

**Little Squalicum Park Master Plan
Public Site Visit & Meeting #1
7/22/09**

Summary

Attendees

Gina Gobo Austin - City of Bellingham	Joy Patterson -
Tim Wahl - City of Bellingham	Janille & John Dutton - Neighbors
Leslie Bryson - City of Bellingham	Bob Walsh - Belt Collins
Dave Zeretzke - Neighbor	Chris Webb - Belt Collins
Louise Bjornson - Neighbor/Council Member	Analiese Burns - NW Ecological
Mollie Fauekner - Grateful Dogs	Ellen Southard - Belt Collins
Barb Campbell - Birchwood Neighborhood	Mary Jane Nearman - USEPA
Sharon Bishop - Grateful Dogs	Jeanne O'Dell - USEPA
Mary O'Herron - WDOE	Mark Herrenkohl - Herrenkohl Consulting
William Hadley - Parks Board	
Dan Welch - Birchwood Neighborhood	
Sue DenAdel - Birchwood Neighborhood	

Comments During the Field Visit with the Public

- Would love to walk out on the pier even if no fishing is provided
- Love the tree with tree house on the beach, keep it
- One person observed putting in a kayak
- Need a place for dogs, 99% are well behaved
- Drug deals or “meet and greet” then they go around the west side of the pier
- Need to cut blackberry bushes, they infringe on bikers
- Need a trail turnaround at the south end of the park
- Jim Johannessen - Lummi Tribe fishing area
 - Sandlance and salmon
 - Some of the most productive forage fish develop in estuaries
 - Like brackish water - small estuaries are very important
 - More fish are caught at the mouth of Little Squalicum Creek than closer to Mt. Baker Plywood
 - Eric Beam (Skagit) and others say estuaries within 5 miles of major river systems (Nooksack) are of the greatest importance
- Lagoon - would want as much freshwater as possible, as much surface area as possible
- Inlet stabilize around MHH due to gravel accumulating at outlet of the lagoon
- Like to walk along beach and view/experience natural environment, beachcombing
- A great way for children to learn about the outdoors
- A lot of interest in making the pier accessible, views, provides a walking destination
- A restroom in west meadow would be great

- Trails that meander like Connelly Creek Nature Area and Point Whitehorn is good - makes you feel like you are going somewhere

Analysis, Opportunities/Constraints & Brainstorming Concepts Discussion Items

- What is the definition of a stakeholder - who are they?
- What is the extent of the clay layer at the creek and beyond?
- The proposed BTC administration building in the current parking lot will be built on top of 2-3 levels of parking (garages), therefore building will be very tall, will alter the park entrance on east side
- Like the loop trail from the bridge trail through the BTC
- Creek was diverted in 1961 for mining, adjacent to the existing west trail
- Contaminated soils to be removed from landfill, 1,000 cubic yards, primarily heavy metals - lead, zinc
- Layers of peat below the existing landfill - was a wet area
- Landfill could be filled or made into a wetland
- Will the creek return?
- Will trails remain where they are?
- Will the maintenance road remain?
- Could there be activity nodes near the wetland areas?
- Want to make sure whatever we do with the lagoon you do not decrease people's ability to walk across the beach.
- Like to walk back and forth along the beach
- Lower area should be active at the beach edge
- What will it look like after the clean up?
- Not urban, keep it natural especially near the beach
- No playground near the beach
- What will become of the Oeser related contamination?
- Clean up = manipulation
- Cleanup will result in less dramatic changes than past activities
- What will the landfill excavation entail?
- EPA solutions are yet to be determined
- No asphalt cap
- EPA comments "not high levels of contamination", "pretty easy to address", "solutions will fit into a beautiful setting"
- Too many mosquitoes
- Has there been a deer count? we see lots of deer
- Important animal corridor
- Loop= how many miles can you get out of one loop? +/- ¾ of a mile
- Prefer to have a straight trail in the southern portion of the site rather than the curved trail to create active area
- Put active area (small area) to the east, want a straight trail because we want the ability to see (safety), less costly, like to see the creek from the trail.
- Meadows OK, benches OK, but a nature experience, propose is to keep people moving not a final destination
- Information signage for the parking lot
- Folks are parking on Lindbergh St. to use the park
- Possible pocket estuary near Port parking area

- Is the transfer of the Port parking lot in the discussion?
- Make this park different from other parks
- The beach is very dynamic, severe winter storm a few years back, less erosion in recent years, maybe let the beach be dynamic.
- Leave beach the way it is
 - Surprised the culvert has lasted this long
 - Beach collects debris
 - Water used to reach trestle
- Could logs be cabled to hold them in place?
- What is an ADA trail?
- Lots of folks use the BTC lot to access the park
- Currently Birchwood residents park at BTC to access park. Will BTC continue to allow resident parking?
- Better sense of security along trails, improve safety
- Like the “natural feel”
- Bathroom(s) would be great
- People like to build fires on the beach, can we create a legal fire use area (have BBQs)?
- Cannot use railroad ROW, discourage lingering below the trestle.
- The Port owns the beach, so we need to have an active area north of the trestle.
- Love to see pier access
- Love to see interpretive signs about natural processes, habitats, islands
- Love to see off leash dog use
- City ordinance that City parks be “on leash only”, but the Parks Director can make an exception for this project
- Reminder signs at the perimeter of the park (north especially) telling people to put dogs back on their leash.
- BBQ pits and restrooms might attract certain types of use that detracts from a natural area, maybe restrooms up by the parking lot.
- Would like a restroom in west meadow area
- To control mosquitoes - bat houses, swallow houses, maybe work with elementary schools to build them
- Maybe signs saying who property owners are
- Will the Master Plan address safety/management, who responsible for the site?
- Make sure Park maintenance staff/equipment can access the full loop (north-south) in the park, the park will need more maintenance.
- Majority of “mis-use” of the park is late evening and night time use by teenagers and college age people
- At what point in the Master Plan process will we know what the EPA will do/phasing of clean up? probably second public meeting at the end of September
- Neighborhood wants to know what areas will be cleaned up/how, EPA will be conducting own meetings in next few months.
- Want the southern hairpin trail in place, need to be closer to the beach, able to see parked bikes
- Armor trail if necessary for erosion, if vehicular access is needed then a second access further north is OK
- Restrooms = longer use of the park
- Beach bonfires and BBQs
- Pier access

- Interpretive signage
- Off leash dog areas
- Signage/regulations or instructions for dog owners
- Restrooms closer to the beach
- Could facilities go to old pump houses?
- Swallow & bat habitat to prey on mosquitoes - work with schools to build them
- Who do you call about squatters?
- Owners of the property should deal with crime
- Are management issues part of plan, safety and law enforcement to be addressed
- Ability of maintenance trucks to access the site? Low maintenance = low costs
 - Durable
- Ability to walk easily with children
- Trail to the south of the estuary?

Handwritten Notes from Cards

<p>Keep Loop Trail Keep the main trails in their present location- thank you! Gravel trails please Allow pedestrians (including young children) to walk along the beach and across creek Leave main trail from Marine Drive fairly straight to beach Also it leaves (for visibility) a natural area to the right.</p>
<p>Stream is missing from the "Composite Analysis" graphic Need to look at extent of active use area adjacent to BTC- wetlands will significantly constrain Clearing and views need more discussion and how to mesh with habitat corridor Habitat corridor is most accurate of shown surrounding creek, not just east of creek</p>
<p>Birchwood Neighborhood Picnic at Birchwood Park 4-6pm August 2nd (set-up at 3pm) Can the graphics be displayed at the picnic? Can city post graphics on their website?</p>
<p>Let's get the creek cleaned up (and the soil) Small boat launching place, for kayaks, primarily Restrooms and garbage cans P.S. I edit the neighborhood newsletter "Columbia News", so will be following this project. Thanks! (see us online at www.northernneighbors.org)</p>
<p>Would like bat houses and frog pond</p>
<p>Parking by Mt. Baker plywood Hiking loop Pier access Swallow/bat habitat Interpretive signage One designated fire pit at beach Bathroom One overriding agency for complaints/problems Keep it off leash but post signs</p>
<p>We live at the trailhead</p>

THE END

**Little Squalicum Park Master Plan
Public Meeting #2
Master Plan Alternatives
9/16/09**

Summary

Comments as Recorded on the Large-Size Flip Chart

- How recent is the wildlife assessment? There is a blue heron rookery in the park.
- PW Environmental Resources Department is developing the Estuary study. The Bellingham Bay Action Committee is also involved.
- The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad does not want groups congregating underneath the tracks (within their right-of-way).
- What about emergency access and fire suppression on the beach? How will it be accommodated?
- Why is there standing water in the upper park? It's isolated water that leaches from seeps along the hillside.
- Make sure we retain a through loop with the trail. No doubling back, leave the Eldridge access as it exists.
- Like the current stream channel – but understand the change. Combine creek with the estuary tidal influx.
- What is the relationship of the train trestle supports (+/- 60 feet) to the new West Meadow grading? Probably about a 5 to 10 foot increase in elevation.
- What impacts will the estuary inflow channel have on the railroad trestle supports? Design of the estuary will include consultation with the BNSF Railroad and an assessment of potential impacts.
- Emergency access to the beach is a key concern. How will it be accommodated? Trails will accommodate emergency vehicles. Will need to determine specifics regarding beach access.
- Like the idea of meandering trails rather than linear trails.
- Like a variety of trail and park experiences.
- Pull the trail back from the beach. It will help in the natural erosion/deposit process – resulting in a healthier beach.
- How will ADA access be accommodated? One of the trails to the beach will be accessible.
- Like the environmental education component. Include historical information about the park and previous activities.
- Happy the City is preparing the Master Plan.
- People will continue to want to use the loop trail on the beach. Look at maintaining this opportunity.
- Off-leash versus on-leash is a policy issue that will be addressed by the Parks Director and the Parks and Recreation Board.
- There are established guidelines for dogs – defining rules and regulations. There is potential for variation. We want to hear from the public.
- Avoid alienating existing users with new park regulations.

- How will trash and garbage in the park be handled? Expanded trash facilities (receptacles).
- Will the logs stay on the beach? Yes
- Need to encourage interagency dialogue (City, Port, BTC, BNSF, etc.).

Additional Comments Recorded by NW Ecological, Subconsultant to Belt Collins

- Would prefer interpretive signs be a mix of natural environment and cultural history.
- Make entrance/signage for park entry at Marine Drive.
- Signage at Marine Drive should include a map or directions on where to find parking.
- Place recycling bins in addition to trash cans.
- Coordinate with the Port to make sure they are encouraged to maintain parking/safety on Port property. Perhaps the City should acquire the land?
- Does the grade along Lindbergh allow for a sidewalk on the north? The neighbors would likely not support pushing the road further south to accommodate such a sidewalk; however, a sidewalk would be a benefit considering the speed at which people drive on the road and the blind intersection with Marine Drive.

PLEASE SIGN IN

LITTLE SQUALICUM
PUBLIC MTS #2
SEPT. 16, 2009

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LITTLE SQUALICUM
PUBLIC MTG #2
SEPT. 16, 2009

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PLEASE SIGN IN

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Dan Welch 907 Connecticut bundleesign@gmail.com Birchwood Board.

**Little Squalicum Park Master Plan
Public Meeting #3
11/12/09**

Summary

Attendees:

Sue DenAdel	Gina Gobo Austin - City of Bellingham
Judy McCarthy	Leslie Bryson - City of Bellingham
Helen Rondestvedt - Grateful Dogs	Tim Wahl - City of Bellingham
Co Co Lomas - Grateful Dogs	Chris Webb - Belt Collins
Joy Patterson Grateful Dogs, Neighbor	Bob Walsh - Belt Collins
Barb Campbell - Birchwood Neighborhood Association	Mark Longtine - Ecology & Environment Inc.
Bill Hadley - Parks Board	

Public Comments

1. Is the elevation change in the lower park going to work? It looks less steep on the drawings. The drawings reflect the proposed slopes at an actual 1:1 ratio (1 foot vertical to 1 foot horizontal).
2. Number of green dots. What is the cut off number for elements included on the Preferred Master Plan? The green dots provided a general idea of desired park elements by meeting participants. All of the desired park elements were included in the Preferred Master Plan
3. Change in off-leash policy? Could be a consideration in the future. A policy change is not included in the master plan documents.
4. ADA Trail? ADA Loop? Both upper and lower trails will be ADA accessible.
5. Existing hairpin trail on Port/BNSF property. Will remain existing until the City is required to remove it. It will not be maintained by Parks since it is not on Park's property.
6. Dog bags/trash receptacles should be provided at park entries.
7. Beach/Trails, what is off-leash.
8. How do we keep dogs/people out of the estuary? Vegetative buffers, possible interim fencing.
9. Dogs running through private property (Edens).
10. Grateful Dogs - Provide a designated off-leash area to avoid dog conflicts.

11. Need clarification of off-leash areas. More signs? Currently no enforcement.
12. Restroom locations. Like the restroom near the pier.
13. Lock the restroom at night.
14. Timing of the development. Cleanup tentatively scheduled to be completed in the Fall 2010. No funding has been allocated for park improvements.
15. Would Greenway Funds be available? Possibly
16. How do we obtain pier access? Would require acquisition/transfer from the Lehigh Cement Company. Creosote Pile hazard? Replacement of pilings is highly unlikely.
17. Is it possible to close the Mt. Baker parking lot? Lots of illicit activity is occurring here. Install lighting. Increased activity and visitation to the park will reduce illegitimate activities in the parking area.
18. Provide "Call 911" signage in the park with responding law enforcement jurisdiction.
19. Annexation of the Mt. Baker parking would require resolution of City/Port/County issues.
20. The plan looks good.