

**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	Analiene 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 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 <a href="http://www.northernneighbors.org">www.northernneighbors.org</a>)</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