

Ravenna-Bryant

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

November 2005 Issue

STATE ROUTE 520

RBCA, UW and Northeast Neighborhoods Oppose Plan For Additional Bridge Crossing Union Bay and the Arboretum

by Larry Sinnott

The SR 520 bridge replacement timeline now calls for the Department of Transportation to identify its preferred alternative sometime in January or February 2006, with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement due in May '06. WSDOT's official reason for the latest delay is traffic analysis of the late developing "New Montlake Alternative." This alternative totally removes the Montlake interchange, and places it on columns above Marsh Island in the Arboretum. The upper level of this interchange would have three stop lights to control traffic to the connecting high-level bridge, over the Montlake Cut, into the Husky parking lot, and on to an expanded intersection at Pacific Street. This wholesale change in traffic patterns is more than a little different than previous plans.

The UW Regents have just released a statement to the press and to WSDOT that this proposal is "unacceptable." This alternative would make going through Montlake a whole lot worse. Northeast residents going to I-5 would go via double left turn lanes at Pacific, out to a stop light above Marsh Island, where they would turn right to travel above Montlake and Portage Bay, back to I-5. Those double left turn lanes at Pacific are likely to cause traffic backups even farther beyond University Village than they do today. And when that happens, traffic will divert to NE 75th St. to get to I-5, making that speedway even worse than it is today. This alternative was conceived by residents on Shelby and Hamlin Streets in the Montlake neighborhood, and while it

certainly improves their traffic situation, it also happens to make ours much worse.

If you like parks, then you might be concerned with the disastrous impacts of this proposal on the Arboretum. Not only does it move the entire Montlake interchange into the wetlands, it makes Lake Washington Blvd., (a two lane, curbed roadway shared with bicycles), the main traffic approach to and from the south. The UW Regents' press release quotes WSDOT as predicting a 49 percent increase in traffic on Lake Washington Blvd., which now handles 19,000 cars per day while 23rd Ave, the parallel 4-lane arterial, handles 18,700. The Arboretum has spent the last ten years developing its Master Plan for the new century, and just when they need to ask for donations and grants, here comes the 520 re-build. This begins to look a lot like what Aurora Avenue did to Woodland Park. The historic Arboretum clearly suffers under this alternative.

This proposal will effectively harm our neighborhoods and the Arboretum.

The new governor changed the approval process for major highway projects to allow affected cities to have a major say in what gets built. It is still up to the City Council, the mayor, Seattle Dept. of Transportation, and Seattle Parks Dept., to decide what gets built here. And State Secretary of Transportation McDonald and Governor Gregoire also will weigh in. But it is really up to you to tell these officials if you like the way things are going with this "New Montlake Alternative."

Board member Larry Sinnott follows transportation issues on behalf of RBCA.

FIRE STATION NO. 38

Proposed Relocation Fires Up Some Community Members

When it was announced that Fire Station 38 would be moving as part of the 2003 Fire Facilities Levy, northeast neighborhoods served by the station were worried. Chief among the concerns was the new location wouldn't be as central to its primary response area as its current spot at NE 55th St. and 33rd Ave. NE. The station serves Bryant, Ravenna, Hawthorne Hills, Laurelhurst, View Ridge, Windermere, and Wedgwood.

So when the City chose a location only seven blocks east, at NE 55th and 40th NE, it seemed a practical option for the new station. The announcement, though, has set off a bit of a firestorm among some living and doing business near the proposed site. These alarmed neighbors cite concerns such as increased noise and traffic, less parking, and potentially lower property values.

The outcry led to another community meeting on November 2. The City Council will likely take up the subject in early 2006. The City may also assess whether the existing station might be remodeled so that it would be sufficient.

The proposed station will accommodate modern fire-fighting equipment, and provide the full array of services expected of a one-engine firehouse. The current station 38 is one of the smallest in the system. RBCA favors the proposed location because it will adequately serve our neighborhoods with an enhanced and modern station. If you have opinions on this matter, or want more information, contact Ellen Hansen at 206-386-0525.

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME

New Efforts to Curb Car Thefts

Reported car thefts in Seattle have continued to rise every month. Recently, though, the Seattle Police Department and the City Attorneys's Office have implemented a few trial programs in efforts to reduce this trend.

There are now a number of "bait cars" donated by insurance companies. These cars are equipped with GPS, a remote engine kill switch, and cameras. As soon as these cars are broken into, the car can be tracked. When police arrive, the engine can be shut off and the doors locked, catching the criminal.

There is also License Plate Reader Technology. When this is installed in a patrol car, it automatically takes photos of license plates and notifies the officer if that license is tagged as stolen. Several patrol vehicles are also equipped with the "LoJack Security System". If your car has the LoJack system and it's activated, it can be tracked by those officers and located.

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UW BIOTERRORISM LAB

UW Withdraws Application for Bioterrorism Facility

Due to community pressure and lack of funding, the University of Washington withdrew its \$25 million grant application to build a Level 3 Regional Biocontainment Laboratory (RBL) on land near Portage Bay.

The initial backlash surrounded the notification process; the application was made prior to public discussion of the safety and security issues that accompany such a facility. Subsequently the University held a number of public meetings.

At these meetings community members and citizens complained the densely-populated urban location was inappropriate for such a lab. It was noted that the proximity to a large body of water would make it even more devastating if deadly pathogens were released. Others worried the lab could become a terrorist target.

In July the University halted its application, citing challenges finding the additional \$35 million required to build the facility.

The RBCA Newsletter is published periodically by the Ravenna-Bryant Community Association. Articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board.

Board meetings are the second Wednesday of each month. All are welcome. If you wish to be on the agenda, please notify us at rbca@scn.org.

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RBCA membership dues are \$15/year. Dues cover the costs of operations and communications. Please send check to RBCA, 6527 29th Ave. NE, Seattle, 98115.

To subscribe to our e-mail list, send an e-mail to rbca@scn.org and ask to be added. Your e-mail address will not be shared with any group or commercial entity.

Car Thefts...

Continued from previous page

Through a partnership of the Seattle Police Department and Safeco Insurance, Seattle residents can purchase The Club, an anti-theft device, at a discount via the Seattle Neighborhood Group. Each Seattle resident can purchase two devices at the reduced price of \$20 a car, or \$25 for an SUV. Fill out the form at www.sngi.org/theclub.html

Car thieves will now be charged with a misdemeanor instead of a felony. This may not sound like a step toward combatting the problem, but in reality auto theft is among the least serious felony charges, with relatively minor sentences. Because of sentencing guidelines, it can take seven convictions before a felony sentence can reach a year. As a misdemeanor, though, a judge has more leeway and sentences can be one year, even after a first offense.

Car owners need to do their part to reduce auto thefts, too. In 50 percent of thefts the car was unlocked, and for 20 percent the keys were in the ignition.

RAVENNA PARK PLAYGROUND

Friend of Ravenna Playground Continues Fundraising Efforts

Friends of Ravenna Playground has raised over \$330,500 in cash, in-kind time and materials for the renovation of Ravenna Park's children's play area, located at 5520 Ravenna Ave. NE. The group is hard at work securing the additional \$183,000 needed to construct the new play area. Construction is planned between June and September, 2006.

The project aims to expand and upgrade the deteriorating playground, offering a diversity of play activities for children of all developmental abilities, eliminating existing safety hazards, and creating open and inviting community gathering spaces – all while respecting the history of this Olmsted legacy park.

The group is seeking additional volunteers to help raise the remainder of funds and finalize the design. For more information or to make a donation visit www.RavennaPlayground.org or contact Ella Thompson at (206) 527-4960.

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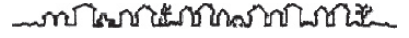
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You will get your name out to the neighborhood, and help RBCA cover its operating costs, including communicating with the community.

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Join the Ravenna-Bryant Community Association

RBCA and its members work on important issues for you. Like any organization, we want new contributing members, and need volunteers for tasks such as distributing the newsletter and working on community projects and concerns.

Annual dues are only \$15. Your dues help cover our operations, including printing and mailing newsletters. Return this form with your dues to: Ravenna-Bryant Community Association, 6527 29th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115. You will receive the newsletter and other information, and know you've made a contribution to your community.

Name _____

Address _____

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Areas of interest or concern _____

Ravenna-Bryant Community Association
6527 29th Avenue NE
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