

Burke-Gilman Trail Redevelopment Study Citizens Advisory Group

Minutes of April 19, 2005

CAG members present: Jeff Weissman, Dean Peterson, Sandy Koppenol, Alison Starling, Tim Ahern, Tom French, Gary Elmer, Mark Withers, Jon Skamser, Michelle LeMoine, Mark Gibbons, Stuart Strand.

Handouts:

- Draft minutes 3-15-05
- Response to CAG questions from 3-15 meeting
- Summary of public comment
- Burke Gilman Trail Expansion Arborist's Report
- Burke Gilman Trail Wildlife Study
- Burke Gilman Trail Wetlands and Aquatic Areas
- Preliminary Drainage Analysis
- Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation

Welcoming remarks: Brooke Bascom, King County

Public comment

- Dave Crawford, 17230 Brookside in Kenmore, delivered public testimony
- He is concerned about the underpass being eliminated at 73rd NE
- He asked for support at a hearing 1 month from the CAG meeting
- He said he is interested in reasonable traffic flow, anything that will benefit will benefit all of us
- He gave some history of how he became interested in this issue – he used to belong to the Lake Forest Park Rotary years ago, was looking for project, saw a need for the underpass and began lobbying the county.
- When presented with a petition supporting the underpass option, the county said it would support any option that wasn't grade level crossing.
- Now the underpass has been eliminated as an option due to its \$3 million price tag
- Grade level crossing as proposed may be dangerous and cause traffic
- The King County Executive in his March 21st State of the County said he is committed to safe trails but this is being eliminated due to cost
- Mr. Crawford said he believes the 73rd NE underpass is over-engineered and could be done for less
- He submitted his written public testimony for the CAG, copies were made, distributed to CAG members and put at the back of the room on the public handout table.

Written responses to CAG questions

- Clarification: Alison clarified her question was "are there stop signs at private driveways anywhere else along the trail that stop trail users---does this set a precedent?"
- Correction: minutes should have stated a design speed wherever possible.
- Some CAG members believe the sight distances in the Transpo Group report were overly conservative and may cause unnecessary changes on the trail such as removing more vegetation than necessary. Jessie said Transpo is clarifying the sight distances as well as other issues noted.
- Dean said in its study, Transpo measured traffic at two intersections. In a 12 hour period they counted 1,000 trail user and 390 vehicle crossings. Their coefficient says each house generated 10 crossing per house. With more than 200 houses, 10 trips per house is 2000, much more than what Transpo said.
- Several CAG members clarified for Dean that the coefficient applies to trail crossing and not houses. Many houses use the same trail crossing.
- Comments from Jon S.
The posted speed limit can be set arbitrarily without regard to the design speed. It is usually set below design speed and most likely not set above design speed.
I think we should focus on what the Transpo Group is recommending, design speed and that they have made no recommendation on posted speed.
I would like to see the King County Parks guidelines for posted speeds on bike paths with some discussion on how these guidelines would be applied to the BGT in Lake Forest Park.
- Comments from Tim A:

- 1) In any upgrade to the BG Trail it should be a high priority to make sure that drainage is constructed and maintained in a manner that can handle the run-off especially in the south end of the area near 145th street. The trail should be constructed in a manner to improve the drainage situation and not have an adverse effect on it.
- 2) Maintenance of the entire right of way should include such things as removal of the non-native ivy on the trees is done.

Summary of public comment

- Diane Steen presented a summary of public comment on the redevelopment of the trail previously gathered
- Public comment included:
 - 5/4/00 Public meeting held by Lake Forest Park
 - 1/26/00 Meeting with LFP staff and County Parks staff
 - 10/8/03 King County public meeting held at LFP City Hall
 - Green comment sheet distributed at 10/8/03 public meeting (and on Parks website)
 - Emails received
 - Letters received
- Alison commented the survey has nothing about pedestrian behavior and is a very unscientific survey instrument.
- Dean commented the Cascade Bicycle Club has 5000 members and homeowners only 200 homes. CBC can send the survey to its members and organize. He believes comments made are heavily oriented toward cyclists.
- Gary pointed out responses are not cyclist-loaded, but weigh more toward homeowners.
- Jessie clarified the public comment form was given to the public at the first County meeting, and reflected previous issues/comments raised by prior meetings in LFP.

Arborist report

- Tina Cohen presented her findings of trees in the KC right-of-way (ROW)
- At the end of March Tina walked the trail from Log Boom Park down to 146th and looked at all trees 6 inches in diameter and larger--consistent with Lake Forest Park regulations.
- All trees in the study are on the King County ROW
- This was done as a survey to get an idea of general health of the trees. As this was not a detailed survey, some trees will need to be revisited. This is a record of apparent health.
- Her general assessment is that most trees are healthy.
- She defined her terminology:
 - Healthy means nothing apparently wrong with tree
 - Healthy (moderate) means some problems but not major problem
 - Healthy pending means the tree is covered w/ ivy or couldn't be evaluated
 - Healthy no access means the tree is in the King County right of way, but locked behind a fence or otherwise inaccessible to the public
 - Unhealthy topped means that though they are not dying currently, their longevity is compromised and all topped trees will decline and create hazard trees
 - Dead/declining was used for one tree, though others which would be rated dead/declining were located up steep slopes or otherwise out of assessment scope
- The conclusion from the survey and looking at all trees on the ROW is that most are well-suited to the site, most are healthy, though some will be too large when they reach maturity and many will break branches during wind and ice storms (cottonwoods, ashes esp.).
- Dominant species are cottonwoods, true ashes, non-native Austrian pines, non-native sycamores.
- Tim Ahern asked if a decision has been made to remove the ivy and voiced his preference that King County remove the ivy.
- The question was asked why a decision was made not to investigate trees on steep slope?
 - Tina said her scope was only trees that might be affected by widening the trail to the east. According to the Lake Forest Park code, trees on the slope will not be removed.
- Dean asked why the study was done
 - Tina said this is a standard procedure with any kind of redevelopment. Lake Forest Park will require information on how trees will be impacted by potential redevelopment.
- Tom French asked for clarification on the mandate of the study and Jessie directed him to the report.
- Mark asked why 4-6 cottonwoods were removed

- Someone answered those were Lombardi poplars and don't have anything to do with the redevelopment.

Sensitive areas study

- Lizzie Zemke from Adolfsen presented the finding of the sensitive areas study (Lisa Krippner unavailable for tonight's meeting)
- The purpose of the study was to identify and describe environmentally sensitive areas along trail within Lake Forest Park. Wetlands were not surveyed or formally delineated--this was a reconnaissance-level effort
- Work consisted of surveying the trail looking for areas that met wetland conditions based on Lake Forest Park code and national guidelines
- Specific plants, soils, and hydrology indicate wetlands. Six different wetlands were identified:
 - Area 14 lake side of Log Boom Park
 - All others were near McAleer and Lyon creeks.
- It is likely that buffers for wetlands A and B will extend into ROW
- Class 3 wetlands require a 50 ft. setback.
- Jeff asked for clarification on Log Boom Park in Kenmore and if those codes applied
 - Yes
- The last thing identified was ditches.
- Both LFP and Kenmore are both updating their codes, though they've not passed yet.

Wildlife study

- Lizzie Zemke also presented the finding of the wildlife study.
- The study found low percentage of native habitat—it did not reveal important wildlife around the trail. It mostly provides same habitat as a backyard would provide, i.e. habitat for song birds.
- The question was asked that if something is classified a class 2 or 3 wetland does that mean no development can happen?
 - Under Lake Forest Park ordinance mitigation would have to happen
- Alison asked if current groundwater seeps are covered under LFP code?
- A question was asked about the eagle nest and if that is important wildlife.
 - Lizzie said the known eagle nest is in Myrtle Edwards Park and while conceivably an eagle could perch along the trail, nothing on ROW would impact it. Habitat along trail is not considered vital to the eagle.
- Alison asked if a heron rookery falls under important wildlife protections. Lizzie said she doesn't believe LFP has specific heron protection regulations. Jessie asked group to email her with any questions after reading the reports.

Drainage analysis

- Ken Nilsen from PACE Engineers presented the preliminary drainage analysis
- The scope of their work was to identify drainage basins crossing the trail using KC GIS maps
- Fourteen (14) drainage basins were identified that cross the Burke-Gilman Trail with the largest being the McAleer Creek and Lyon Creek drainage basins
- Seventeen (17) culverts are associated with perpendicular crossing of the trails
- They looked at capacities, detention/water quality issues which exist by looking at predicted runoff and pervious and impervious surfaces.
- A few lots that have not been developed yet, but the area was assumed to be built out in the study.
- They used the KC SWM manual and the KCTRS model which takes 40 years of rainfall data to estimate flows, then computed 25/100 year flows for each drainage basin crossing the trail.
- Then they looked at the capacity of existing culverts to see if there is sufficient capacity to handle flow and if additional development would aggravate any existing problems
- There were a number of culverts that couldn't be identified because of brush/etc. or were on private property—so they made the assumption that there is a 1% slope along them.
- They then used hydrological analysis to assess capacities.
- The first culvert doesn't have the capacity under the existing scenario. It will pass the 25 year flow but not beyond.
- All others appear to have sufficient capacity to serve areas they are serving.
- Drainage basin 8 has three culverts at the bottom--12 inch culverts-- which it obviously cannot handle but PACE couldn't find. This will require more analysis. This basin is by far the largest basin other than McAleer/Lyons Creek basins.

- As we get into detailed design this will need to be looked at more closely.
- Stuart said he knows that homeowner has had some problem with this culvert, which goes under the house. Culverts are way over capacity because homeowner has had flooding issues.
- Researched all WSDOT as-builts and found that drainage basins for the most part go from Bothell Way to lake.
- Regarding retention/detention requirements, LFP and Kenmore adopted the KCSWM manual. Lake Washington is classed as a receiving body so it is exempt from requirements for detention.
- Trail will be exempt from detention and water quality treatment per the SWM manual.
- Question: What about culvert that begins and ends elsewhere?
- Answer: This requires research to see if there's an easement, etc. If not, then some sort of agreement will need to be entered into with landowner? There is a larger issue here with drainage—this is outside of scope of study.
- Question: Are ditches drainage or collection?
- Answer: for most part, they drain to culverts, though some may be depressional. Lizzie Zemke confirmed.
- Jon asked if we know if where ditches drain.
 - Most go to culvert crossings.
- Tim commented he hopes the CAG pays attention to maintenance of ditches in its recommendations because Parks hasn't maintained them properly and they cause major problems. This needs to be addressed by ongoing maintenance by Parks. It might impact the kind of trail improvement that can be made because of the impact on ongoing maintenance costs.
- Alison asked if a culvert change could affect water temperature and flow to Lake, and thus affect fish habitat.
 - Detention is a function of flow control—the temperature of water coming off warm pavement is insignificant because of the large size of Lake Washington.

Geotechnical report

- Brad Thurber of HWA presented the geotechnical report.
- Purpose of the preliminary report was to identify general geotechnical issues associated with widening and other improvements.
- For the most part widening the pavement and building a separate soft surface trail would require widening of the old railroad embankment with new cuts and fills
- Findings were based on reconnaissance of trail, geology, a literature review and review of maps combined with consultant knowledge, geomorphology, and determining immediate trail geometry, adjacent slope and driveways
- They identified issues associated with widening the trail—downslope widening and upslope widening
- With downslope widening, the main issues are the stability of the downslope, the difference in settlement between new fill and existing. Both issues can be addressed in design phase.
- Depending on the situation, you can widen with fill and also use retaining walls (which are more expensive)..
- Widening upslope is geotechnically feasible, but in certain areas (as cited in earlier slope study provided to the CAG) it will be more expensive.
- Retaining wall types have different costs and construction times, some require more excavation than others.
- 5 new types of walls include (from simplest to more difficult): rockery (a quasi-engineered wall); ecology block wall (a gravity block wall); MSE (mechanically stabilized earth) wall; concrete cantilever wall; soldier pile wall; and sheet pile wall. A soldier pile wall is major surgery—can do it but upslope slides will still occur.
- Ditches will possibly need to be reconfigured with upslope widening.
- In both directions (upslope and downslope) walls can be built.
- Dean asked how wide did they tell you the trail might be?
 - Brad answered that we are looking at what is possible.
- Jessie clarified the scope was just to look at tools.
- Dean asked which way the consultant thought would be most advisable to move--east or west?
 - Brad said that ultimately it becomes decision-making process.
- Sandy commented one decision factor on which way the project will go will be cost--would this group be involved in that decision?
 - Jessie said ultimately money is always a factor and recommendations will be taken into consideration.
- Dean asked if a budget has been established yet.
 - Jessie said we don't have a project yet in order to develop a budget.

- Jessie reiterated that we have given group lots of detailed information—please send any questions to her once they review.

Questions:

- The report from the Transpo Group (p.9) says no accidents were found in a search of police records – did the consultants search for accidents on streets crossing the trail? Revisit the number of accidents on the trail looking at EMS responses, asking police how accidents are usually reported and ask Medic One how they report the information.
- Bicycle/bicyclist and bicycle/pedestrian accidents matter, too, in the design so how is that reported?
- Did bollards ever cause an accident?
- In the wetlands report are the buffers referenced still current per the new CAO?
- Will part of process discuss other places with similar projects? Will it report on best practices from other areas that have dealt with these same issues?
- Please show an apples to apples comparison of car crossing and bike crossings
- Are current groundwater seeps covered under Lake Forest Park sensitive area ordinances?