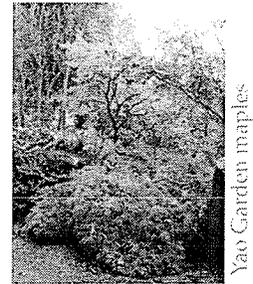


PO Box 40042
Bellevue, WA 98015-4042
February 12, 2008



Yao Garden maples



Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board
450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Re: Bellevue Botanical Garden (BBG) Master Plan Update

Dear Chair Keeney, Vice-Chair Bennett, Boardmembers Aron, Henrickson, Karle, Maxim, and Roland:

We are being asked to look at BBG in isolation from the much broader picture of how the entire Bellevue Parks system serves its stakeholders. Too many questions remain unanswered; too many issues are unresolved. Too few citizens have been asked to participate in the process, which sets the future for a treasured community park whose service area is citywide.

As citizens we want a transparent, open, fair, and responsive process. As taxpayers, we want to know the underlying assumptions are valid, reasonable, and meet the test of rigorous public debate. To these ends, this is an appeal to the Parks Board to postpone approval of the master plan update.

We are told that this is simply the implementation of certain elements already in the 1997 master plan. If that is the case, then the issue on the table today is implementation for a capital improvement project, not a master plan update. What citizens have seen at the October 25, 2007, and January 17, 2008, public meetings does not constitute even the most basic of master plan updates.

The world has changed since 1997, and those changes are visible in our fair city. Impervious surface has increased dramatically, while our tree canopy is dwindling. With current plans to allow even more intensive development along I-405 and the Bel-Red Corridor, there is increasing pressure on the transitional neighborhood sandwiched between the commercial district and BBG. BBG is all the more precious for the oasis it is.

In light of City Council's environmental stewardship initiative and recent Council action to amend the agreement with American Forests to obtain vegetation and impervious surface data for mapping (Resolution 7671 of January 7, 2008), it seems prudent to wait for Council direction on preserving or restoring tree canopy and any limits on addition of impervious surface in Bellevue's public parks and open spaces. When the American Forest studies and recommendations are complete later this year, Council policy decisions could then be incorporated directly into the master plan update as specific, phased goals. The same is true for Council decisions on *Walk & Roll Bellevue* to encourage human-powered transportation. Parks are natural choices to demonstrate environmental stewardship, and BBG could lead the way.

Based on what citizens have seen of the plan as of noon today, it appears that we are being asked to give carte blanche for an indefinite, continually changing concept, illustrated by an incomplete sketch that is not to scale, with no cost estimate and no phasing or timeline. We are looking for a grand vision with a sweeping, cohesive design; but the projects are piecemeal, and the focus continues to be new buildings and expanded parking. If this is a capital improvement project, let's call it such and launch a separate master plan update process that is worthy of Bellevue in the 21st century. We have not seen a suitable requirements analysis to justify what we are being asked to accept on faith. In a spirit of cooperation, I offer an outline of what a board member might expect when asked to approve a 12-year plan which will involve a multimillion dollar commitment (attached).

The Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board has the vision to consider the park system as a whole. Rather than have multimillion dollar facilities at each community park, we might start thinking about some public transportation between parks and community centers, including Meydenbauer. Consider what's happening at the University of British Columbia's UBC Botanical Garden, for example. Here's a quote from their webpage, "TransLink Community Shuttles are minibuses that fit well into communities, providing more service, connecting neighbourhoods and linking with the regional transit network. There are two community shuttle routes at UBC." One of those serves UBC Botanical Garden, Nitobe Memorial Garden, and the Museum of Anthropology on the west side of campus. (Reference <http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/community/001869.php> online.) Alternate modes of transport may be far in our future, but in the case of Bellevue Botanical Garden, there is an opportunity to realize the open space partnership with schools, particularly with neighboring Wilburton Instructional Service Center. (Reference Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan.) There are ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the current proposal, if only we view BBG as part of a larger system with incredible resources and ingenuity.

Just as environmentalist David Brower asked, the twin questions apply here:

"What kinds of growth must we have?" "What kinds can we no longer afford?"

(Reference https://www.earthisland.org/brower/sub_bio.cfm online.)

We have twin questions for board members regarding the public involvement process and policy.

- ☉ Is BBG a community park with a citywide service area as defined in Bellevue's Parks & Open Space System Plan? Invitations to the first public meeting on October 25, 2007, went to people who live within ¼ mile of the center of the park and various garden groups; just a handful of citizens from the neighborhood attended since many were not invited. Invitations to the second public meeting on January 17th went to the Wilburton neighborhood, though some citizens west of 124th did not receive the January 4th mailing. The corollary is whether the Parks Board considers the scope of public involvement to be adequate for the service area.
- ☉ How do garden partnerships affect BBG's status as a public park and do they preclude public involvement?

Our 5-year-old neighbor dreams of being a gardener. Her birthday is this Saturday, February 16th. Please join in offering her and future generations the promise of protected green and open space in our hometown.

Respectfully yours,



Jo Scott

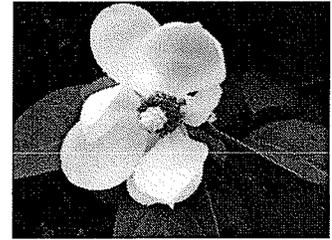


"We do not inherit the earth from our fathers;
we are borrowing it from our children."
Native American proverb

Enclosure: a proposed framework for requirements analysis

A Citizen's Proposed Framework for

Bellevue Botanical Garden Master Plan Update Requirements Analysis



Magnolia sieboldii



OVERVIEW

A Brief History of the Park

- Terms of the agreement deeding the Shorts property to the City of Bellevue
- Original charter
- Original master plan and approval process
- 1997 master plan and approval process
- Property acquisition

State of the Park Today

Garden Partners (for each provide 2007 membership totals and specific role at BBG)

- Lead Partner BBGS and major contributions (education, *Garden d'Lights*, collection data base, main portal website, fundraising, grants)
- NPA and the role of the Perennial Border
- All other partner societies and their levels of participation

The Numbers

Total acreage

- Acreage of each cultivated garden space
- Miles of trails (breakdown by gravel, asphalt)
- Miles of paved surfaces (drives, parking, walkways)
- Total impervious surface
- Size of wetlands and critical areas

Total number of estimated annual visitors

- Breakdown by special event (separate line item for *Garden d' Lights*) and regular visitors
- Description of the scientific method used for calculation or extrapolation
- Statistical confidence level for these numbers
- How many groups arrive in buses, when do they arrive, and for what purpose?

Size, current use, and condition of structures

- Shorts home
- Sharps Cabin
- garden offices
- Tateuchi viewing pavilion and platform
- maintenance yard
- Yao garden gate
- Dewey home

Proposed Requirements Analysis Framework (Continued)

- Percent of BBG as tree canopy, according to 2007 survey results
- Public art installations
- Number and condition of benches
- Total linear feet and condition of fencing
- Size and condition of water features, particularly those operated mechanically
- Total park budget (plan versus actual) for the past 10 years
- Staffing
 - ☉ Gardeners, Office and Administrative Staff
 - ☉ Interns
 - ☉ Other City staff who work at BBG on an as-needed basis
 - ☉ Volunteers
 - ☉ Totals by organization and/or mission
 - ☉ Use of contractors for the past 5 years (brief description of contract and dollar amount)
- Governing Documents (by reference) which put constraints on or drive requirements
 - ☉ Legal requirements (such as ADA)
 - ☉ City Council directives or ordinances (for example, tree canopy targets, the *Critical Areas Ordinance*, a possible future gas-powered blower ban or any ordinance similar to Seattle Ordinance 103667 specifying no restriction of access, no admission charge or entrance fee among other provisions)
 - ☉ *Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan*
 - ☉ Wilburton Hill Park Master Plan
 - ☉ Partnership agreements
 - ☉ Agreements with donors

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Too many visitors? (When and why? Breakdown by specifics.)
- Too few visitors? (During what times?)
- Too few full-time staff members?
- Too few volunteers? (Specifically for which tasks?)
- Too many cars? (During what times, days, events?)
- Too many buses? (When and for what events specifically?)
- Too many people walking through on their way elsewhere? (When and how do they adversely affect the garden?)
- Too many dogs?
- Car prowls? (How many and during what times, days, events?)
- Theft?
- Why current office space is inadequate or unsatisfactory (how many do we need to house, from which organizations, and for what purposes?)
- Why current classroom space is inadequate or unsatisfactory
- Why current garden spaces are deemed not to be working, where are they, and why?
- What paved spaces are in poor condition?

Proposed Requirements Analysis Framework (Continued)

What wooden structures are failing?

Two-cycle engines generating too much pollution?

Moles digging up the great lawn by Main Street?

Not enough storage space?

Siting of current entrance is a traffic safety issue.

If meeting space is a problem, specifically for which groups, how many, and where are they meeting now?

ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS

For each problem, describe all the attempts at resolution. This will form the basis of your alternatives analysis.

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

For each requirement, state the source(s) of the requirement and the justification. If the source of the requirement is a community group or garden partner organization, use the same criteria as City Council for determining who can speak for an organization. State clearly whether the requirement was submitted by the board or a majority vote of the members, and include dissenting opinions.

Staffing (Needs now and anticipated)

- Overall (Total needed overall, with the following breakdowns)
- City/Volunteer/Contractors
- Garden, Administrative, Janitorial, Program, and Special Events

Garden Spaces

Education Program (Discuss indoor and outdoor classrooms. How many do we need to serve, from which organizations, when, frequency, and for what learning purposes? For example, Living Labs, master gardening workshops, pruning and propagation workshops)

Facilities

- Propagation Areas and Greenhouse (here, for example, the sources of the requirements would be garden partners BBSG and NPA; justifications could be written separately or as a joint statement)
- Visitors Center
- Classroom/Meeting Space
- Office Space
- Public Restrooms

Maintenance (Scheduled, Repair, Restoration)

Habitat Preservation

Tree Canopy Target (for example, the source would be a City Council directive; justification would be by reference)

Access (including entrance, drives, parking, public transit, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, gates, trails)

Interpretation and Wayfinding

Security

Public Involvement and Information

Proposed Requirements Analysis Framework (Continued)

NEEDS ANALYSIS

In a summary table, for each requirement:

Does it solve a problem or provide an opportunity?

Is it a necessity or enhancement?

Rate its relative importance on a scale of 1 to 10

Need by date

Anticipated cost/benefit

Cost estimate

Anticipated funding source

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

For each requirement, describe:

Possible alternatives

Risks/projected costs (with maintenance cost projections as well)/benefits of each alternative

Additional resources needed to implement and maintain each alternative

Determination of suitability (assign percent value for how much of the need is met by each alternative)

RECOMMENDATIONS

For each requirement, recommend three alternatives, including "do nothing" where feasible.



Note: This might seem like considerable effort, but it is the groundwork for the master plan document.

For an example of a rigorous process, consider the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan Update:

<http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/masterplan.htm>

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/arboretum/eisacrobat.htm>

Bellevue Botanical Garden (BBG) Master Plan Update

Public Meeting Comments

January 17, 2008

Many thanks to the task force for expanding the public involvement process with this meeting and for providing internet access to some key planning documents. These comments are organized in five sections: step one, positive steps you have taken (2 through 12), cause for concern (13 through 27), need further clarification (28 through 36), and before proceeding (37 through 47).

The task force presented "preferred alternative" Option A, which looks very much like Options A, B, and C presented to the public on October 25th. Proposed buildings and gardens are identified by placeholder shapes (rectangles and rounds). The most detailed portion of the drawing is the proposed parking lot. Few existing gardens are shown on the sketch. We are told details will come later. An exploded view of the visitors center complex is labeled Option C with a scale of 1½ inches = 100 feet, approximating over 9,100 square feet of buildings.

As citizens, are we being asked to give carte blanche for an indefinite concept, illustrated by an incomplete sketch that is not to scale, with no cost estimate and no phasing or timeline? We are looking for a grand vision with a sweeping, cohesive design; but the projects are piecemeal, and the focus continues to be new buildings and expanded parking.

Step One

1. Let's start at the beginning with an assessment of the state of the garden at this point in its lifecycle, followed by a solid requirements analysis and a thoughtful alternatives analysis. Let's conduct this process with all stakeholders involved. Some of us at the January 17th public meeting were shocked to realize that there is not even consensus within the two main BBG partner garden groups! We need to respect and listen to their ideas, just as we need to respect and listen to the opinions of Bellevue citizens.



"Less hardscape, more landscape!"

is the message you are hearing from many people who have taken the time to provide written public comment. As Dr. Neil Huber so eloquently wrote to you in his public comment after the October 25th meeting, he spoke for many of us:

"Why does it need more structures and more pavements?' It was meant to be a garden. It is called a garden, and is generally considered a garden, indeed a beautiful and attractive one. I hope it will remain an attractive garden and not a parking lot, office or or university complex, and so do many of my neighbors."

Those of us who treasure walking in the woods are asking that you take steps to preserve the forest and restore the tree canopy at BBG.

We respectfully ask that the task force listen and offer alternatives to significantly reduce the proposed hardscape.

Positive Steps

2. On behalf of wildlife, THANK YOU for their habitat study in preparation for the SEPA review. There have been significant adverse changes to habitat in the past 26 months. Before and during that time two biologists were observing wildlife at BBG, both former professors. One was on staff (now retired) and the other lives in the Wilburton community. They could offer invaluable information for this study, particularly if you desire to restore habitat.
3. Congratulations on your beautiful new webpage, a breakthrough in public information for BBG. Please add links to the original master plan document; results of traffic, tree survey, and wildlife habitat studies; meeting minutes; as well as the detailed requirements and alternatives analyses. Please include the City of Bellevue alert feature to "*Receive e-mail notification when this page is updated*" for those who wish to subscribe.
4. We are delighted that you are working to make additional overflow parking available at ESC across Main Street. Dr. Huber suggested this approach at the October 25th meeting, and we are grateful to you for adopting this portion of his idea. Those 100 spaces, with the 73 at WISC and 155 at the Wilburton ballfields, give the garden 328 overflow spaces. If you add the 80 proposed spaces east of the soccer field, as shown on Option A, there will be 408 overflow spaces. With the current 53 spaces at the garden, that makes 461 spaces available, and you do not need further expansion on the hill. Frequent walkers note that many times during the day, there are very few cars in the BBG lots.
5. It's grand that you are working with the Transportation Department to request a crosswalk at the Main Street entrance. This will also make life safer for the frequent walkers who work across Main from BBG.
6. In the spirit of *Walk & Roll Bellevue*, you are investigating better pedestrian, bicycle and bus access for visitors. With people arriving via these modes, there is less need for vehicle parking. This is environmental stewardship with an eye to the future.
7. The traffic analysis is a great idea, for transportation as well as parking. We hope the consultants have access to Transportation Department staff who have unique visibility to the wider system.
8. So glad you are proposing better lighting and a more parklike experience north of WISC after you walked that dark stretch of asphalt connecting BBG to the Wilburton ballfields at night. With the construction this year, that section has been very difficult for people to navigate.
9. Wonderful to see you working with GIS to identify slopes steeper than 5%. That was very creative to color-code them on your map.
10. Great idea to provide an exploded view of the proposed buildings from the main map so we can see more clearly.

11. You clearly stated that the Shorts home will remain “as-is.” We hope this is a firm commitment.
12. The task force is not recommending development on the Koh property acquisition; the main purpose is preservation.

Cause for Concern

13. The current “preferred alternative” adds too much impervious surface at the crown of the hill in an ecologically sensitive area. That was my comment on options A, B, and C, presented at the October 25th public meeting; it remains my major concern about the new option A presented at the January 17th public meeting. Is there really any difference in square footage or impervious footprint among any of these options?
14. At the October 25th meeting, we were told you are in the information gathering phase. Yet we seem to be going backwards. Then, there were three high-impact alternatives for discussion; now there is one, which merges elements of the previous three high-impact options. Classic alternatives analyses include a no-action option and a low-impact option. Please consider other options, including the possibility of alternative sites for any new construction. At a minimum, add the smaller, less-aggressive 2002 design as an alternative.
15. Instead of reducing the number of new parking spaces proposed, as citizens have been requesting, the current “preferred alternative” simply omits displaying the total number of spaces on the new option A. Old options A and B had 157 and 142 on-site parking spaces, respectively. During the presentation on January 17th, we were told the new option A has 153 parking spaces. If there was a reduction in planned capacity from 250 to 200 for the buildings, there should be concomitant reduction in parking spaces, particularly in light of an additional 100 off-site, off-hours parking spaces becoming available directly across Main Street. Can you see why I’m skeptical whether there has actually been a reduction (rather than rearrangement) of proposed hardscape? To paraphrase Wilburton community leader Ward Harris when he spoke before the Bellevue Park Board in April 1988, *“We have respectfully said we do not want triple the parking spaces on the hill at BBG, but we keep getting triple the parking spaces.”* (Ward’s actual statement appears in a newspaper article from that time.) The City of Bellevue is trying to encourage people to walk, bike, and take public transit as part of its *Walk & Roll* initiative; more parking is an old paradigm.
16. As I’ve been hearing in the neighborhood and via e-messages, at the January 17th meeting, you heard a number of citizens telling you that they like it “just the way it is.” BBG is already held in high regard and known from Shoreline to the west coast of India, the west coast of Africa, central Europe, Canada, Mexico, Beijing to Mumbai, and points between. It is not buildings and parking spaces that make the garden. At the April 1988 public meeting before the Bellevue Park Board (mentioned in step 15), the Bellevue Park Department had proposed a park design that was *“mid-way between plans for extensive*

and minimal development.” (Reference April 13, 1988, *Journal-American* article, “Neighbors, sports fans battle over park plan” on page A 3.) It is good practice to offer real alternatives.

17. There is no mention of a plan to increase or restore the tree canopy to 1986, 1996 or even 2005 levels.
18. The meeting handout calls it “realistic and appropriate,” but the planned rerouting of the Lake-to-Lake Trail is unacceptable. Has anyone tried walking along the eastern outer edge of the lower parking lot? How do you plan to stabilize the steep slope there? This is environmentally unsound and so unwelcoming to a Volksmarch. It is also unsafe to deliberately route walkers across north and east vehicular entry / exit points, rather than the graceful arc around the west and south trails adjoining the parking lot. Adding bicycle traffic to the precipice of that slope is totally inadvisable. Just post a sign directing bicycles to access the trail by continuing along Main rather than going through the garden.

The rationale of restricting pedestrian access escapes me. This is certainly not in the spirit of *Walk & Roll Bellevue*. Why do visits have to be intentional? Some of the best things in life are a result of serendipity. Until more people take walking as a mode of transport seriously, we do not have to worry about pedestrian traffic jams along the Lake-to-Lake Trail. BBG counts these folks among the 250,000 garden visitors; let them have a little touch of the garden. They might come back intentionally and perhaps donate or volunteer. Why wouldn't the city want a gracious welcoming place for groups walking in solidarity against breast cancer, birth defects, and environmental degradation? Do we really want to route them around a parking lot and make them feel unwelcome?

19. After listening to talk of the hanging garden and seeing 110 enthusiasm for the idea among the community attending the meeting, I took a walk on the ravine overlook trail the afternoon of January 18th to think about this proposal. It is a very short, but awe-inspiring experience to be in the woods listening to the stream in the ravine, as it rushes to meet Kelsey Creek in the floodplain to the south. (Thanks, too, for putting the boards across the previously-impassable sections of trail.) Envisioning a suspension bridge just covered up the view and blocked the sense of being in nature. This is about as close to pristine nature as we can get in Bellevue; let it be truly a botanical reserve.

In preparation for this public meeting, we attended an open house about Kelsey floodplain January 16th and listened to creekside residents' sad experiences being downstream of development. We saw the effects on the maps, heard about erosion on untouched banks, flooding during the December 3rd storm, and the devastating effects on salmon runs. For environmental, aesthetic, and spiritual reasons, I've crossed to the side opposing this bridge.

If the trail erodes so easily, a 170- to 190-foot long bridge cannot be constructed, used, and maintained without adverse effects, even if it is grounded not to touch the slopes.

Fixing the ravine overlook trail is enough challenge, and we know you have been working hard on this since the December rainstorm. If you build a suspension bridge, you might find people bungee-jumping off it or throwing things in the ravine. History shows the bridge on the east section of the Lost Meadow Loop Trail (between trailheads to the ravine overlook) gets slippery from moss buildup and must be cleaned periodically to ensure pedestrian safety. A suspension bridge in the deep woods would be likely to gather more moss even more quickly. Cleaning the surface, particularly if you pressure wash it with bleach or other solvents, would inevitably affect the stream in the ravine below.

Constructing a “*bridge to nowhere*” is impractical in today’s economy and environment. Indeed, if it connected with a trail system on the far side of the ravine, there would be another point of access into the park, which the task force wishes to limit. At the January 17th meeting, the task force said the pricetag would be under \$400,000.00, which is a breathtaking amount to many of us. At a time when the economy is squeezing many middle and low-income families to the breaking point, the funds would be better spent as a donation to the food bank. If the Parks and Community Services Department has already earmarked the funds for BBG, why not use them to restore the tree canopy?

IslandWood already has a suspension bridge. Let’s celebrate that, and leave the ravine in as pristine state as possible.

20. We still don’t know what gardens will be protected from removal. You say the existing gardens will be preserved, that we do not need to worry just because they are not called out on the concept drawings. Yet many of us, visitors and volunteers alike, feel quite uneasy looking at those drawings. We saw this at the meeting, we know what happened to the Herb Garden and Harriet Shorts’ lilacs some years ago; it seems that the rose garden or dahlia display will be next to go. (Please tell us it isn’t so!) These drawings seem threatening to some treasured spaces (for both humans and other wildlife).
21. We keep hearing about an “*exclamation point*,” which is quite puzzling, since a strategically placed exclamation point is extremely effective. After hearing that the “*fact it’s not there doesn’t mean it’s going away*,” we were told that the “*shade border remains; the western border changes*” in regard to the Perennial Border Gardens. Please understand that the Perennial Border is one of the most popular cultivated spaces at BBG, and people travel great distances to see it. It is a key reason BBG is “world-renowned” as task force members say they wish to be. Why tamper with success? The NPA needs assurance that the work its members do is honored and the space they have so lovingly tended is sacrosanct. If we zoom in on the option drawings next to the proposed sun terrace wetland, we see the western Perennial Border is missing and there is a slice through the hillside border. I hope this is an oversight, but fear it might be intentional. The meeting handout speaks about creating “*design parameters for revisions to the*

Perennial Borders for better visual/physical integration with the rest of the Garden...." This sounds quite ominous for some stunning plants and the lilacs.

Visitors' fondness for the Perennial Border Gardens includes a fondness for the volunteers who work there. The Perennial Border has generated a tremendous amount of positive press for BBG. It would be a major public relations fiasco to tamper with this treasure. More importantly, it would generate a lack of trust among garden partners, visitors and the community, which could take years to rebuild, if ever. I mentioned this issue with regard to the Herb Society in my comments after the October 25th meeting. We cannot afford to treat garden partners this way again, particularly if BBG wishes to have volunteers meet most of its staffing needs.

22. The scope and purpose of the Sun Terrace Gardens, identified as a yellow circle with two red arrows on Option A, remain unclear. However, early indications are interference with the slope to the wetlands and the western Perennial Border. With a moniker "Sun," do these gardens involve more clearing? We cannot keep clearing the few trees left in Bellevue without replacing some.
23. Distributed toolsheds. Is the plan to leave these open to the public or locked with keycard access by all volunteers? Either poses logistics and security problems. BBG had one of the most beautiful toolsheds many of us have ever seen, designed and built by Cal Shorts. Was anything done to preserve this treasure? Is the reason BBG now needs distributed toolsheds because the maintenance yard is so far away from the working gardens? Maybe it's time to rethink where the maintenance facility could be. The 1997 *Study & Implementation Guidelines* mentioned the lower parking lot.
24. We heard at the meeting that the planned maintenance facility is the former residence of Dr. Dewey, first dentist in Bellevue and involved with the dairy farm at Kelsey. This needs to be investigated.
25. Still no long-term or short-term plan for a greenhouse and propagation area? Another volunteer asked about this at the meeting. If BBG has room for 9150 square feet of buildings (6650 square feet of new construction) and 153 parking spaces, perhaps some of that space could be devoted to the greenhouse and propagation area. This seems more important for a botanical garden than a catering area or a gift shop. In response to my comments on the October 25th meeting, the task force mentioned possible access to the City of Bellevue greenhouse and nursery on a case-by-case basis. Considering our growing season, would adequate space be available when BBG garden partners need it?
26. Gift shop location on new option A has some drawbacks. My concern about the siting is as a pedestrian and vehicle drop-off bottleneck. Three volunteers at the January 17th meeting had misgivings about the proposed location for safety reasons. We need to listen; they've worked there and understand the situation first-hand. This is a genuine concern. Please give thought to modifying the checkout at the current gift shop location, so the volunteers can see who is coming into the building. Many times, when

one person is alone in the Shorts visitors center, that person is the gift shop volunteer. When there are other volunteers and visitors in the building, the gift shop volunteer has companionship, which can be one of the joys of volunteering. There is concern that this would be lost if the shop moves into a dedicated solo space near the parking lot. Let's listen to these devoted volunteers and honor their input.

27. Continuing long-term maintenance for all the proposed new structures is not addressed in the planning. A citizen who lives close to Kelsey Creek Park raised this important issue, and she is right on target. She's seen all the work being done to maintain Kelsey Park and understands the long-term consequences and cost commitments involved in any new construction. We are grateful to this citizen for reminding us what is downstream of every exciting new project.

Need Further Clarification

28. When we hear the phrase "*the master plan has served us well,*" which master plan? Did someone say that the 1997 master plan had not been formally approved yet? Does that mean BBG is operating under the original Wilburton Hill Master Plan? Is it possible to post that on your new webpage? Are you following Iain Robertson's implementation guidelines from 1997? Whatever the date, Bellevue is in a new century with a new mandate from City Council for environmental stewardship. The world has changed significantly and we all must adopt more environmentally friendly approaches. Parks are a natural place to begin, and BBG could take a lead role with this master plan update. Let's not lose the opportunity to do something *for* the environment rather than continue to encroach with impervious surface.
29. When a citizen at the meeting said that BBG is a community park, the Parks staff response was "No, it's a botanical garden." People in the neighborhood are still talking about this interchange a week later. Has Bellevue's *Parks & Open Space System Plan* — which repeatedly refers to BBG as a community park — changed? Why can't BBG be both botanical garden and community park? This is very confusing to average citizens, who are wondering what the charter is and the terms of the founding agreements. In the Parks response to my comments on the October 25th meeting, I was delighted to see that "*We absolutely agree that the BBG belongs to all Bellevue citizens.*" But later in the same response, we learn that it "*is different from other parks due to its governance structure as a public/private partnership.*" Does this mean that BBG is exempt from the City's long-time commitment to the public involvement process? The Parks response went on to mention that Washington Park Arboretum is one of several which "*operate under similar governance models.*" Yet the arboretum has demonstrated an outstanding and ongoing commitment to public information and involvement. This policy issue needs clarification. The contractual partnership agreements with horticultural groups need to be public information.

30. When another citizen said she would like to see a conservatory, she was told BBG does not have tropicals, as though her idea is outside the bounds of the collections. (Is this why the lovely palm tree was removed from its place south of the visitors center rather than moved to another location in the garden several years ago?) Yet the theme of the 2007 *Garden d'Lights* was tropical. This was honest feedback from a citizen who might be more inclined to vote for a classroom in a conservatory than meeting space in an enclosed building.
31. A citizen suggested holding a design competition at the UW School of Architecture [for the visitors center]. He spoke very eloquently how this sparks the creativity of the students. Having suggested this in my comments after the October 25th meeting, I was delighted to listen to a spokesman for this idea who has professional experience. If you want BBG to be world-renowned and get lots of publicity, this type of competition certainly offers both. In response to his idea, he was told that JGM is contracted to design the hanging garden and the sun terrace. However, I believe this gentleman was talking about the visitors center design. Have you already contracted for the design? Is it complete?
32. Reading the meeting handout about "*hosting annual or regional meetings/exhibits*" makes me wonder if the intent is to be the Center for Suburban Horticulture in competition with the Center for Urban Horticulture across Lake Washington? Could we cooperate instead?
33. At the meeting, we heard about the new 7,000 square foot structure going in at VanDusen Garden. Is the purpose to be another VanDusen, which is currently working with \$20 million to rejuvenate? Considering the population, demographics, and tax base of Vancouver, BC, is this realistic? Also consider the topography of those 55 acres and how long they have been under cultivation. BBG already emulates VanDusen with the *Garden d'Lights*.
34. The meeting handout mentioned that the Asian community has expressed interest in developing an Eastern Garden at BBG. We look forward to hearing more about this garden. Will they be redesigning the Yao Garden as well? The tentative Eastern Garden site on the northwest edge of the pond in Option A might be important wildlife habitat, but that would be identified in the survey. Is there an alternative space available? Is the 16,000 square foot area contemplated for the Eastern Garden comparable to the size of the Yao Garden?
35. Specifically, what is the difference in square footage (of proposed buildings and parking lot) between the current preferred alternative and the three options presented on October 25, 2007?
36. Do citizens have a say in whether Sharps Cabin is moved? This question was a heading on page 35 of my December 8th letter. In the same section was a request to "Please ask the citizens." The January 8th task force response was, "*We are consulting with the Eastside Heritage Center to explore programming for Sharp Cabin. Margot Blacker, former*

council woman, was instrumental in locating the Cabin at the BBG and is working with us through the EHC. We are exploring relocating the cabin closer to the EHC (but still remain in the Garden) and the EHC would create and maintain temporary exhibits that would rotate throughout the year, celebrating the history of Wilburton Hill. This idea is very much in keeping with recommendations in the Parks Interpretive Master Plan” Does this mean “no”? What and where is the Interpretive Master Plan?

Before Proceeding

37. After listening to so many people around town, via e-mail, and at the meeting, my impression is that we seem to be getting ahead of ourselves with the beautiful drawings from JGM. It seems that we citizens are much earlier in the process. Until you asked us to attend this series of public meetings, it had been years since the average citizen was asked to comment on anything going on at BBG. Some of us who attended the public meetings in 1988 don't remember being invited to any meetings since BBG opened. Frequently asked questions: “Did we miss something” and “what master plan?”

Although JGM consultants' graphics are stunning, we citizens might need a “reality check” and begin with the “as-is” aerial view done by city GIS staff or even something so simple as a Google map hybrid view. That way, there is no wondering about what scale is being used; in fact, GIS engineers can provide measurements for existing garden features and show the slopes on the existing trails which would be easier for us citizens to recognize. If the meeting is at City Hall, perhaps a GIS analyst could be present with real-time answers on the screen.

People get confused with all the colored circles and boxes as placeholders (not necessarily reflecting true scale), green arrows for views, red lines for grade steeper than 5%, red arrows for something else. For the next meeting, it might be more effective to have GIS or IT print large GIS maps or Google hybrid maps, identify existing garden features on those maps with a numeric legend, bring a large stack of post-it notes in various shapes and sizes, and let nature take its course. Or you might choose a more structured approach. At this point in the garden's history, it's important to have a review of where we are, then get a sense of what the community needs in its parks.

38. It seems that the task force wants to proceed with more buildings and parking at BBG whether citizens agree with the plans or not. So keep the words of Peter Busby in mind. The Shorts home exemplifies this ideal for its time.

The future of Environmental design rests in the exploration of the boundary between man and nature. Buildings have for too long, been the enclosures that kept us apart from nature. Now here we have a chance to show the way into the future, buildings that are a part of nature, united with the ecological systems around them. In nature there is no waste, no garbage, no pollution. Imagine a future ... where buildings are part of the ecological systems around them, where man and nature rest peacefully together.

Further, any development must be carbon neutral and achieve energy self-sufficiency, using proven technology from zero net energy demonstration projects currently underway in Bellevue and Issaquah.

39. Reduce the proposed square footage for buildings and parking by entering cooperative use agreements for space in other city properties and the Bellevue Public Schools, which have plenty of off-hours parking and which were designed for classes and large gatherings. This fits with the partnership described in Bellevue's *Parks & Open Space System Plan*: "School sites have traditionally been considered an integral part of meeting a community's park and recreation needs. The City's longstanding partnership with the Bellevue School District has enabled school facilities to function even more strongly in this role. School sites present excellent opportunities to provide facilities typical of neighborhood and community parks." Consider the creative approach taken by Bellevue Youth Theater. If *Garden d'Lights* is a major driving force for more space, are there Bellevue-owned community centers to accommodate this ever-growing activity?

40. Clearly identify implementation phases on a timeline with gate reviews. We were told at the January 17th meeting that there "is no answer for timing." If so, it is too early to ask for citizens and the City to approve the plans. Priorities and implementation phases need to be identified. At the meeting, we were told that the three most important are the two gardens (hanging and sun terrace) and the visitors center.

41. Involve other city departments and coordinate with other public agencies during the concept and design development phase, specifically the City of Bellevue Transportation Department, the Police Department traffic and crime prevention units, and the Utilities Department Storm Water and Surface Runoff Division on site selection and mitigation.

To repeat my statement from earlier public comment submitted December 8th: "Storm Water and Surface Runoff staff would be helpful in reviewing drainage and runoff implications of planned development at BBG. They are experts at mitigation efforts and could evaluate the current situation to improve drainage and reduce erosion." The January 8th task force reply was not responsive to the specific issue, stating, "We are fortunate to have a partnership with Bellevue Utilities in the Waterwise Garden project and have consulted with them regarding programming our new visitor center (as we have with all Garden partner groups). We are committed to incorporating good gardening practices, as demonstrated in the Waterwise Garden, throughout the Garden and the entire Bellevue Parks System."

My point is for BBG to get expert input during concept and design, not only for the landscape but the hardscape. Given the current situation in King County, I recommend you also consult with public health officials on proposed water features.

42. Ask the schoolchildren of Bellevue how they would like the park to be in 2020. Ask the Network on Aging about their needs and wishes for better access to a wooded setting for elders who still hike, but have trouble with slopes. Give both the children and the elderly the opportunity to review your plans. In response to my earlier suggestion to

consult with the Network on Aging, the task force discussed senior volunteerism and ADA compliance instead of addressing the issue.

43. Develop and implement a specific plan item to increase or restore the tree canopy to 1986 levels.
44. In the master plan update, include specific, detailed plans for how BBG will work with its many garden partners.
45. Rather than repeating each concern listed in previous written public comment, this feedback incorporates by reference citizen comments, suggestions, and concerns documented in my letter of December 8, 2007, and Dr. Neil Huber's letter of December 13, 2007. The task force January 8th response provided additional information, but often did not address the issues being raised in the December 8th public comment. (The Sharps Cabin dialogue is one of many examples.) The January 17th public meeting addressed some of the issues, as noted in "Positive Steps" (2 though 12).
46. Please explain why citizens were not shown the proposed programming for BBG at the January 17th meeting. When I checked the BBG parks planning webpage January 23rd for meeting minutes, they had not been posted. But there was a new posting, which was generated as a PDF file shortly before 10 a.m. on January 22, 2008. At the bottom of the page is a statement "Revised January 17, 2008." Certainly the task force would agree that citizens would have had many comments if they had seen this at the public meeting. It does not reflect what the community was telling the task force.

Can you imagine the public response if we had seen this at the January 17th meeting? A public park with no picnicking allowed? Or that there are plans to renovate the Shorts home to bring it up to code for public food service? (This is completely objectionable if there are new buildings being built, which already have space designated for catering.) We learned at the January 17th meeting that the classrooms marked on Option A also covered meeting space (perhaps in a multistory configuration?). On the programming proposal, we see plans for a theatre configuration as well.

47. In fact, we are still waiting for meeting minutes from October 25, 2007, since the posting is a partial list of comments made at the meeting and does not include what was presented by the task force that evening. There has been no response to a previous inquiry about this omission; it's possible that the PDF generator software saved only one page of multi-page meeting minutes.

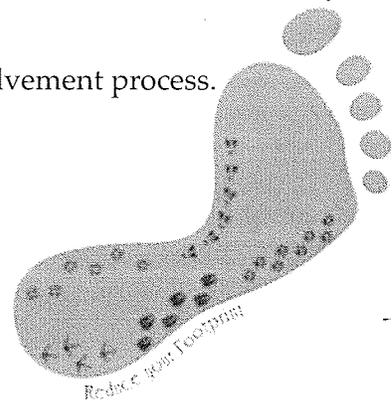
All the best to you as you expand the scope of the public involvement process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Jo Scott



Proposed Programming - Bellevue Botanical Garden

COPY

Visitor Services Center

Function: Visual/Physical Sense of Entry, Greeting and Orientation

Components: Tour gathering place; way-finding; interpretation, small exhibition; donor recognition; gift shop (and shop support); restrooms

Description:

Located at the desired entrance to the BBG, this building, staffed by volunteer greeters and docents, gives visitors their first impression of the Garden. It is visually stunning, well integrated into the topography of the site, and fully accessible. Visitors are welcomed, oriented, and encouraged to visit the gift shop. They have access to garden guides, maps and other print materials. A small exhibition space allows rotation of interpretive displays consistent with BBG education program objectives and areas of current special interest within the garden. This is where all garden tours begin and end, with room for docents to greet and orient their tour groups before heading into the garden.

Shorts Center

Function: Visitor Amenity

Components: Restrooms; food service; resource center (reference library, computer stations)

Description:

We envision a comfortable, welcoming space for visitors to enjoy "light fare" in a small café, along with access to computer stations and small reference library. This space is not suitable for exhibitions, lectures or interpretive displays. Rather, it is a "sweet spot" from which to enjoy views of the garden, seek shelter, linger over horticultural and botanical publications, and access our searchable on-line database. We anticipate very limited modifications to the existing Shorts house, mostly to accommodate bringing the kitchen up to code to allow public food service. Picnicking will not be allowed within the Garden, with food limited to this space.

Education Center

Function: Education, Special Event, Administrative

Components: Classroom/workshop/meeting; administrative offices; restrooms; storage; catering kitchen

Description:

We envision a space that is as modular and flexible as possible to accommodate a broad spectrum of multipurpose use, beautifully designed to be in keeping with large-residential scale, and which opens out onto courtyard space to blur the line between indoor/outdoor and gives the sense of meeting "in the garden."

While the space we specify has the capacity to seat a maximum of 180-200 in a theater-style configuration, we anticipate a broad spectrum of mission-based programming to include adult education programs, workshops, expanded Living Lab children's education program, exhibitions, fund-raising events, plant shows and sales that would use all the space but with far fewer people. Exhibit/gallery use would draw a steady flow of people, including the casual visitor, through the building. In addition, we expect a modular design to allow multiple concurrent uses for smaller groups in either workshop, conference, or theatre style configurations within partitioned spaces.

Large lectures, regional meetings, and other larger events would be possible, but we concur with concerns that events which draw 200 people will impact parking for the casual visitor. We are committed to developing program management plans which include limiting those kinds of events to evenings, winter daytimes, and other non-peak visitation times. We can build that type of program planning with limits to frequency, as well as timing.

A word about Garden d'Lights: while parking constraints will prohibit scheduling additional evening events during this time, we recognize this as an opportunity to provide a welcoming space to Garden d'Lights visitors, and may intentionally direct casual visitors to this building during Garden d'Lights. The opportunity to re-institute holiday entertainment, now missed by so many long-time Garden d'Lights devotees, may become a tool we can use to help even out visitation throughout December, for example: by offering popular entertainment mid-week, early in the season, and other "slow" times.

As is consistent with current Garden policy, weddings and other private party rentals would not be an appropriate use of the Garden.

Revised January 17, 2008

from BBG master plan webpage