triggers" proposed by the Seattle City Council have already been met! The second draw-bridge is needed now for bus reliability and consistent performance, which is basic to building commuter bus ridership.

It is time to step back and ask yourselves, is this Preferred Alternative really what we want for our future? FSOP believes you still have a chance to re-configure this plan more like Alt A in the SDEIS, and make it a much better plan for the Arboretum, for bus riders, for car traffic in Montlake. Oh, and by the way, it also saves money!

Sincerely,

Larry Sinnott, AIA
Boardmember, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks

From: Larry Levine [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 1:56 PM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: Comments on SR 520 Bridge and the Arboretum Traffic Mitigation Plan

Attached is a letter from the Madison Valley Merchants Association, commending on the proposed SR520 Bridge and Arboretum Traffic Mitigation Plan.

Larry Levine, President
Madison Valley Merchants Association
[redacted]

mvma
Madison Valley Merchants Association
P.O. Box 22126, Seattle, WA 98122

December 15, 2010

Washington State Department of Transportation
SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program
Plaza 600 Building
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

This concerns comments related to the new SR 520 bridge and the mitigation plan for the Arboretum.

I represent the Madison Valley Merchants Association, an association of 100 small businesses in an area along East Madison Street, from Lake Washington Boulevard to 23rd Avenue East.

While we support the traffic mitigation plan for the Arboretum, we would be opposed to a plan that would eliminate all vehicular traffic through the Arboretum or would install traffic mitigation components that would deter traffic from coming through the Arboretum. We also support the proposed on and off ramps to and from SR 520, if the allow easy access to the Arboretum, via Lake Washington Boulevard.

Restricting or eliminating access to Lake Washington Boulevard and/or the road through the Arboretum would have a negative impact on businesses in Madison Valley.
The end of the road, through the Arboretum, that ends at East Madison Street is the gateway to the Madison Valley business district. Many of the individuals and families who patronize our businesses come from the Eastside of Lake Washington. If access were eliminated or restricted, many of those individuals and families would not find it convenient to come to Madison Valley. In fact, many of the businesses decided to locate in the Madison Valley because of its convenient location to the Eastside and surrounding Seattle neighborhoods. Some merchants may decide to leave Madison Valley because of the potential lose of business from customers from the Eastside.

We request that you consider the impact on the small business community in Madison Valley as you make your decisions for the new floating bridge and the traffic mitigation plan for the Arboretum. We would also like to receive progress reports as you proceed with your plans. You can send progress reports at our above listed address or E-mail at [redacted] The Madison Valley Merchants Association meets once a month. I hope you can attend one of our meetings in the near future to further discuss plans for the new bridge and the traffic mitigation

plan for the Arboretum. If you would like to discuss this matter with us, please contact me at [redacted]

Sincerely,

Laurence Levine
President
Madison Valley Merchants Association

From: VGunby [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2010 10:53 AM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
[redacted]
Subject: RE Ravenna/Bryant Community Association Comments- Arboretum Traffic Mgt/Measures

Dear SR 520 Arboretum Traffic Mitigation Reviewers,
Attached are the RBCA's Comments on the WSDOT's Arboretum Traffic Mgt Measures.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments!
Please confirm by e-mail reply that you have received our e-mail and attached File.
Yours truly,
Virginia Gunby, RBCA Representative on SR 520

For Jody Chatalas, Chair, Ravenna/Bryant Community Association

RAVENNA BRYANT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

RE: Comments on the WSDOT's Arboretum Traffic Management Measures
12/13/10

By- Virginia Gunby for Jody Chatalas, RBCA Chair

Introduction

Our RBCA has been represented, observing and testifying on 520 for about three years. Representatives of Seattle Communities at on recent ABGC discussions of SR 520 that were disappointing with the lack of leadership taken on their positions to protect the Arboretum from the past and future 520 impacts of the proposed rebuilt Westside SR 520, through the Arboretum.

History Note:

a.) Our **RBCA** Chair Chatalas' mother is a member of the McCurdy family, whose relative was the McCurdy, a past Seattle Shipbuilding Business owner, for which the Park was named. The family has been curious about the outcome of the 520 project, and its future significant impacts on the present McCurdy Park.

b.) Virginia Gunby, our 520 Representative, has been a representative of citizen non-profit organizations with the SR520 project since the Translake Study , going back about 13 years and earlier with 520 issues, when she was a member of the State Highway Commission from 1973-79.

c.)Virginia has an old ***1963 Lake Washington Ship Canal Nautical Chart, (available if needed)*** that shows the Wetland area, that is now a transformed and filled in and used as a Mohai Parking lot near the Waterfront Trail. It was filled in during the first 520 Construction of the first SR 520. Some older residents remember that the filled-in wetland area was used, during the first 520 construction by the SR 520 Contractors, as a former project mobilization area. With the completion of SR 520 in 1963, we think that the present large Parking lot and former (Pre-EIS) Wetland property, was deeded over to the Arboretum. *WSDOT SR 520 should check on this history, and hopefully revive some of the filled in Wetlands area if possible, in its Plans for the Westside SR 520, to repair some of the earlier damage.*

1.)The Westside SR 520 Project is being planned during uncertain and changing times, environmentally and financially. The history of this new Westside SR 520 Project is full of new constraints, that the first 1963 built SR 520, did not have to adhere to. The 1970s many new SEIS or FEIS laws, Fed. Clean Air Acts, Federal 4f and 106 requirements, and other laws were adopted to protect parks, wetlands and communities.

2.) Today we are planning a rebuilt Westside needing $**2.Billion for building the total Westside segment**. One of our major concerns of the RBCA is that when 520 west-side project is actually started, probably with a Phased strategy, it will be built over many years, as construction cash is available. That the time spent by many Community members and Staff on a detailed, planned, future new environmentally responsible "Green" Corridor" will be shelved. An amended "bare bones" project will result, from lack of funding. Or that the new 520 cross-lake Bridge pontoon bridge will be, as the 520 opponents claim,—"*A Bridge to Nowhere*." **RBCA** supports planned west-side 520 improvements that meet all Federal and State goals for SR 520 storm water run-off, noise reduction and all of the mitigation that will address all federal and state laws, particularly to meet GHG reduction and vehicle miles reduction benchmarks, as soon as financially possible.

3.) The **RBCA** has in the past supported the concept of a **520 Corridor Management Agreement (CMA**) to assure accountability for a sustainable SR 520 completed by WSDOT, and particularly for reducing past impacts to the Arboretum. After delivering the Westside project, laboriously planned in the past, and the future 2011 FEIS, plus designs and engineering, that it could become the new first, unique, integrated, multimodal urban Washington state Highway. But so far our CMA recommendation has been avoided, or defined in highway highway-oriented management type programs.

As our four county regional Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO) **Puget Sound Regional Council's** adopted **2040 Regional Transportation Plan Executive Summary, pp.10- states**—
"*Performance monitoring completes the link between plan, policies and investment strategy designed to implement those policies. Through evaluation over time the region can be sure that investments are achieving desired outcomes. In order to perform this function the region is establishing a baseline and developing transportation performance information that can be measured.*

"This PSRC element in 2040 is a break from the past and business as usual to move toward sustainable transportation improvements."

"*Performance measures provide policymakers and the public a framework for evaluating progress toward implementing adopted regional policies. These measures were .established for describing desired policy outcomes, identifying measurable indicators for each outcome, and setting targets for these indicators at various points in the future."*

RBCA is cheered to see that the PSRC's first step toward a new SR 520 Performance based Corridor Management system that has been adopted in the new **2040 Regional Transportation Plan**, and that the PSRC' future is to do cross-lake monitoring of SR 520 and I-90, as one corridor. PSRC Monitoring will provide WSDOT with current information on the existing and future SR 520 Corridor Performance, and recommend changes, if the indicator target outcomes are not met in the future, to promote a sustainable SR 520.

4.) We urge you to return **WSDOT's "Wedge" to Arboretum Ownership** In April 2010 the west-side "SR 520 Preferred Alternative Design" was announced and included *the removal of the 1963 SR 520 Ramps—a major accomplishment, for the Arboretum*. In the 1960's the State Highway department condemned part of the north-end of the major, Arboretum's Olmsted planned Historic park for not only SR 520 on and off ramps but also for the future ramps to the then planned for new State north/south highway called the RH Thomsen. Seattle voters later removed the state RHT Highway from the Seattle and State Highway Plan. But the state Highway Department's resulting leftover impacts in the north section of the park, with derelict columns and highway ramps, meant for the RHT. They were not removed but used and neglected for storage of materials, trucks etc. No highway funds were ever used to remove the uncompleted aging and dirty RHT **ramps, or return the land to the Arboretum, and they are still there today, and planned to be removed, 47+ years later.**

Currently the WSDOT owned **"WEDGE**" of former Arboretum land is still not being returned, under the current negotiations underway. The **RBCA** finds that that decision by the **ABGC** Committee should be reconsidered. After almost 43 years of impacting the adjacent public parklands and waterscape, and using the "Wedge" for storage of WSDOT equipment, trucks and supplies ,and not removing the misplaced "ramps to nowhere, built early for the RH

Thomsen freeway before the Seattle Voters stopped the state road in the 1960's. It is time to return it to the original park-like surroundings, and give ownership back to the Arboretum.

With tight WSDOT budgets, if surplused, this WSDOT owned land could be sold for Housing, or a water related Business, into private ownership. This land issue should be resolved in favor of returning the land to back to the Public and the Arboretum, as soon as possible.

4.) Prepare a west-side Transition Plan for the mitigation of the early removal of the current SR 520 ON/OFF Ramps. The existing SR 520 on/off ramps are scheduled to be removed early in the future Westside Construction plan. The **ABGC** did not discuss new strategies and opportunities to help to change driver behaviors for the 18,000 vehicles that currently move through the Arboretum each day, on the historic Lake Washington Blvd. that was built originally for 4000 cars, using it each day.

We support a new SDOT/WSDOT Public Information Plan to alert Arboretum Lake Washington Blvd. users about the major revisions, including the removal of the existing SR 520 on/off ramps. The program would provide information on Alternative modes and Routes to replace the existing SR 520 ramps. And enlist traffic control strategies, plans, or alternative routes to reduce the daily gridlock. Some of the former SR 520 users from the south will immediately divert trips to I-90, a move that should be anticipated with a joint Public Information Cross-lake Strategy.

5.).**No Left turns on 24thE to LW Blvd**. The ABGC did not adopt this recommendation to allow exiting SR 520 vehicles, before Montlake Blvd. to turn left on a the new Lid/Street at E 24^{t,h} and another left, to travel south on Lake Washington Blvd through the Arboretum. **The RBCA position supports that this new route should only be available to High Occupancy Vehicles HOVs**

All SR 520 users should be provided with new Transit and HOV information on SR 520, to reduce SOV trips on adjacent arterials to the 520 Corridor. Schedules for the future Sound Transit Link Stadium Station (open in 2016), and Metro Shuttle bus schedules to get there or to the Eastside, or the Seattle CBD should be on WSDOT's SR 520 website, for promoting integrated multimodal rider programs, with the Metro and Sound Transit agencies.

6.) **Continue to Develop Improved New Strategies to Reduce Traffic through the Arboretum**-Due to the ESSB 6392 fragmented planning process that was implemented, separated the planning for the Arboretum and Transit processes, and more comprehensive evaluation to improve the Findings is needed. A major goal of the **ABGC** should continue to be for reducing traffic. In fact, WSDOT's current traffic statistics, project past trends into the unknown future, predict an increase in traffic on Lake Washington Blvd, over the current daily 18,000, due to the increases in Population and Employment, for this area by 2030.

The city of Seattle also failed to apply current Policies from adopted Ordinances established from the Seattle citizen's in 1997 named **Initiative 42 that** requires the replacement of any city of Seattle Park land taken.
Also and the adopted Seattle "**Complete Street's" Ordinance, that supports and requires that major city Arterials be designed and built for operating Vehicles, Transit, Cyclists, and Pedestrians.**

7.) Another **ABGC**'s avoided controversial 520 issues which impacts the Arboretum is the effort to stop or significantly delay the planning for a parallel Montlake Bridge, which directly impacts increasing Traffic through the Arboretum. Without a new parallel bridge, the Transit planned for

in the April, **2010 Preferred SR 520** Westside Alternative, there will be no new lanes for operating faster and more reliable Transit service through the city arterials on Montlake Blvd and NE Pacific St., or to the 2016 opened the Sound Transit's Stadium Link Station, or for the U of W, the Hospital, the U District and the Northeast and Central Seattle Communities.

7.)**NOTE**: Many of the **RBCA**'s comments/recommendations were submitted on *12/14/10 RBCA's Comments for the 12/1/10 Transit Planning and Financing Report*. They overlap and can be applied to our Arboretum Plan issues. This is due to the lack of an overall, integrated Westside 520 planning process that was passed in the 2010 Legislature in the2010 ESSB 6392 Legislation**.**

8. Final comment from the RBCA- We observed weaknesses in the ABGC Review and Final responses to WSDOT and SDOT's proposals to meet the challenge of really protecting the Arboretum. We recommended that they seek Legal assistance for more adequate information on past and future land ownership issues, and to prevent future impacts from Westside SR 520 Construction and Operations.
ABGC is a three headed organization consisting of representatives from the U of W, the City of Seattle and the Arboretum, and it is difficult to determine who is in charge of making the major decisions.

We are urging that the ABGC will be more thorough and watchful of protecting all of the Arboretum interests in the future, as we continue to move ahead with the SR 520 West-side project. One way is, through the joint west-side SR 520 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the RBCA signed recently with WSDOT.

RAVENNA/BRYANT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION 12/13/10

Prepared by: V. Gunby for Jody Chatalas, Chair, RBCA

RE: Comments on the SR 520 Transit Planning and Financing Recommendations; Draft Report

The RBCA Supports the SR 520 Transit Planning and Financing Report Recommendations: The Report provides some plans for the future of Transit on SR 520 with *flexible, limited and practical* r*ecommendations*, but is not a definitive statement promoting new ways to increase Transit use on local Arterials, and Regional Transit on the new rebuilt SR 520. Below are RBCA's suggestions primarily in the interest of increasing Transit use and meeting the challenge of reducing SR 520 traffic on local city Arterials and on the SR 520 rebuilt facility.

A.1.**RBCA** supports the Report's reaffirmation of the 2008 SR 520 HCT Study, that was completed earlier, publicly reviewed and endorsed during the SR 520 Mediation process that many of us participated in. The 2008 HCT Report update provides a realistic Schedule for Updating for the future with a Short, Mid and Long Range Timeline and Milestones that reflect current Regional Transit Plans for the SR 520 Corridor. We support more emphasis on Transit and new Transit Operation's funds in the future, possibly from 520 Tolls.

A.)1. **RBCA** supports greater emphasis on improving the use of Transit to the Eastside. (Page 3) in the above 11/30/10 Draft Transit Planning and Financing SR 520 Reports. By 2030, our region's Population and Employment growth projects 40,000 more SR 520 cross-lake daily trips. A new policy is needed for prioritizing " **Moving People First" on a SR 520 SMART Corridor, with adopted Transit Performance objectives, a Transit Public promotion program, a Monitoring of SR 520 Transit/HOV Performance and Reporting Outcomes regularly to the users and the Public. Who will do this? WSDOT, PSRC? ?**

Even though a State Highway, the new urban SR 520 HOVCorridor if planned well, and with new Tolls should serve a majority of the new cross-lake trips in the future on 520 in Transit and HOVs. The new two-way new SR 520 HOV lanes, and the future I-90 LRT system, along with Sound Transit's future North and South Link expansions, should provide an expanded unprecedented, new People-Moving Regional system that will bring new service to the Seattle and the Eastside Commuter shed. Eastside urban land-use policies are in transition, to transform from auto-dependent development to Transit Oriented Communities, as recent State GMA law revisions provides.

2. RBCA is Opposed to SR 520 HOT/HOV lanes-No comment was made in the Report about the potential initiation of SR 520 HOT/HOV Lanes and whether they will be managed ***to always assure preferential treatment for Transit /HOVs***. The new 520 HOV lanes are valuable additions that will have long-term capacity only if they move more people faster than those traveling east and west in the two outside E/W vehicle lanes. WSDOT's need to fill the $2 Billion Westside funding gap with HOT Lanes, must consider the negative 520 operational impacts, as well as the financial benefits of HOT lanes. WSDOT staff should consider the **negative impacts of HOT lanes on Transit/HOV operations, with careful monitoring, if this option is considered in the FEIS and implemented.**

Important--Once the lanes are opened to HOT tolled users, WSDOT will never be able to remove them, and give priority for HOV and Transit users.

3. RBCA Supports Promoting the use of Transit and Informal 520 Carpooling: The RBCA would encourage WSDOT to initiate a program for informal Carpool pick-up/drop-off locations for accredited riders to wait for a 520 HOV pick-up, called "slugging", as they do at the Bay Bridge in California. We know that WSDOT needs the Tolls to pay off the Bonded indebtedness costs of Westside Construction, and their financial Goals may overcome the real objective of moving more people on transit and carpools across the Lake on the SR 520 Bridge and I-90 Corridors, and preventing the need for ever having to build another cross-lake Bridge in a new location.

B. 1.Other Issues/Problems: Not mentioned in the report was the Stalling or Stopping the Construction of the parallel Mountlake Bridge that could have important consequences for new 520 Transit Service.

Indecision on this important multimodal improvement will impact the ability to increase the use of Transit service speed and reliability, and we think that it should have been included in this Report.

Our organization was deeply disappointed with the above TCT Report's avoidance/omission or any mention of the *need for the second Montlake Bridge ASAP*, and the overall impact on Transit service, without two new dedicated Transit Arterial lanes. They are near the 520 Interchange with Montlake Blvd, and new Transit lanes and Operator control of the intersection Montlake Blvd/NE Pacific Street traffic light.

This is because the Seattle Council's current political position has been to delay or never build a parallel Montlake Bridge, in response to opposition to the parallel bridge. It is a very short-sighted policy, and lacks any objective studies to document that "political conclusion". Without change the gridlock and congestion at the bridge, it will increase, particularly, during construction, and after 520's completion.

The long term impact of this policy on the Arboretum, and the increased Traffic on Lake Washington Blvd. was never presented or discussed openly outside the Work Groups or in Public Meetings. This was due to the fragmented and separate TWG-Arboretum Planning processes, created by the 2010 state Legislature's ESSB 6392. There was no overseeing the need for integrating or improving the consistency on major issues to present a comprehensive overview and statement in the Final reports. Perhaps this will be left to the State Transportation Committees Legislative Reviews to fix in 2011?

2.) Every work-day today, 520 destined and other city Arterial users on Montlake Blvd. are held hostage in stalled, crowded lanes in the current daily Montlake Blvd. gridlock. Many can't avoid using the historic 4-lane Montlake (bascule) Bridge for work trips on SR 520. **Support for new efforts** is needed **today** to evaluate the and objectively discussion of the new parallel Bridge designs options and the feasibility of alternative narrow/widerl bridge designs for Transit, Peds, Cyclists and Vehicles. --

-* to allow more space for increased Transit on E.23rd Ave/Montlake Blvd. and NE Pacific St.

-*-to improve and schedule, reliability and speed of Transit operations on Preferential Transit lanes and Traffic lights that can be actuated by operators of Buses and Trolleys, and-

-* for adequate, safe space for increased use by Cyclists and Pedestrians, to provide a variety of Transportation choices,

-*-to promote increased and **reliable local and regional Transit service options to reduce auto traffic, especially through the Arboretum's LW Blvd., the Northeast Seattle area, U of W, from Madison Park the Central Seattle and Montlake Communities.**

*-to reduce the daily delay, due to the "Montlake Gridlock," due to this narrow existing Bridge, a 'Pinch-point' at a WSDOT owned, historic 4-lane Montlake Bridge, that has adequate city Arterial streets on either side, with a total of seven lanes. (The estimated cost to build is $80 million.) costs and benefits need to be compared to calculate the overall Public Benefits to Seattle and Eastside citizen's, and users for their daily time lost in traffic, versus the gains and improvements from an improved future Bridge addition.!

4.)We don't need or have to wait for more information. The adopted "Triggers", and criteria for surveying daily stalled Transit, Cyclists, Pedestrians and Vehicles, or on SR 520 Mainline east/west travel delays are present with existing conditions **easily meeting the City Council's "Triggers" NOW**! Everyday the Gridlock continues and worsens, and verifies the need for the added parallel Bridge, for new added space for moving Transit and other modes today.

(Note: The parallel **Montlake Bridge** was in the **SR 520, April 2010 adopted Preferred SR 520 Alternative Design announced by the Governor and should be included in the SR 520 FEIS, and built now.**

5.) With the future **new Lidded Montlake Transit Stop, southeast of the "Cut," and the new SR 520 North side Bike/Ped Trail-Eastside E/W Route, there will be a increased growth for alternative travel modes, including Transit users crossing the"Cut," to get to and from the rebuilt SR 520, the new Sound Transit cross-lake BRT routes, the U of W Hospital, and Stadium Link station, to be completed in 2016.** Also there will be more trips between the Burke Gilman Trail and to the planned southeast Pedestrian friendly Arboretum Trails and Cycle/Routes, connected with the existing and new SR 520 Bike Trails in the city.

4.)There are over **600 buses** that daily use the major Montlake Blvd. area Arterials. **Today this area of the city's Transit use/routes/service is second highest in our region, and next to the Seattle CBD. Transit to and from a major Seattle urban center that includes the U of W, the University Hospital, the U Dst. and Northeast Seattle. Moving ahead on improving a multimodal Arterials, would be consistent with the Seattle City Council's adopted Ordinance for promoting a city's"Complete Street's Policy," which currently seems to have been forgotten...**

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-WSDOT needs to seek a Public Process and Schedule to legally condemn the needed land for the new parallel bridge, taking one or two houses,

-WSDOT should apply soon and receive a U.S Coast Guard Permit for construction of the new bridge over a "Lake Washington Ship Canal "Waterway", and that will take time.

RBCA urges acceleration to the parallel bridge design process. It is needed now, ahead of the disruption of all of the proposed Westside SR 520 long- term Construction projects. If built early it would reduce some of the long term impacts and detours for our Communities, and **shorten the long delays for improving Transit service and routes for users, with reliable service.**

5).**WSDOT's projects Arboretum internal and thru traffic increases and traffic Impacts were not considered- as part of an overall Multimodal 520 Plan, and should be included in the SR 520 FEIS.**

This was due to the past fragmented planning process established in the 2010 ESSB 6392Legislation, when the Transit and Arboretum planning process were separated, and never coordinated. Little study of the overlap of Arboretum Traffic issues were included in the SR 520 TWG studies of adjacent City arterials. Unfortunately there also appeared to be little staff communication between the two processes.

The result is that ABGC members have accepted the narrow Findings to meet the December 2010 deadline. ABGC had adopted a Goal of decreasing traffic through the Arboretum, but that will not happen in the future, if the proposed package of SDOT TDM proposals will be all the Information that is available. Traffic will continue to increase thru the Arboretum , and continue to reduce the ambience of Park the Lake Washington Blvd. that was built for 4000 vehicles a day, and now carries over 18,000, 50% of which are headed to or from SR 520.

6.)**Left Turns at E.24th-**In addition, the **ABGC** approved a new route to allow SR 520 traffic exiting westbound destined vehicles to go South to use the new Lid street at E.24th and to make a left turn exit to LW Blvd. **RBCA** supports this route only as an incentive for 520 HOV's, as was supported in the SR 520 A Preferred Alternative, that was adopted in April 2010.

A reason for **ABGC** position is that SDOT studies found that not using E.24th to the LW Boulevard it would require Montlake Blvd. Arterial intersections to need added capacity (widening) at some intersections, along 23rd Ave that the city of Seattle currently opposes. This "Trade-off" had limited discussion and was made in favor of the not impacting or widening city Arterials for increased traffic, that could have resulted in reducing traffic through the Arboretum. *The **ABGC** accepted this policy.*

ABGC's current hope is to cure the increased Traffic through the Arboretum, with a tentative SDOT proposal funded by WSDOT, for a Traffic Calming and TDM program. Not included at this time in the current Traffic studies, is a new *two-way Arboretum public Park Tolling proposal for Lake Washington Blvd*. This is the behind the scenes **ABGC** LW Blvd. traffic reduction solution, that has not been studied, and may or may not be supported by the city of Seattle, to reduce the LW Blvd traffic. *The status of this option is unknown*.

7.)RBCA urges that this fragmented planning process be fixed by the 2011state Legislature so it can become a comprehensive/unified process in the future. Continued work on new options, including Tolling, to decrease increased Traffic through the Arboretum and on Montlake Blvd should be continued. To comprehensively consider the changes/impacts of 520 Tolling, increased use of Transit and other policy questions/issues, and revisions on major city Arterials in the vicinity of the Arboretum, before any of the recommendations are implemented**.**

Recent work related to the Arboretum Traffic Calming Recommendations, were studied separately from the overall regional Park issues, the Community Arterial systems and 520's new design, and need to be unified.

5/) Prepare early for the removal of the existing 520 Arboretum Ramps-- Current SDOT studies have found that even with the removal of the two 1963 SR 520 vehicle on/off service ramps to a state highway, and Traffic Calming, LW Blvd. speed cushions and other SDOT TDM programs, that by 2030, ***there will still be more vehicles than ever traveling through the Arboretum, despite the implementing' phased TDM package of proposals***.

RBCA's Position- *Our organization does not accept that current inadequate study Conclusions, and does not support unprecedented two-way Tolling on the Blvd. of a Public Park, as a "cure" for reducing traffic on our historic, Olmsted designed Lake Washington Blvd.*

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If legal, and found feasible, it would be a temporary Traffic reduction "Band-aid" as driver's adjusted to paying a Tollor using another route. It is costly to sign up vehicle users, to install automated Park Tolling Equipment and to administer a separate Toll Program. How will the ABGC determine who are a daily SR 520 users from thru traffic, or from Arboretum Park visitors? In our opinion, the system could not be paid for by WSDOT 18th Amendment funds for Park Mitigation, or part of the SR 520 Tolling System funds.

Other more complete studies for reducing the traffic problems of the Arboretum should be done now, More emphasis in required on ways to increase trips on other Modes, including local and Regional Transit systems, Rather than using only WSDOT Traffic studies that project historic traffic trends into the future, which is presently changing and unknown.

Times are changing along with the 520 user's future choices of transportation travel modes. Environmental issues like the need to reduce green houses gases, the increased consumer costs for a using foreign oil, reduced future use gas powered vehicles, along with the new high Peak-hour SR 520 user Tolls, and the reduced Federal and State Gas Tax funds.

Right now our planning for our Transportation future required that we keep options open, and it is difficult to predict the impacts on the public's future use of the Boulevard. RBCA supports an objective study the whole system of adjacent Seattle Arterials, and the Boulevard together. Revised, and new city Arterial projections should include alternative estimates of future SR 520 users and local Arterial users for Transit and other modal alternatives. Future impacts on Tolling 520 info should also be included..

We need an objective review of current studies to determine new methods to reduce of auto trips through the Arboretum, our historic Park.

*(**NOTE**: Current SR 520 State Legislation authorized WSDOT to levy SR520 Tolls before construction and after Opening, and then only on the 520 non- HOV users of the existing and new floating 520 bridge segment.)*

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Comment Submitted 12/13/2010
Name: Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
[redacted]

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners: Neal Adams; John Barber; Terry Holme; Jourdan Keith; Diana Kincaid, Vice-chair; Donna Kostka; Jackie Ramels, Chair

December 13, 2010
Washington State Department of Transportation
Online Comment Form
RE: Comments on Draft Arboretum Mitigation Plan

The Seattle Board of Park Commissioners appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Washington Park Arboretum Mitigation Plan for the SR 520 project. The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project will have a profound effect on parks and natural areas throughout the SR 520 corridor, and particularly within the Washington Park Arboretum. State Route 520 has been a scar through the heart of the Arboretum since its construction. The highway's continued operation and future expansion will continue to dominate the natural environment and intrude upon the unique visitor experiences within the northerly portion of the Arboretum.

The Board wishes to recognize the work done by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) in working with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to outline a set of mitigation measures based upon the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan. Implementation of the Arboretum Master Plan is of critical importance to the long term operation of the Arboretum. We support the ABGC's work as they prepare for the future and urge WSDOT to completely fund the projects identified in the Mitigation Plan. Full implementation of the mitigation plan won't make the Arboretum whole again but it will help the Arboretum provide a living classroom and a unique natural experience for visitors in the heart of an urban city. Park lands and natural areas adjacent to park lands are important. Any further expansion of the roadway, beyond what is shown in the preferred alternative, into undeveloped natural areas and/or Park lands is not acceptable. Waterfront public access, open space and natural areas are precious commodities which should not be compromised for the sake of automobile transportation. The Board urges WSDOT to take every precaution to ensure that no additional 6(f) resources are impacted and that during construction, disruption of the Waterfront Trail will be kept to a minimum. Trail closures must be kept to the absolute minimum and public access and safety are paramount concerns.

To consider replacement of land, we need to match land values and provide comparable land for the unique experience which is lost. In addition to 6(f) requirements fulfilled by the Bryant marina site, we recommend the State returns the land currently occupied by the ramps to and from Lake Washington Boulevard to SR 520 to the Arboretum and City of Seattle. This includes the RH Thompson ramps and the Arboretum ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard. This will return "comparable" land – wetland – and is consistent with the Olmsted plan for continuous green space from East Madison Street to East Montlake Park. The SR520 Project should

remove these ramps and restore the wetlands, providing trail access to the lagoons and marsh. Boulevards are an important feature of our park system. Traffic patterns can greatly impact the quality of our boulevards, increasing noise, air pollution and reducing safety for pedestrians and cyclists. We therefore strongly object to routing westbound traffic from SR520 southbound through the Arboretum by providing a left turn for all westbound vehicles on NE 24th. This was not included in the Nelson-Nygard plan provided to the Seattle City Council and is projected to increase the traffic through the Arboretum by 500 cars per hour. We think it is important to protect the quality and safety of Lake Washington Boulevard from the increased traffic this significant detail would create.

SR 520 cuts the city in half along the eastern corridor, segregating communities from north to central and south Seattle. We therefore support the plan for the 2nd Montlake Bascule Bridge for pedestrians, cyclists and transit, enhancing our Boulevard system, protecting Lake Washington Boulevard from increased traffic and reconnecting the chain of neighborhoods in this corridor.

Thank you again for this opportunity to remain involved in the SR 520 project.

Sincerely,
Jackie Ramels, Chair
Seattle Board of Park Commissioners

Cascade Chapter
180 Nickerson St, Ste 202
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 378-0114
Fax: (206) 378-0034
www.cascade.sierraclub.org

15 December 2010

ESSB 6392 Workgroup
600 Stewart St., Ste. 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Comments on Arboretum Mitigation Plan

Dear SR 520 Project Staff:

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the SR 520 Project Washington Park Arboretum Mitigation Plan. The close work of the Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) with both Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has helped to reduce potential impacts to the Arboretum and identify important mitigation measures at key locations throughout the Arboretum.

Sierra Club agrees with the ABGC that this SR 520 corridor project is an opportunity to design a roadway that will protect the Arboretum from excessive traffic volumes along Lake Washington Boulevard, reduce noise and aesthetic effects in the park, and generally correct the insults perpetrated against the Arboretum when the original highway was constructed nearly half a century ago. We generally support the list of mitigation measures outlined in the p. 27 table, with some notable concerns and exceptions, which are detailed below.

Transfer ownership of WSDOT Peninsula to City of Seattle and/or Arboretum

We support the wetland restoration that is planned to occur following removal of the existing unused freeway ramps as well as the SR 520 on- and off-ramps to and from the east. But ownership of this wedge of land known as the WSDOT Peninsula should transfer to the city and the Arboretum for long-term management of park land. This mitigation is noted as satisfying a Section 4f requirement, but might also be considered a supplemental replacement under Section 6f as well. There should be no possibility of WSDOT selling this land as surplus for non-park uses as occurred adjacent to I-90 at the conclusion of highway reconstruction.

Noise reduction can be enhanced by speed reduction with benefits for reduced project footprint

The noise abatement for SR 520 as it crosses Foster Island is described as an elevated structure that includes a 4-foot-high traffic barrier with noise absorptive material. WSDOT has indicated it intends to set a 45 mph speed limit and design the roadway accordingly to reduce noise impacts where SR 520 crosses Portage Bay. The lowered speed limit and corresponding design features should apply east of Montlake Blvd. to include where SR 520 crosses Foster Island. A roadway designed for a lowered speed limit will reduce the project footprint, thereby reducing impacts in the Arboretum.

Eliminate turning movements that direct traffic onto Lake Washington Blvd. E. through the Arboretum

Lake Washington Boulevard was never intended to carry the traffic volumes associated with access ramps to and from SR 520. Sierra Club objects that the preferred alternative enables vehicles from the bridge corridor to continue using the Arboretum cut through route on Lake Washington Blvd E. We take exception with the draft finding to not recommend Arboretum Traffic Management Measure "E" Full-time restriction of SB left turn from 24th onto LWB. Instead, we urge a design change to allow only right turns from 24th Ave. E to westbound Lake Washington Blvd sending vehicles to Montlake Blvd for travel southbound away from the 520 corridor. Additional traffic management techniques should be explored along 24th / 23rd Avenues to enable this change in traffic routing from the east to south of SR 520.

Sierra Club does support Traffic Management Measures L and M that call for tolling of LWB. Proposed Measure L that specifically tolls traffic traveling between the Arboretum and SR 520 appears to be most effective at accomplishing the reduction of traffic volumes through the Arboretum with fewer effects elsewhere in the street network.

The Arboretum is a regional treasure for the northwest and the crown jewel of Seattle's Olmsted Parks. It is worthy of the protections that this Mitigation Plan proposes and then some. We urge that better protections be implemented through traffic management to reduce volumes on Lake Washington Blvd.

Sincerely,

Morgan Ahouse, Chapter Chair
Sierra Club Cascade Chapter

Jorgen Bader
[redacted]

November 29, 2010

ESSB 6392 Workgroup
Washington State Department of Transportation
600 Stewart St. # 520
Seattle, WA 98101

RE: draft arboretum mitigation plan

Dear ESSB Workgroup:

Chapter 248, Laws of Washington, 2010, Section 2(4)(b)(v) states that the mitigation plan "must, to the greatest extent practicable, include on site wetland mitigation of the Washington park arboretum, and must enhance the Washington Park Arboretum." "Must" is a very strong verb; it means "do without fail." The draft report ignores it and downplays the obvious damage SR 520 does to the Arboretum: it takes almost 4.77 acres from the Arboretum Waterfront Trail within the Section 6(f) impact area,; it takes another 2 acres or so of the Arboretum area that had been part of the former Canal Reserve; and it builds a bigger, wider, higher bulkier freeway that damages the adjoining park.

Despite this obvious taking, the mitigation plan identifies and offers no replacement land at all. The land is simply lost and the discussion starts from that deficit. There are two clear candidates for replacement land that need to be included to overcome that deficiency in any mitigation report:

(1) The Bryant Marina site offered by the University of Washington as replacement for the conversion of park land taken that was under a perpetual covenant pursuant to a grant agreement between the United States through the State of Washington, Committee for Outdoor Recreation to The City of Seattle and the University of Washington under Section 6 (f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, 16 USC § 460*l*-8(3)(f); and

(2) The "WSDOT peninsula" (also known as the "WSDOT wedge") now occupied by the R.H. Thomson "ramps to nowhere" and the Arboretum ramps soon to be removed. It is a lagoon impaled with pylons that support concrete overpasses. It had been part of the Arboretum until construction of SR 520 condemned the area.

Replacement Land Needed

The mitigation report should endorse the Bryant Marina site with the stipulation that it be devoted to use for "arboretum and botanical gardens." In 1947, RCW 28B.20.350 et. seq. and in 1939, 28B.20.360 et seq. conveyed sections of the Lake Washington Shore Lands, which are now being converted to highway use, to the University of Washington for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes" and imposed a reversion should that usage cease. The University was authorized to convey a rectangle 120' by 400' to the City for museum use, and the University did so retaining a reversion should museum use cease. That reversion now applies. The restriction to "arboretum and botanical garden purposes" travels to the replacement property received in exchange.

The mitigation report should also call for return of the WSDOT wedge after its restoration to the Arboretum. The WSDOT wedge no longer serves SR 520. It is "excess" and subject to surplusing. WSDOT is not in the business of maintaining parks or of providing horticultural or arboricultural services. As a result, the WSDOT wedge will receive minimal maintenance at best or, if WSDOT's finances are tight, neglect or lWSDOT may lease it to a concessionaire for roadside sales or equipment rentals. It also might again be a base for storing equipment. The WSDOT wedge is so strategically located to the Arboretum that return is absolutely essential to mitigating the impacts of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement project.

The mitigation report mentions the WSDOT wedge almost in passing at pages 18 and 19. Pages 18 lists as it as Project C among eleven projects. It states that "WSDOT Peninsula wetland restoration" will address wetland impacts of the project, satisfy regulatory requirements for mitigation, and is not a priority in the Master Plan. Page 19 states that WSDOT will remove the existing ramps, restore the wetlands and vegetation, grade about four acres and plant trees around the restored wetland. It makes no mention of reconveyance of the lagoons to the Arboretum.

Before SR 520 was built, the Arboretum was a continuous park from Madison St. to Montlake Boulevard. People could walk along the lagoons of the WSDOT wedge and then north of Lake Washington Boulevard through a woodsy wetland between 24th Avenue and Montlake Boulevard. That last stretch was called the Canal Reserve and belonged to the University of Washington. Youth bicycled on the upper Arboretum roadway and a pathway beside Lake Washington Boulevard. SR 520 took a big shark-like bite from the side of the Arboretum and the most southerly part of the Canal Reserve where the bike path had been. Returning the WSDOT wedge provides an opportunity to heal that gaping wound and return that experience. Reconveyance will give the site the expert care of Arboretum arborists and horticulturalists.

Restoration is necessary to providing just compensation: (1) The Arboretum is a very, very special place so that injuries have a heightened impact; (2) the taking causes severance damages to the remainder that is not fully taken into account in the Mitigation Plan; and (3) the Arboretum includes lands of the old Canal Reserve. The Mitigation plan, pages 10-11, arbitrarily and erroneously detaches and ignores this acreage.

(1) Heightened impact ---

The Arboretum is a unique park. It is so esteemed that Chapter 248, Laws of Washington 2010 charges the Work Group particularly to mitigate injuries and enhance the Arboretum. (emphases supplied). RCW 1.20.120 declares that the Arboretum is the official arboretum of the State of Washington. No other municipal park in Washington enjoys such special attention. The Arboretum Mitigation plan writes about the Arboretum like a mortician about a cadaver. It misses its importance, its beauty, and its uniqueness. Arborists rank the Arboretum up with the Arnold Arboretum in Boston in national standings. It has the largest collection of temperate woody plants in the Northern Hemisphere. Its variety is amazing: ridges, valley, and marsh. Its beauty has inspired photographers, artists, poets, and lovers (Weddings take place there regularly). It is a haven for bird watchers: some species are found only there in Seattle; it hosts the roosting area for crows that congregate at certain times in the tens of thousands; bat people see it as the best refuge in Seattle for certain species, etc. Children come there in bus loads; University botany and forestry classes convene there. It's listed in tourist guides and starred as an attraction. In the springtime, it's as beautiful as the tidal basin in Washington, D.C. of cherry blossom fame. Species grow there that are found nowhere else in Seattle. It's a nursery for replenishment rare specimens that die elsewhere. A treasure of that stature requires extra sensitivity to avoiding injury and responsiveness to reducing it when it occurs. Chapter 248 had that in mind in ordering the Mitigation Plan and the draft report fails on the first and most important element: replacing land taken.

(2) Severance damages ---

The Mitigation plan minimizes the "severance damages", i.e. injury to the Arboretum that has not been taken by reason of the loss of the property and construction of the project; and it overlooks completely the future, prospective injury if further development occurs within the limited access lines established for the project, such as ramps for a light rail connection to the UW Sound Transit on the UW Campus; and the development likely to be stimulated by and related to the project. All are elements of Just Compensation in eminent domain proceedings and ought to be considered and offset in the Mitigation Plan.

Severance damages occur because the replacement bridge is bigger (taller, wider and bulkier), expands the right of way, and will be busier. Impacts are often classified under the categories of light (shadowing); air (pollution; odor; and wind circulation and effects); access to the street system and between the severed segments; view (the ability to see and to be seen; and in serene natural areas, intrusion into the line of sight); noise; aesthetics; wave action for the waterfront and other environmental impacts (e.g. ground water flow, change in and impacts on vegetation, susceptibility or adaptability to pests and infection, disruption of the ecosystem) and so on. Take aesthetics as an example of the Plan's down playing of adverse impacts. The new bridge structure will loom over Foster Island like a concrete viaduct The structure impairs the park's natural ambiance and overrides the tranquil sounds of nature. The Mitigation Plan, pages 17-19, suggests that undisclosed "aesthetic enhancements" will address adverse effects. Perhaps, but not much. The aesthetics shown so far to the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee are not much different in character than the ramps by Royal Brougham Way near the

stadia or by Spokane Street to the West Seattle Bridge. The sketches were comparable to bathing a skunk to relieve its odor. To mitigate the range of adverse impacts, the Mitigation Plan must supply another refuge, i.e. the WSDOT wedge.

(3) True scope of Arboretum, Arbitrary Exclusion --

The Arboretum includes all of McCurdy Park and all of the Canal Reserve conveyed in 1947 by RCW 28.20.350 et seq. to the University of Washington for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes and for no other purposes..." The conveyance contained a reversion to the state should any land be put to any other use. The legislation allowed the University to grant The City of Seattle a use of a 120' by 400' rectangle for museum use ---- a usage that will soon expire and under the University's deed cause the area to revert to Arboretum usage. The City renamed its segment McCurdy Park, but that did not change the underlying limitation for arboretum and botanical garden purposes after expiration of the museum use nor change the character of the rest of the former Canal Reserve.

The University has never abandoned the property conveyed nor has the State declared the University in default. The letter of the State of Washington, Recreation and Conservation Office, dated July 28, 2008, Attachment "A," Attachment "Arboretum Park Draft Boundary," contained in Attachment 2 of the SDEIS on SR 520 shows the former Canal Reserve easterly of 24th Avenue East as part of the Arboretum. Roads maps of Seattle, bicycle maps, trail walking maps, and park guides show a continuous green from Madison St. To Lake Washington save for the WSDOT wedge and label it "Arboretum" without breaking out McCurdy Park. The grand vision of the Arboretum at the reception desk at the Graham Visitor Center includes the Canal Reserve as part of the Arboretum. The Don Sherwood Portfolio, Data on the History of Seattle Parks, in the Seattle Central Library, shows the Canal Reserve west of 24th Avenue East as "Arboretum – U.W." The Sherwood Portfolio is generally considered as authoritative. On the ground, the parking area serves the arboretum waterfront trail. Aerial photos show the Canal Reserve west of 24th Avenue East as green space; and anyone walking along the north edge will see woodsy growth with mature trees. The fact that the westerly segment is allowed to grow naturally scarcely disqualifies it as open space and Arboretum reserve. There are strips of Washington park on the south margin that grow untended too. It provides habitat for creatures that prefer the wild. By excluding that area from the Arboretum, the Mitigation plan blinds legislators to very significant adverse impacts that they are entitled to know.

24th Avenue East Left Turn

The Mitigation Plan accepts without discussion a left turn for westbound vehicles on SR 520 to go south on 24th Avenue East to Lake Washington Boulevard and then east or south. That left turn enables motorists to Madison Valley and parts of the Central Area to avoid Montlake Boulevard and cut through the Arboretum on Lake Washington Boulevard. The Mitigation Plan should lay out the discussion before the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee and set out the alternatives. The Mitigation Plan at pages

15 and 20 fails to do so. Omissions of the alternative and the pro's and con's cover up an important controversy that should be disclosed to legislators.

The Nelson/Nygaard Report to the City Council recommended that a left turn be allowed only for HOV's and for other vehicles during peak hours should traffic congestion require it. The reasons for such a restriction are compelling:

+ The left turn allows 500 vehicles more per hour during peak hour to use Lake Washington Boulevard, the spine of the Arboretum. It is made to serve as a freeway access roadway. Those vehicles impair the use and enjoyment of the park Boulevard by cyclists, by pedestrians who cross the Boulevard to and from the Japanese Tea Garden to the main Arboretum, and by motorists who seek to drive at leisurely speeds in order to enjoy a pleasure drive --- the purpose of the Boulevard.

+ Restricting the left turn avoids the injury to the Arboretum caused by excess traffic and speeding commuters. As the adage says, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Prevention works; the supposed traffic calming isn't likely to do so. The arterial traffic flow adds noise, odors, air pollution etc. to what would otherwise be a superb park setting --- it's completely contrary to the ambiance desired for the Arboretum. Anyone, who has experienced the Arboretum when Lake Washington Boulevard is closed, such as a morning of a Marathon race or a Bicycle Sunday, can tell how much richer the Arboretum is without through motorists. The less traffic, the less impairment. Closing off the left turn off-peak would remove at least one third of the traffic volumes.

+ Restricting the left turn to HOV's encourages the use of higher occupancy vehicles by residents. It also favors the use of buses that run along 23rd Avenue, the major arterial.

+ The left turn increases traffic that use neighborhood streets, which connect to Lake Washington Boulevard in the Arboretum. Those streets are narrower than the Seattle standard street and commonly have parking constraining them even further.

+ Parks advocates and environmentalists favored the restriction, e.g. Friends of Olmsted Parks. So did advocates for the Japanese Tea Garden and various community organizations.

At the meetings of the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee, the Executive Director of the Arboretum Foundation spoke strongly against allowing the left turn. Others supported her. One compromise proposed was rush hour use only. Nonetheless, the ESSB 6392 Work Group --- mostly transportation people --- decided to allow the left turn for all vehicles all the time, giving the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee no say in the matter. By its silence about the option, the effects, and the discussion, the Mitigation Plan gives the appearance of concurrence by the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee, which it did not get.

Other Errors and Omissions

To be fair, the Mitigation Plan should make comparison to the existing situation, especially on traffic and noise. The Mitigation Plan, pages 12 and the 15, makes comparison to a hypothetical "no action" alternative as of 2030. Its methodology

assumes a prescriptive right to pollute at a level determined by computer modeling for purpose of the Federal Highway Administration uses. The objective here is to minimize adverse impacts on the Arboretum and for that purpose a comparison with existing levels would be more useful.

The Mitigation Plan should consider the use of restrictive easements to protect the Arboretum and/or recommend or to use of covenants in an agreement to give the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee a continuing role in development of the SR 520 Project in the Arboretum. Restrictive easements would assure that the WSDOT right-of-way and the drainage pond to be built near East Montlake Park would be consistent with the Arboretum Master Plan, and that, if WSDOT retains its WSDOT peninsula, it would have to be maintained at the level of the adjoining Arboretum with public access assured. The Mitigation Plan should contain stipulations about an active role for the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee as the project moves along, including giving its design review and approval authority. The drawings that WSDOT has submitted for is Foster Island crossing befit an industrial area more than an Arboretum. Its "consultation" with the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee --- cited at pages 13 and 14 --- so far has been mostly presentations selling its ideas rather than soliciting opinions, listening and heeding recommendations.

The Mitigation Plan draws a curtain at 24th Avenue East. However, developments further west and north affect the Arboretum and ought to come within the purview of mitigation. The lid between 24th Avenue East and Montlake Boulevard East could be a welcoming doorway that complements the Arboretum or it could be a sterile grass field with crossing pathways between bus stops and sheds for bicycles. So far WSDOT and the Workgroup have the latter vision. In this respect, the plan acts like a weak-eyed horse with blinders lacking peripheral vision.

As to the history at page 6, The City and the University executed the management agreement for the Arboretum in 1934. As a result, the Arboretum received assistance of the Civilian Conservation Corps and through the Works Progress Administration in building the lookout, the gates, pathways, drainage, and other improvements. Tree plantings and botanical landscaping had been underway earlier. Some of the trees seem to be well over eighty years old. Visitors are from around the United States and abroad --- not just from the region.

During mediation the representative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries made extensive presentations about the importance of the Arboretum wetlands as nursing areas for fingerlings of endangered species going through the Lake Washington Ship Canal and actions necessary to reduce prededatation. The Mitigation Report should cover that subject too. He also recommended advance acquisition of replacement properties and early development --- a consideration for the Bryant Site.

The list of regulatory requirements at pages 8-10 should include RCW 28B.20.350 and 28B.20.390 that restrict the use of those areas of Lake Washington Shore

Lands conveyed in the 1939 and 1947 for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes." Both will need amendment. The Mitigation Plan ought also refer to Initiative 42, which requires replacement of park land in kind by an equivalent of equal or larger size, value, and usefulness in the same vicinity serving the same purpose. The City has "superseded" (i.e. repealed) it as to all of McCurdy Park and much of East Montlake Parks, but it still applies to City-owned other sections of Washington Park.

Conclusion

The Mitigation Plan brings to mind the anecdote of the injured worker and the worker's compensation carrier years ago. An industrial accident took away the worker's foot below the knee. After the amputation, the worker sought a prosthesis to so that he could walk with both feet touching the ground, the prosthesis serving as a substitute for his missing flesh and bone. The insurance carrier offered a lifetime supply of aluminum crutches. It explained that aluminum crutches were adjustable, lighter, and more enduring than wooden ones. Its solution did not make the injured worker whole to the state of the medical art, but rather offered a niggardly approach slightly better than nothing.

So here, the Mitigation Plan does the least that it can get away with --- a direct contradiction to its statutory charge. Its failure is manifest when compared to the six guiding principles for the SR 520 Project adopted by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee at pages 14-15. The Mitigation Plan falls short on all of them. WSDOT during mediation offered, and in its Section 106(f) process for the Arboretum Waterfront Trail is doing, much better than the Mitigation Plan. The Mitigation Plan needs a fundamental rewrite and to stress securing the former Bryant marina site and the WSDOT wedge as replacement land. All it is offering now is the equivalent of the aluminum crutch by the parsimonious insurance company in the anecdote.

Yours truly

Jorgen Bader

Jorgen Bader

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Jorgen Bader with the University District Community Council

The mitigation plan must include on-site wetland mitigation of the Washington Park Arboretum, and must enhance the Arboretum. This mitigation plan ignores this important piece, required in Chapter 248, Laws of Washington, 2010, Section 2(4)(b)(v). The proposed mitigation plan takes almost 4.77 acres from the Arboretum waterfront trail within the Section 6(f) impact area, and another two acres of land from the Arboretum that has been part of the Canal Reserve property. The mitigation plan cites taking only a half acre in passing and neither identifies or offers any replacement land. The WSDOT peninsula must be returned to the Arboretum as well, as it is very important to the park.

Jorgen Bader
Distributed at ESSB 6392 Workgroup meeting on Dec. 1, 2010.

Chapter 248, Laws of Washington, 2010, Section 2(4)(b)(v) states that the mitigation plan "must, to the greatest extent practicable, include on site wetland mitigation of the Washington park arboretum, and must enhance the Washington Park Arboretum." "Must" is a very strong verb; it means "do without fail." The draft Mitigation Plan ignores it and downplays the obvious damage SR 520 does to the Arboretum: it takes almost 4.77 acres from the Arboretum Waterfront Trail within the Section 6(f) impact area,; it takes another 2 acres or so of the Arboretum area that had been part of the former Canal Reserve; and it builds a bigger, wider, higher bulkier freeway that injures the adjoining park. Despite this obvious taking and damaging, the draft Mitigation Plan cites only a 0.5 acres taking in passing and neither identifies and offers any replacement land.

The Arboretum Mitigation Plan must call for replacement land to overcome the loss of land and project impact damages, specifically:

(1) The Bryant Marina site offered by the University of Washington as replacement for the conversion of park land taken that was under a perpetual covenant by a grant agreement between the United States through the State of Washington, Committee for Outdoor Recreation to The City of Seattle and the University of Washington under Section 6 (f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, 16 USC § 460*l*-8(3)(f). The replacement should carry over and be subject to a restriction of its use for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes."; and

(2) The "WSDOT peninsula" (also known as the "WSDOT wedge") now occupied by the R.H. Thomson "ramps to nowhere" and the Arboretum ramps soon to be removed. It is a lagoon impaled with pylons that support concrete overpasses. It had been part of the Arboretum until construction of SR 520 condemned the area. Restoration of the WSDOT wedge to wetland falls far short unless the WSDOT peninsula also returns to the Arboretum. Leaving it with WSDOT risks surplussing followed by sale or lease.

Return of the WSDOT peninsula is necessary to provide Just Compensation and appropriate mitigation because:

(1) The Arboretum is a treasure susceptible to damage that calls for special and sensitive care. The draft Mitigation Plan understates the remedial measures due.

(2) The new SR 520 does extensive damage to the portions of the Arboretum that remain outside the right-of-way. Those adverse impacts fall under the category of " severance damages" and are elements of Just Compensation in an eminent domain proceeding. Their extent is much greater than the Mitigation Plan acknowledges. The replacement land would help compensate somewhat for the severance damage.

(3) All the land of the former Canal Reserve conveyed by RCW 28B.20.350 et seq. is part of the Arboretum. It was conveyed for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes and for no other purposes…" It remains so until taken for SR 520. The Mitigation plan ignores the statute, history, literature and usage and misleads the legislature in arbitrarily excluding it from the Arboretum.

(4) The public interest favors it. The area can best be integrated into the Arboretum if it returns to City/University management – WSDOT is not set up for caring for parks and plant collections. The waterfront trail makes a better loop if the path loops from the islands inland around the lagoon. WSDOT processes may use the site for highway-related storage or grant concessions for commercial activities inconsistent with the adjoining Arboretum.

Comment Submitted 12/8/2010
Name: Jason Barbacovi
[redacted]

We take the arboretum to 520 every day, both getting on and off. I just want to make sure there is a realistic plan in place for what those thousands and thousands of cars that currently do the same thing are doing to be doing instead. Certainly, 23rd as it stands isn't capable of doing that. Even with the redesign, I am picturing a gigantic bottleneck as all the cars on 23rd try to get onto 520 with all the cars that are already on the freeway. 23rd is already a disaster on a daily basis, especially coming from the U-District. You have a lot of images up on the site, but I don't see a clear one that shows where the arboretum traffic is going, or how all the extra traffic volume on 23rd will be handled. (I could have missed it.)

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
John Barber with the Leschi Parks and Green Space Committee

"The Wedge" should be returned to the Arboretum as part of this mitigation process. This fits under Sections 4(f) and 6(f) and the city of Seattle's Initiative 42, and returning this piece of land should be a priority.
Additionally, measures should be taken to keep SR 520 traffic out of the Arboretum. To do this, do not restore the left turn on 24th Avenue E. By reducing traffic, you will allow for better traffic conditions on 23rd Avenue E. and Montlake Boulevard E. Constructing the second bascule bridge will also improve traffic in this region. Overall, improvements to the 23rd Avenue E. and Montlake Boulevard E. area are very important.

Comment Submitted 12/12/2010
Name: Bill Horder
[redacted]

Regarding the proposed Landscaped Curb Bulb at the SE corner of Lake Wash. Blvd and Foster Island Road: This is one of the few safe places for northbound cars to pass bicyclists. Narrowing the roadway here would force more car/bicycle interaction. An better alternative would be to narrow the roadway to slow traffic as planned, but to also add a separate bike lane in this area. This bike lane would then connect to the bike/pedestrian path running under 520.

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Fred Hoyt with the University of Washington Botanic Gardens and the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

Thanks to WSDOT and SDOT, as this has been a very cooperative and open process. We worked hard on the mitigation plan as a group, and I think it's been done very well.
Through implementation of the mitigation projects, the UW will have the opportunity to engage faculty and students, and this could be a very positive thing. Also, I'd like to clarify that not all of the impacts to the Arboretum can be mitigated within the Arboretum. The I-5 to Medina project also proposes to mitigate at the UW's Union Bay Natural Area.
There are still many details that are being worked out in scoping, and Lake Washington Boulevard E. continues to be of concern to us. That road was only designed for 4,000 cars a day, and it divides the Arboretum in half. I'm hoping that together, we can resolve some of these issues.

-----Original Message-----
From: Elaine King [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 4:42 PM
To: SR520 Technical Workgroup
Subject: Arboretum mitigation plan

By giving the Arboretum what they want, what the University of Washington wants, what the bicycle groups want, etc., etc., you continue eroding the Montlake neighborhood with these plans. It is clear that the needs/wants of any and all of the politically connected parties are met by continuing to erode the Montlake neighborhood. We are not allowed to participate in these decisions, but are the direct recipients of the consequences. It is equally obvious that WSDOT will ultimately be embarrassed by the end result of granting these favors to those in positions of power and, yet again, create a transportation structure that has nothing at all to do with transportation.

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Larry Levine with the Madison Valley Merchants Association

I applaud your effort as you are looking at improving traffic, especially at E. Madison Street going to and from the Arboretum. One of my biggest concerns is about on- and off-ramps. The current SR 520 off-ramp offers an entry into the Madison Valley business district. I'm concerned that if this ramp is removed, it will be more difficult and inconvenient for people to come to the business district. Additionally, I can see more people using 23rd Avenue E. if the ramps to the Arboretum are removed. Traffic is already horrible on 23rd Avenue E., and serious accidents frequently take place. Increased traffic following ramp removal will make this street even more dangerous and difficult.

Comment Submitted 12/15/2010
Name: Scot Hilen Merrick
[redacted]

My grandfather built the first home on East Lake Washington Boulevard, which I grew up in and currently own. Before the construction of 520, ALL of the residents along the boulevard were essentially a part of the Arboretum and it was an environment second to none. With the construction of 520, damage occurred to the gardens, wildlife, visitors AND permanent residents of the area. I applaud the activities of the ABGC in proposing corrective measures for the Park itself--this is long overdue. However, it is painfully apparent that the board, although legally mandated has no representation for the people who live on the Boulevard and who have endured far more pollution, degradation and proximity to the existing freeway than any part of the corridor. It is quite difficult for local residents to have an equivalent voice in the mitigation plans, to attend early afternoon meetings and carry the same legal responsibility. With that said, the overall Mitigation Plan is unacceptably unfair to the Boulevard residents. I offer the following excerpts: "When the original SR 520 was built, environmental regulations protecting park land and wetlands were not in place and the Arboretum suffered damage and property loss." SO DID THE BOULEVARD RESIDENTS "The ABGC stressed throughout their discussions with WSDOT that the region now has an opportunity to design a roadway that will protect the Arboretum from excessive traffic volumes along Lake Washington Boulevard, address traffic safety concerns and reduce noise and aesthetic effects in the park. From the ABGC's perspective, these improvements would, most importantly, return the Arboretum to a place of quiet and respite in out region." SO TOO FOR THE BOULEVARD RESIDENTS "Botanical gardens contain a wide array of both herbaceous and woody plant collections, varied educational offerings for all ages, and research programs focused on plant improvement, conservation, ecology or basic science. If there is one characteristic that unites all botanical gardens, it is that they have botanically diverse, rather than simply aesthetic, collections of plants." DO THE LIVES AND WELFARE OF THE BOULEVARD RESIDENTS ENJOY SIMILAR STATUS/PROTECTION? "The Arboretum is a stunning gem of the Seattle Park system, a 230-acre oasis of gently rolling land, bucolic watery inlets, and home to the best of the city's wildlife. It provides respite, scenery, recreation and solace to thousands of visitors in every season of the year. It provides educational and volunteering opportunities to thousands of friends, sightseeing to thousands of visitors, and cultural enrichment in gardening styles and distant ecosystems to those who seek it out. Proposed upgrades to State Route 520 (SR 520) across the north end of the Arboretum threaten to significantly impact the park for many, many years due to construction, and will impose a base set of permanent adverse impacts once the bridge is completed." WHAT ABOUT THE PERMANENT RESIDENTS ALONG THE BOULEVARD? Mitigation for the Arboretum is paramount, but it should not exclude nor should it adversely impact residents, people, immediately adjacent to the park. The local ecosystem does not and should not discriminate on the basis of native origin, plant or wildlife. Lake Washington Boulevard residents have been poorly served by SR 520 from its inception, in every respect. Removing the Arboretum on/off ramps is laudable; constructing a giant replacement at 24th Avenue is outrageous, unfair and unacceptable and we deserve better, lest we become the endangered species.

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Paige Miller with the Arboretum Foundation and the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee

First, thank you to the WSDOT team that was led by Rob Berman and Kerry Ruth, and the SDOT team led by Stephanie Brown and Jennifer Wieland, as they have really done a fabulous job working with us. Wonderful progress has been made, including having ramps removed from the Arboretum, designs for the preferred alternative are narrower than before, and a list of mitigation projects has been identified and agreed to. But we still have more to achieve. The SR 520 crossing over the Arboretum will be twice as wide as it currently is, and traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard will bring greater traffic volumes that we see today, which are already high. Moving forward, we must consider a traffic management study to reduce traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard E., and WSDOT should assist SDOT to study tolling on Lake Washington Boulevard E. in the future. Additionally, you must continue meeting with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe on how we will address this dark area on Foster Island under the new freeway. Finally, additional scoping and negotiations are necessary on specific projects we have identified and tentatively agreed to.

From: jroneil[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 11:09 AM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: SR 520 Arboretum Mitigation Report

DRAFT Arboretum Traffic Management Measures for Evaluation - October 7th, 2010

A Signing Improvements
Install signing that directs SR 520-related traffic to the Montlake interchange on routes other than Lake Washington Blvd.
Locations could include the intersections of Madison & 23rd Ave, LWB & Madison and 24th Ave & LWB.
Low cost. Easy to implement Little effectiveness. People will typically find "easiest" route regardless of signing. WSDOT data indicates that in the AM Peak period,only 5% of SR 520-bound traffic originates to the west of the Arboretum. With Preferred Alternative, and removal of Arboretum ramps, access to SR 520 via 23rd Avenue is the shortest route for vehicles originating from the west.

This proposal fails to examine the capacity of 23rd.

B Traffic Signal Modifications
Set intersection signal timing to discourage traffic from routing through the Arboretum. Options include reducing time for EB left turns at the intersection of Madison & LWB, Increasing time for EB left turn at of Madison & 23rd Ave.

How will Madison handle the back-up WB if the EB left turn interval is increased? What will happen to the WB stacking of Madison at East John for those individuals turning on East John to head North on 23rd? What will happen to the stacking of the NB traffic of 23rd at Madison?

D Turn Restrictions Prevent SB left turn from 24th onto LWB during off-peak hours Would direct SR-520 off-ramp traffic away from Arboretum during off-peak times (weekends, mid-day, and evenings) Capacity improvements (adding turn pockets) at the intersections of Montlake Blvd/LWB, 23rd and Boyer,
Interlaken and John Streets may be needed. Without additional turn restrictions and/or capacity improvements being applied to the intersections of 23rd and Boyer/Interlaken, these roads would be impacted by traffic trying to get back to Lake Washington Blvd. from 23rd during off-peak times.

Proposal fails to consider the capacity of the intersection at Montlake Blvd. and ELWB. It fails to consider the capacity of the intersection of East Montlake Place and E. Roanoke. What will prevent an individual from turning East at East Newton and right on 25th or 26th to Boyer? What will prevent an individual from turning left at East Galer to 26th and on to Madison? What happens to these neighborhoods? Will bus service be increased during off-peak times? Will bus service be provided through the Arboretum to reduce traffic?

F Turn Restrictions Prevent SB left turns from 23rd onto Boyer and/or Interlaken Would direct SR-520 off-ramp traffic away from Arboretum
For peak-hour operations, would potentially require additional capacity improvements (adding turn pockets) at the intersections of 23rd and Boyer Interlaken and John Streets.

Would force SB local neighborhood traffic to take circuitous routes. If turn restriction is only applied during off-peak times, additional capacity improvements would not be as extensive.

Proposal fails to consider the capacity of the intersection at Montlake Blvd. and ELWB. It fails to consider the capacity of the intersection of East Montlake Place and E. Roanoke. What will prevent an individual from turning East at East Newton and right on 25th or 26th to Boyer? What will prevent an individual from turning left at East Galer to 26th and on to Madison? What happens to these neighborhoods?

H Traffic Restrictions
Prevent WB Through traffic from LWB from accessing the EB 520 on-ramp at Montlake. Would discourage SR 520 onramp traffic from using LWB. For peak-hour operations, would require additional capacity improvements along Madison and 23rd/24th Avenues, at the intersections of 23rd and Boyer, Interlaken and John Streets. Without additional restriction being applied to Boyer and Interlaken, these roads would be impacted by traffic trying to go from Lake Washington Blvd. to from 23rd. If turn restriction is only applied during offpeak times, additional capacity improvements would not be as extensive.

This proposal fails to consider the width and grades of Boyer. It fails to address the one-ay bridge at Interlaken. How will this proposal deal with that traffic that will use 26th and 28th from Madison?

J Traffic Restrictions Restrict Interlaken and Boyer access to Lake Washington Boulevard Would discourage traffic from SR 520 from using the Arboretum. Would reduce traffic on Interlaken and Boyer during the PM Peak. Would affect all traffic (not just SR 520 vehicles). Local access for residents would be circuitous. Could be used in combination with other turn restrictions that divert traffic to 23rd.

What will prevent an individual from turning at East Newton and on 25th or 26th to Boyer? What will prevent an individual from turning at East Galer to 26th? What happens to these neighborhoods?

L Tolling
Toll trips SR 520 by through the Arboretum. Scanners would be installed to read a vehicles toll transponder or license plate. Vehicles that drive between the Arboretum and SR 520 would be charged a fee. Depending on the toll amount, tolling has the potential to significantly discourage traffic from accessing SR 520 via the Arboretum. Visual impact - scanners and associated signing would be inconsistent with the aesthetics of the Arboretum. Diverted traffic may impact adjacent neighborhoods. Policy implications of tolling Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would require additional review and assessment by City and State agencies, and is beyond the purview of this technical assessment.

Not an acceptable solution. This proposal fails to consider the economic impact of the Madison retail district. How would you educate the drive of the differences of the tolls if they use the Arboretum? How will 28th, 26th, East John, Madison and 23rd handle more than 14,000 additional trips per day? The diverted traffic will impact adjacent neighborhoods. This proposal fails to consider the economic impacts to the neighborhoods. The proposal will defeat the City of Seattle's goals to preserve neighborhoods.

M Tolling
Cordon toll around the Arboretum. Scanners would be installed to read a vehicles toll transponder or license plate. All vehicles that passed through the Arboretum would be

charged a fee. Those that stopped to visit the park would not be charged if they returned the same way they entered. Depending on the toll amount, tolling has the potential to significantly reduce traffic in the Arboretum. Would impact local neighborhood travel. Visual impact - scanners and associated signing would be inconsistent with the aesthetics of the Arboretum. Diverted traffic may impact adjacent neighborhoods. Policy implications of tolling Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would require additional review and assessment by City and State agencies, and is beyond the purview of this technical assessment.

This is not an acceptable proposal. This proposal fails to consider the economic impact of the Madison retail district. How would you educate the drive of the differences of the tolls if they use the Arboretum? How will 28th, 26th, East John, Madison and 23rd handle more than 14,000 additional trips per day? The diverted traffic will impact adjacent neighborhoods. This proposal fails to consider the economic impacts to the neighborhoods. The proposal will defeat the City of Seattle's goals to preserve neighborhoods.

From: jroneil[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 11:07 AM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: SR 520 Arboretum Mitigation Comments

"(4) Projected traffic is expected to reduce compared to a no action alternative but be higher than existing. The additional traffic by the year 2030 would occur as a result of projected regional growth in population and employment that is independent from the project. No changes in regional population and employment growth have been attributed to the project build alternative." This is unrealistic and invalidates any proposed solutions to divert traffic from the Arboretum.

"Removal of existing ramps. The existing SR 520 ramps and unused R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps would be removed, which would open views for Arboretum users, eliminate some columns that currently impede boat access, and allow the area to be restored to natural conditions and additional park access." Part of this statement is not true. The footbridges at the path from the Museum to Foster Island limit boat traffic and not the columns of the ramps.

"Section 106 consultation"
WSDOT and FHWA consulted with the Arboretum Foundation, the city of Seattle, the University of Washington and the ABGC on the Section 106 process. The consultation process is defined as "the process of seeking, discussing, and considering the views of other participants, and, where feasible, seeking agreement with them regarding matters arising in the section 106 process." The current process has failed to include the Montlake Community as an active member of the review committee. Lake Washington Boulevard is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with the Olmsted Brothers' plan for parks and parkways in Seattle. Where it falls within the boundaries of the Montlake Historic District, it is a contributing element to that district. The portion of the boulevard within the Washington Park Arboretum also contributes to that historic property. By definition, the Montlake Community qualifies as a participant in the process. A proper urban design process cannot be successful without participation of all the stakeholders.

From: jroneil[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 11:01 AM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: Arboretum Mitigation Plan

A mitigation report, plan and EIS should be based on fact. The following descriptions and sentences should not be included in the report:

"Throughout the discussions, ABGC members stressed the importance of protecting the Arboretum, as they believe it is one of the most respected and loved educational and cultural resources in the Pacific Northwest. From the ABGC's perspective, these improvements would, most importantly, return the Arboretum to a place of quiet and respite in our region. The Arboretum is a stunning gem of the Seattle Park system, a 230-acre oasis of gently rolling land, bucolic watery islets, and home to the best of the city's wildlife. It provides respite, scenery, recreation, and solace to thousands of visitors in every season of the year. It provides educational and volunteering opportunities to thousands of friends, sightseeing to thousands of visitors, and cultural enrichment in gardening styles and distant ecosystems to those who seek it out. The Washington Park Arboretum is a regional treasure and resource for our citizens and need to be valued and protected. I have strong concerns regarding the environmental effects of the proposed rebuild of the SR 520 bridge, particularly the effects on the beautiful, sensitive wetlands in the Arboretum in Seattle. These wetlands are a rare and precious gift of nature that is already seriously affected by the existing SR 520 bridge. I live near the arboretum and find it to be a really wonderful."

These descriptions are elaborate rhetoric and elaborated with decorative details. One could just as easily say that the Montlake and the surrounding neighborhoods are just as much as gem to Seattle. The Montlake neighborhood is a Historic District and should be treated as such.
The current suggestions to restrict traffic through the Arboretum do not consider those neighborhoods East of 23rd.

From: jroneil[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 11:01 AM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: Arboretum Mitigation Plan

Traffic calming measures:

A turn-about should be added at LWB East and East Foster Island Road.

The East Foster Island Road improvements, the Graham Visitors Center parking and Greenhouse improvements should be move to a High Priority.

The parking lot North of the Arboretum Pedestrian Bridge should be eliminated.

The various neighborhoods, Boyer, Interlaken, East Roanoke St., East Miller, East Calhoun, East Newton, 23rd, 26th, 28th, East John and Madison can not support he removal of the Lake Washington Blvd. 520 exits. They cannot support the proposed 24th intersection.

From: Joe Quintana [redacted]
Sent: Fri 12/3/2010 5:39 AM
To: SR520 Technical Workgroup
Subject: I oppose any toll for access to or through the arboretum eom

Joe Quintana
Managing Partner, IndexGroup
[redacted]

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Sean Riley

I am a resident of E. Lake Washington Boulevard. Most of the traffic calming and management plans discussed today are only for Lake Washington Boulevard E., and I noticed that there is no plan to extend traffic calming to the area of E. Lake Washington Boulevard between E. Miller Street and Montlake Boulevard E. It's wonderful to help traffic in the Arboretum, but people live nearby, and we're neglecting any traffic calming measures for the neighborhood. I'd like to see the left turn on 24th Avenue E. eliminated or metered.

Comment Submitted 12/13/2010
Name: Sean Riley
[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern, I attended the meeting in Seattle on December 1st to hear the updated plan for Arboretum Mitigation. I also spoke publically at the microphone and will reiterate my comments here. First, I would like to thank WSDOT for putting together a plan for traffic calming in the Arboretum. After hearing the plan in person, I was encouraged by the ideas WSDOT had. However, I was disappointed to hear that the plans are only in effect between Madison Ave and Foster Island along Lake Washington Boulevard E. All of the homes in or around the Arboretum are located on E. Lake Washington Blvd (between Montlake Blvd. and E. Miller Street). This is also the area that will have the largest impact by WSDOT on the SR520 project. Every home on this street are also protected by Section 106 as part of the Historical Designation program as "contributing and eligible." My ask is that the traffic calming plan for the Arboretum is extended to include East Lake Washington Boulevard (not just Lake Washington Boulevard E.). This stretch of road is less that a 1/4 mile and would have an enormous impact on those that have to live and breathe the 520 project. Extending speed humps, new pavement, electronic signage etc. would all be welcome on E. Lake Washington Boulevard. Additional asks would be extending the east end of the lid to protect the homes along East Lake Washington Boulevard. If that cannot be done, adding sound walls on the 520 bridge beyond the east end of the lid would be a minimum ask from the community. I would also highly encourage tolling in and around the Arboretum to reduce car volumes. Lastly, assuming WSDOT will donate the plot of land under the bridges to nowhere once the unused ramps are removed, I would ask that funds are donated to the Arboretum to landscape and transform that area to match the aesthetics of the Arboretum gardens. Thank you, Sean Riley [redacted]

Comment Submitted 12/15/2010
Name: Ewa Sack
[redacted]

I live on Lake Washington Boulevard in the arboretum and I am still amazed that in today's world we are building 6 lane highways vs. building a proper subway system. I am appalled against the noise, what is going to be done to the arboretum, wildlife, and cause more traffic headaches than trying to work with a plan to cause less. It is 2010 and the city of Seattle still has no proper transportation than regular buses from east to west. And to solve against this we are building bigger highways. Seems to me we are making things worse.

Verbal Comment at 12/1 Workgroup Meeting:
Larry Sinnott with Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks

With many of your SR 520 improvements, you're negatively impacting the Arboretum. I believe that southbound traffic on Montlake Boulevard E. will remain congested, which negatively impacts the Arboretum. Moving the bus island on Montlake Boulevard E. near the Hop In Grocery will bog down traffic and also impact the Arboretum. You should consider controlling left turns into the Arboretum, as this will lower traffic. Finally, I'm also concerned about encroachments to medians on Montlake Boulevard E.

Comment Submitted 12/11/2010
Name: Liam Stacey
[redacted]

The cheaper, or more effective ideas: 1. Make the Arboretum drive into the official bike rout. Make it illegal to pass a cyclist or trail one by less than 30 feet. 2. Radar control speed limit of 15 mph. Use your transponder system to impose toll. 3. Put a small shuttle bus that drives from Leshi, Madison, and down to where buses enter the 520. Run the shuttle every 10 minutes. Make it free so two doors open at once - riders will pay when they get on the SR520. Eliminate automobile rout from Arboretum onto SR520. The few people who can't figure out how to live with out a car can drive up to 23rd. 4. Put free WIFI on all buses and trains.

-----Original Message-----
From: Stuk, Christopher [redacted]
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2010 6:21 PM
To: SR 520 Arboretum Comments
Subject: Arboretum Mitigation Plan Comments

Thank you for accepting comments on the Arboretum Mitigation Plan dated December 1, 2010.

The changes to traffic patterns and traffic volumes in the Montlake area due to the design features introduced in the Preferred Alternative do not appear to have been addressed adequately by the traffic analysis contained in the existing SDEIS Transportation Discipline Report (Ref. SDEIS dated January 22, 2010). This comment applies both to the construction phase and to the operation of the project. A new traffic analysis should be prepared, and adequate time for public review and comment should also be provided. Without a new traffic analysis the conclusions drawn in documents such as the existing SDEIS and the recently released update to the Cultural Resources Discipline Report could be invalid.

The additional changes proposed in the Draft Arboretum Mitigation Plan dated December 1, 2010 add considerably to the need for a new traffic analysis. The rerouting of traffic that would otherwise have travelled through the Arboretum will contribute significantly to congestion on Montlake Blvd, 24th Ave E, 23rd Ave E, and the adjoining streets. It will also encourage dangerous cut-through traffic on narrow side streets as drivers attempt to find ways around the congestion and the fastest way through Montlake.

The new design features introduced in the Preferred Alternative and the proposals contained in the Arboretum Mitigation Plan both have the potential to create adverse effects on Montlake. Because mitigation measures rely on the correct finding of adverse effect, a new traffic analysis should be performed and all documents which use the traffic analysis should be updated accordingly and shared with the public for comment. It is especially important that the Cultural Resource Discipline Report be updated since that will influence the contents of the Programmatic Agreement which is currently under development.

Chris Stuk
[redacted]

From: jv [redacted]
Sent: Wed 12/1/2010 4:33 PM
To: SR520 Technical Workgroup
Subject: Arboretum Traffic Mitigation

The focus of the Arbo traffic mitigation efforts appears to be only that portion of the traffic flow that uses the 520 bridge. No doubt that is a major portion of the total traffic flow thru the Arbo, particularly during the morning and evening commutes. BUT, there is also a significant portion of the Arbo traffic flow that is made up of Madison Park, Washington Park, Broadmoor, Madison Valley, Leschi and Seward Park residents going to and from Montlake, University Village, Laurelhurst and Sand Point. How will that traffic be accommodated in your plans?

-jv
John A. Vitalich
Madison Park resident since 1967

Comment submitted 12/11/2010
Name: John Vitalich
[redacted]

The mitigation plan seems to be focused on discouraging traffic going to and from SR520 from traveling thru the Arboretum, and encouraging it instead to follow a route that would take it west on Madison St to 23rd Ave, and thence north to Montlake. I am highly suspect of the ability of Madison St and 23rd Ave/Montlake Blvd to handle the increased traffic flow. They're already gridlocked during the am & pm commutes. How do you intend to increase their capacity? What provisions have been made for accommodating the sizable amount of traffic that currently uses the Arboretum to travel from Madison Park, Washington Park, Broadmoor, Madrona, Leschi and Seward Park to the UW, University Hospital, University Village, Laurelhurst, and Sand Point? Surely you don't plan to re-route that traffic as well onto the same route as the SR520 traffic. I will guarantee you that Madison St and 23rd Ave will not accommodate the addition of all traffic now flowing thru the Arboretum.

Comment Submitted 12/8/2010
Name: Anonymous

I am impressed with the rigor and honesty of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. Clearly, there is a strong commitment to protecting the trees. I trust the same commitment will be exhibited when it comes time to protecting and compensating citizens whose property will be forever damaged by the SR 520/Second Montlake Bridge project.

Comment Submitted 12/14/2010
Name: Anonymous
[redacted]

As a resident of Montlake who lives on the extremely busy Lake Washington Boulevard, I'm fully supportive of the traffic calming plan for the Arboretum. The residents along Lake Washington Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard request that traffic management and traffic calming measures for the Arboretum are extended by 1/4 mile to include the rest of Lake Washington Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard where there are homes (many of which have been identified as historic homes integral to Montlake's pending designation of an historic district). This area is currently the noisiest and one of the most heavily trafficked areas of Montlake and would greatly benefit from reduced and slower traffic. Additional asks would be extending the east end of the lid to protect the homes along East Lake Washington Boulevard. If that cannot be done, adding sound walls on the 520 bridge beyond the east end of the lid would be a minimum ask from the community. I would also highly encourage tolling in and around the Arboretum to reduce car volumes. Lastly, assuming WSDOT will donate the plot of land under the bridges to nowhere once the unused ramps are removed, I would ask that funds are donated to the Arboretum to landscape and transform that area to match the aesthetics of the Arboretum gardens.

Comment Submitted 12/15/2010
Name: Anonymous
E-mail: N/A

Senate bill 6392 gave the Mayor and the City Council the ability to include “other persons or organizations” in the design process. The Mayor and the City Council have chosen to exclude various neighborhood councils and individuals in participating in the design process as active committee members. Washington Park Arboretum Mitigation Plan has been created with a partisan group who has chosen to ignore the needs of the Montlake, Madison Park, Washington Park, Madison Valley, Leshi and Madrona neighborhoods. These neighborhoods need to be part of the design to prevent additional traffic delays throughout all of these neighborhoods, disbursement of traffic throughout the Montlake and Madison Valley and the increase traffic at 23rd and Madison and the Montlake intersection. The economic cost associated with the decrease in value caused by the disbursement of traffic in the Montlake and Madison Valley neighborhoods has not been addressed. The proposed solutions have chosen the Park over various neighborhoods. This contradicts the City of Seattle goals to preserve neighborhoods when viable alternatives do exist.

NOTE: This comment was submitted prior to the start of the public comment period and pertains to an earlier draft of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. Some specific points were addressed in later versions of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. This comment was not included in the public comment period summary.

University District Community Council
4534 University Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105

November 10, 2010

ESSB 6392 Workgroup
Washington State Department of Transportation
600 Stewart St. # 520
Seattle, WA 98101

RE: SR 520 Draft Arboretum Mitigation Plan

Dear Workgroup Members:

The draft Arboretum Mitigation Plan Report falls short of the statutory charge to the workgroup in three major ways:

(1) It barely mentions replacement of only a small portion of the land actually taken from the Arboretum;

(2) It does not mention the urgency of returning to Arboretum use the lagoons occupied by the R.H. Thomson "ramps to nowhere" and the Arboretum Ramps to be removed; and

(3) It assumes, without discussing, routing traffic through the Arboretum by providing a left turn for all westbound vehicles at 24th Avenue N.E. at all hours. Such a left turn was not in the Nelson/Nygaard report to the Seattle City Council that became the foundation of the Governor's preferred alternative and is strongly opposed by environmentalists and friends of the Arboretum.

Our September 21st letter to you addressed these issues.

Chapter 248, Laws of Washington, Section 2, (4)(b)(v) requires the mitigation plan to "identify all mitigation required by state and federal law resulting from" the SR 520 project. It also states that "Wetland mitigation required by state and federal law as a result of the ... program's impacts on the arboretum must, to the greatest extent practicable, include on-site wetland mitigation of the Washington park arboretum, and must enhance the Washington park arboretum." Federal laws include Section 4(f) of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1965 and Section 6 (f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 (16 USC Section 460l-8(3)(f)). State law include the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Program and its implementing regulations that require replacement of park land taken for a project with replacement land.

NOTE: This comment was submitted prior to the start of the public comment period and pertains to an earlier draft of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. Some specific points were addressed in later versions of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan. This comment was not included in the public comment period summary.

Replacement Land

The draft statement page 11 of 25 mentions that the SR 520 project will take "0.9 acre in Arboretum (4.4 acres overall.)" Not one word more. It does not say where the take will occur or where the replacement will be made. It should do both.

A WSDOT hand-out, entitled Exhibit 4, Section 6(f) boundary and converted area, throws light on the calculation of the draft report. It shows another deficiency. In 1947, RCW 28B.20.354 et. seq. conveyed the old Canal Reserve to the University of Washington for "arboretum and botanical garden purposes." It had been used for arboretum purposes by the University before SR 520 was built. It is still used for parking, in part, for the Arboretum Waterfront Trail. The Museum of History and Industry was granted a use of a portion for museum purposes and "no longer" --- an occupancy that has now ceased. The City of Seattle called it McCurdy Park. That renaming and the museum's occupancy did not remove it from the Arboretum. Taking its space (at least two acres) and parking away for SR 520 affects the Arboretum. Excluding that acreage from the report misrepresents to the legislature the impact of SR 520 to the Arboretum. This distortion will become manifest should legislators compare the draft report with the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 4 (f) Statement; the Section 6(f) Statement soon to be published; or the Project Impact Plan that resulted from the mediation process.

The University of Washington is working to fulfill its responsibility to supply replacement land. It has proposed a substitute location called the Bryant Building site. The draft report needs to support that substitution and thereby encourage the City of Seattle to do its share. Ordinance 123408 and Council Bill 117015 state that the City intends to invest at most 60% of the proceeds received from SR 520 for park replacement.

Reversion of Lagoons to Arboretum Use

In the early sixties, the proposed R.H. Thomson Expressway and SR 520 cleaved a mammoth wedge into the Arboretum for freeway ramps. The Olmsted plan as developed had a continuous green space from East Madison St. to Montlake Boulevard East with Lake Washington Boulevard as a perimeter road. When the highway ramps are taken out, the lagoons and marsh can once again serve Arboretum purposes. As the Olmsteds had noted, the Arboretum would have --- and did for two generations --- have the combination of ridge, valley, marsh, and lakefront to host a large variety of flora. The communities

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involved in mediation all agreed that highway area no longer in use should revert to the Arboretum.

The draft report, p. 18, barely mentions it as "WSDPT Peninsula wetland restoration." The one paragraph text says nothing about reversion. Instead that acreage will become green space along a freeway available perhaps some day for transportation uses. Our community council feels that the area needs to be re-integrated into the Arboretum and under its management and care. The draft report should so recommend.

Routing SR 520 Traffic Through the Arboretum

The draft report takes as a given a left turn for westbound motorists on SR 520 to go south on 24th Avenue East directly to Lake Washington Boulevard. The Nelson/Nygaard report to the City Council had recommended it only for HOV's and, if traffic congestion warranted, for other vehicles during peak hours only. The left turn enables vehicles to Madison Valley and parts of the Central Area to avoid Montlake Boulevard and short-cut through the Arboretum. It adds 500 vehicles per hour and a lesser number during the day to clog the Arboretum. Removing those vehicles would go a long way toward restoring the ambiance of the Arboretum, encouraging carpooling and transit use by residents in the affected area, and providing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The drat report does not discuss the advantages/disadvantages of the turn; the environmental impact of the added volumes; the impacts on the immediate neighborhood of the traffic volumes, etc. Instead, it offers some unspecified traffic calming. This routing is a momentous decision. The Arboretum will be hurt by the higher, bigger freeway, the land taken for SR 520, the added pollution etc. Those adverse impacts should be offset by reducing traffic flow along Lake Washington Boulevard, its spine --- especially since most of the flow can use 23rd Avenue East, a City arterial, as an alternative with minimal inconvenience. The State Environmental Policy Act requires state officials to consider alternatives with the less adverse impacts on the environment. In foreclosing disclosure of this alternative, the draft report deprives legislators and high administrative officials of information that they need to make an informed decision.

Yours truly

Matt Fox
President