

Burke Gilman Trail Redevelopment Project
March 21, 2006 Citizens Advisory Group Meeting

Meeting Summary



King County

Meeting Attendees

CAG Members

Kate Comtois
Gary Elmer
Tom French
Mark Gibbons
Sandy Koppenol
Michelle LeMoine
Dean Peterson
Jon Skamser
Alison Starling
Stuart Strand
Jeff Weissman
Mark Withers

King County Staff

Kevin Brown
Rob Foxworthy

Design Staff

Kristin Lohse
Terry Reckord

Facilitation Staff

Maureen Dunn
Margaret Norton-Arnold

Welcome and Overview

Margaret Norton-Arnold

Margaret welcomed CAG members and explained that the primary purpose of the meeting was to review the results of the March 14 property owners public workshop. The following handouts were distributed: meeting agenda, draft summary of the property owners meeting, the CAG's 2006 schedule, and a revised charter/mission statement for the group.

Public Comment

The one audience member who commented said she had been impressed with the property owners meeting. She asked if the trail widths shown on the drawings posted at that meeting did, indeed, represent the final design widths proposed for the trail. Terry Reckord said that final widths had not yet been determined; they will be finalized over the next several months,

as the design is further developed. As CAG members are already aware, it may be difficult to achieve the preferred widths in all areas of the trail.

Property Owners Meeting

Terry Reckord

Terry Reckord reported on the March 14 property owners meeting. Approximately 190 residents who own property abutting the trail along the two-mile segment received invitational postcards to the public workshop. Participants were asked to identify their home on a trail map with a green sticker; based on these stickers there was representation from all of the segments that are included in the trail improvement project. Approximately 65 people attended the meeting, and were able to speak directly with the design staff about key elements of their properties and the ways in which those properties intersect with the trail. Once it is finalized, the meeting report will be posted on the project website.

Key issues expressed at the meeting included concerns about the speed of cyclists through the area, and the degree to which a wider trail might encourage even higher speeds. Vegetation, fencing, and privacy concerns were raised. Driveway stop signs currently posted on the trail are proposed to be removed, and a number of property owners are concerned about that, as well as about how the design will enable greater ease of access and/or protection for both cyclists and drivers. Drainage is another issue, with questions raised about how drainage problems might be solved through better design.

In response to the questions raised and information received, Terry said, his team will now begin more detailed field and realignment work to take the trail design to its next phase, which will include many more specifics than the base maps used for this first meeting.

Once this second phase of design work is completed, it will be reviewed by the CAG, property owners, and the general public. Based on the comments received at this phase, further refinements will be made. The trail design is due to be “final and complete” in late summer 2006.

CAG Discussion

Right-of-way

One CAG member was concerned about where the right-of-way was located; Terry noted that the right-of-way was delineated on the maps used at the meetings, and that the design team is using that information as its definitive point of reference.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

CAG members wanted to make certain that all members of the general public, not just property owners, are informed about and involved in the trail redesign process. Margaret responded that a newsletter is in the works that will be distributed to an extensive mailing list. One member suggested that the website be expanded so that it is very clear when, and how, people can become involved. The Lake Forest Park "Town Crier" should also be used to broadly disseminate information. The suggestion was made that property owners in Sheridan Beach be included on the mailing list, since trail redevelopment will have impacts on that area, as well.

Several CAG members thought it was very important to emphasize that the design is not yet final. There was confusion at the property owners meeting, they said, about which stage of design we are actually in. People may think that what they saw on the maps is final and either be very upset by those drawings, or relieved in some way by the drawings and feel that they no longer have to participate in the process. Margaret said that she would make certain the newsletter very clearly delineates all phases of both the design and the public involvement process.

CAG members further recommended that the newsletter be placed along the trail for users to read, and also suggested that the newsletter contain safety information regarding bicycle speeds and the yield/stop signs at intersections.

Terry noted that several property owners had called to set up individual meetings with him. His preference is to continue through the next phase of design and then meet with smaller groups of property owners if it is evident that those meetings would be beneficial to the overall design process and to the project as a whole. In response to a question, Terry said that it will not always be possible to notify residents when design or other consultant team members are active along the trail completing their field work, but that the team will try to provide this information when it is possible to do so.

Vegetation

Several CAG members were concerned about vegetation in private yards that provides screening and security from the trail, and wanted to know if vegetation removed during construction would be replanted. The County will discuss this issue, but most likely if the vegetation is on public land it will not be replanted. The overarching goal, however, will be to remove only what is necessary in order to make the trail improvements. CAG members suggested that nurseries and/or gardening organizations be contacted about these plants, as they may be interested in saving them. Construction will begin in late spring 2007, which is a good time to move and transplant vegetation.

Trail Use Policies

There was considerable discussion about the fact that some cyclists speed on the trail. One CAG member asked if the design team is responsible for designing the trail in a way that can control bike speeds. Terry responded that his team is responsible for designing safe sight distances, which enable cyclists to see where they are going and to be able to respond earlier if there are slower users up ahead on the trail. While he cannot guarantee that a wider trail will not encourage more speeding, he does assert that improved sight distances will, on the whole, make the trail a safer experience for everyone.

The concern was expressed that a driver who hits a cyclist while pulling into or out of a driveway would always be held liable for the accident and any injuries. Terry responded that this is not always the case; either the cyclist or driver could be liable depending on the situation. Cyclists traveling a high speeds or who ignore yield/stop signs may very well be liable for accidents.

CAG members were enthusiastic about partnering with the Cascade Bicycle Club to promote greater education and safety along the trail. Several CAG members are also cyclists and belong to this Club. Efforts will be made to invite the Club to an upcoming CAG meeting and/or ask them to attend and present at an upcoming public meeting. Some members thought that signage along the trail should also be used since not all cyclists belong to bike clubs and it would change the feel of the trail. Furthermore, Cascade bike club members could volunteer to ride the trail and educate users on riding safely. Margaret said she would follow up with King County staff regarding this possibility.

The question of enforcement of trail speeds was also raised. King County currently promotes an education program aimed at schools, drivers, and the region's bike clubs. The County is also researching the potential (and budgetary impacts) of installing "radar-type" speed signs along the trail to warn cyclists when they are moving beyond the posted speed.

Upcoming Schedule and Groundrules

Margaret Norton-Arnold

Margaret distributed the upcoming CAG schedule, along with a set of revised group groundrules and guiding principles. Most of the language in these groundrules was used in the first charter document developed for the committee; this document was expanded to include the roster of members as well as a few additions to the groundrules. One notable addition is that members make a pledge not to share committee documents with the public until members have agreed that the document is final; draft versions of the committee's first phase report, for example, had been emailed to the Lake Forest Park City Council. Members

agreed that draft documents would not be emailed until all members could agree on a final version.

One member noted that CAG meeting minutes had not been posted on the website since June 2005. Margaret responded that all meetings from now on would be summarized in a brief report and posted on the website.

The next two CAG meetings are scheduled for May 16 and July 18, 2006.