

BANDS OF GREEN



A Preliminary Plan For
BOULEVARDS, TRAILS AND LINEAR PARKS
FOR SEATTLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF SEATTLE'S LINEAR PARKS



THE OLMSTED PLAN

When the Seattle Parks Board commissioned the City's first parks plan at the beginning of the century, they turned for help to the Olmsted Brothers of Massachusetts. During the next decade, the Olmsteds designed a spectacular system of parklands, scenic views and shorelines connected by a system of landscaped boulevards. These boulevards were more than thoroughfares, they were an essential part of the park system, designed to achieve many objectives: to allow the visitor to reach spectacular views of the mountains and water; to separate residential development from the shoreline, preserve the natural vegetation in ravines; give form and texture to surrounding neighborhoods; and provide "linear parks" through which visitors could travel for hours without leaving the countryside.

By using boulevards to create a sense of continuity, the brothers were building on the ideas of their famous father, Frederick Law Olmsted, who had designed New York's Central Park and Boston's Emerald Necklace. The senior Olmsted gave careful attention to the design of passageways within and between his parks, so that he could shape the experience of park visitors, leading them by circuitous routes to a seemingly endless series of discoveries within a confined space. Through this art, Olmsted greatly magnified the value of the limited open space available to the people of the city.

In New York City, Olmsted and his colleague Conrad Vaux applied these techniques within the hard edges of Central Park. Pathways for carriages (and later autos), horses, bicycles and pedestrians were separated to avoid conflict and offer the widest possible variety of experiences. Years later, Olmsted used the same principles to connect the diverse parklands of Boston. The result was Boston's Emerald Necklace, a continuous system of open space stretching 13 miles through the heart of the city.

Olmsted's sons applied their father's ideas to the rugged natural landscape of Seattle. In their first report to the Seattle Parks Commission, they described their initial concept with these words:

"Seattle possesses extraordinary landscape advantages in having a great abundance and variety of water views and views of wooded hills and distant mountains and snow-capped peaks. It also possesses within its boundaries, or close to them, some valuable remains of the original evergreen forests which covered the whole country, and which, aside from the grand size of some of the trees composing them, have a very dense and beautiful undergrowth.

In designing a system of parks and parkways the primary aim should be to secure and preserve for the use of the people as much as possible of these advantages of water and mountain views and of woodlands, well distributed and conveniently located. An ideal system would involve taking all the borders of the different bodies of water, except such as are needed or are likely to be needed hereafter for commerce, and to enlarge these fringes at convenient and suitable points, so as to include considerable bodies of woodland, as well as some fairly level land, which can be cleared and covered with grass for field sports and for the enjoyment of meadow scenery."

From these ideas, the Olmsteds developed a plan for park acquisitions and boulevard developments that created the core of Seattle's present system. Their vision was so comprehensive, in fact, that it included most of the recent additions to the Parks system, including Discovery, Gasworks and South Lake Union Parks.

The importance of the boulevards in the Olmsted Plan cannot be overstated. These "parkways" were the key to opening the natural wonders of the area for public enjoyment, and the Olmsteds believed that by doing so, Seattle could avoid the necessity of acquiring a large inland tract for a "central" park:

"Considering the extent of the land which should be secured in connection with the informal portions of the parkway above described, and considering the size and beauty of the several large natural bodies of water thus made available, and considering the existing parks and the semi-public pleasure grounds of the State University and Fort Lawton, it seems unnecessary to provide, for the period of a generation at least, one or more large parks corresponding in extent to the larger parks and reservations of many of the principal cities of the country."

From the beginning, then, Seattle's "linear parks" were a central feature of its open space system.

THE BOGUE PLAN

In 1911, Henry Bogue developed a proposed comprehensive plan for the City that would have extended the Olmsted park system to include what is now North Seattle and even the east side of Lake Washington. In fact, Bogue predicted that Seattle's metropolitan area would one day surround Lake Washington, and so his proposals for new boulevards extended well into the hinterlands. Perhaps his boldest recommendation was to preserve nearly all of Mercer Island in its natural state as a park 'befitting the grand city' he felt Seattle was destined to become. Unfortunately, the electorate did not share Bogue's vision, and like most of his dreams, the plan to make a park of Mercer Island was never realized. However, the recommendations of the Olmsteds (and a few of Bogue's lesser dreams) were supported by the citizens and much of the Olmsted Plan was implemented, creating a magnificent legacy on which to build.

NEW LINEAR PARKS

For many decades, the completed portions of the Olmsted Boulevard system remained Seattle's only linear parks. In the 1970's the idea re-surfaced with development of the Burke-Gilman Trail. This linear park, however, featured a pathway for bicycles and pedestrians rather than a road for automobiles. The new trail quickly gained popularity, partly because it preserved a de-facto greenbelt along the abandoned Burlington Northern right-of-way, connected major new parks, and provided a tie with the larger regional open space network. Most important, it extended Seattle's park system into an area of the City that previously had few public open space resources.

During the 1980's, the increasing popularity of running, cycling and walking encouraged the City to become more aggressive in seeking opportunities to create new linear parks. In 1988, the City developed a plan for "Open Space Systems along Lake Union, the Ship Canal and the Duwamish", which proposed a large network of recreational trails and preservation of the remaining greenbelt lands above the City's inland waterways. In the same year, the City secured a landmark agreement with Burlington Northern Railroad, assuring that unused railroad rights-of-way would be made available for trail development. A few months later, the Parks and Engineering Departments completed a mile-long extension of the Burke-Gilman Trail.

In November of 1989, the voters resoundingly approved a Regional Open Space Bond issue, providing Seattle's \$42 million for trail development and open space acquisition, and the City is now once again embarking on expansion of the linear park system.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

The new comprehensive plan for Seattle's Parks system will guide our actions in building that system during the next two decades. Our challenges are:

- to preserve the Olmsted legacy;
- to restore the continuity and quality of Seattle's linear parks where they have been harmed by urban development or by neglect;
- to extend the City's linear park system to neighborhoods that have been left out in the past; and
- to meet the changing needs of Seattle as it enters the twenty-first century.

Public opinion surveys and neighborhood workshops conducted as part of the comprehensive plan reflect broad public support for the enhancement of the linear park system, but that goal will not be easily achieved. Those planning today for the future of the system are not working on the far edges of a frontier community, but in the midst of a maturing city, with lands that have been through at least one - and often many - cycles of development. While some opportunities to preserve the natural landscape still exist, and should be seized, much of the effort will go toward reclaiming and "regreening" lands that have been used - or misused - for other purposes.

A close reading of history will show that the Olmsteds, too, wrestled with the conflict between nature and development, even at the edges of civilization. The record reveals their frustration with the obstacles imposed by man upon the landscape. Yet they and their supporters persevered, and Seattle is fortunate they did.

The conflicts ahead will be even more complicated. Those who advocate extending the system will be asked to settle for the bare minimum. Where landowners grant the right to develop trails at all, the rights of way are likely to be as narrow as possible, sometimes with chain link fences and even barbed wire lining the way. Where streets are proposed as boulevards, their value as linear parks will be weighed against the omnivorous demands of the automobile, and of course, against the costs of landscaping and maintenance.

Yet the advice of the Olmsteds to the Parks Commissioners of 1903 may still hold true:

"Financial limitations will make the complete carrying out of such an ideal impracticable, yet much can be done if public sentiment is aroused favorably, and if owners do not try to obtain every cent possible for the needed land, but are helpful and cooperative."

It is still possible to extend the Olmsted vision to neighborhoods that have been left out in the past, and to greatly improve the park system we have inherited. But it will require the City administration, neighborhood organizations, property owners, and other public agencies to work in concert to build a system that achieves the high standards of the Olmsted legacy.

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A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



Cedar River Associates was asked to prepare this preliminary study as part of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation's new comprehensive plan. The study is "preliminary" because there was simply not enough time or money to develop the detail required for a full-fledged plan for the City's boulevards, bikeways and walking trails for the next twenty years. Instead, we have prepared a plan in schematic form, with the hope that upcoming neighborhood workshops and public hearings on the Complan will sharpen the focus on these critical elements of Seattle's open space system.

To develop this preliminary plan, we relied very heavily on the "unfinished dreams" of others, from the Olmsted brothers to the Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Board, from the City's Office for Long Range Planning to the guide books of Harvey Manning. We paid special attention to the ideas that emerged from the first round of Complan neighborhood workshops last year, because they reflected the intimate knowledge of neighborhood resources that can only be gathered by close encounters with the land on which one lives and plays. And we tried, as much as possible, to be true to the spirit of the original Olmsted Plan.

GOALS

Our goal was simple: we sought to renew the original Olmsted vision of a beautiful and diverse system of parklands *thoroughly integrated* by linear parks. We believed that this vision, once achieved, would carry with it many benefits:

- it would beautify the city;
- encourage the public to venture to parks they seldom used;
- diversify and expand the routes available to walkers, hikers, runners, and cyclists;

- add greenery and character to city neighborhoods;
- improve the safety of public thoroughfares for cyclists and pedestrians;
- relieve overcrowding on existing trails and boulevards by expanding the available resources; and,
- knit together the various activity centers of the city.

DEFINITIONS

As we began, we found it necessary to answer some basic questions about the meaning of our terms:

WHAT IS A "LINEAR PARK"?

We suggest that this question can be answered as follows:

Seattle's linear parks are public rights-of-ways designated by the City as part of the open space system. They are intended to provide a path or roadway for pedestrians, cyclists, and/or motorists through a natural or landscaped corridor between major parks and activity centers, and to provide scenic views of the City and its natural environment.

This broad definition purposely begs the question of "standards" for the simple reason that the existing condition of Seattle's designated boulevards makes the question moot. Perhaps there are technical definitions of the ideal dimensions of a boulevard, for example, but if there are, Seattle's existing boulevard system surely would confound those definitions. We have existing City boulevards of widely varying widths, with and without medians, with and without formal landscaping, and so on. What characterizes Seattle's boulevards is simply that *they are treated with care as a part of our open space system, and aesthetic judgments take priority over the movement of vehicles.*

Of course there are useful standards for the various elements of our linear parks that should serve as guidelines for development, but they should be applied with respect for the unique conditions in each area of our city, and for community opinion.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED IN A BOULEVARD OR TRAIL?

Our Answer:

- A. **Destination:** *the linear park must lead to (or be) a major open space resource such as a park, shoreline, panoramic view or public activity center.*
- B. **Continuity:** *the route must flow to its destination(s) with a minimum of man-made obstacles. The way must be clearly marked, by landscaping if possible and with monuments or signs otherwise.*
- C. **Recreational Potential:** *the linear park must be designed to encourage recreational use as well as transportation. This means that pedestrians and cyclists should not be overwhelmed by multiple lanes of high-speed traffic. It also means that resting points and places of interest should occur frequently so the park can be enjoyed by strollers. Whenever possible, "loop routes" should be created, so cyclists, runners and walkers can return to their starting point by a different route.*

- D. *The Presence of Nature: boulevards and trails should be landscaped to reflect their important role in the City's open space system, and as a means of establishing continuity. Where these routes pass through natural areas and greenbelts, those areas should be preserved. There are segments of several existing bike trails in the city in which nature is barely evident. The "trail" consists of an asphalt path between chain link fences. If our system is to serve its multiple purposes, these gauntlets of grey must be replaced with more imaginative and natural solutions.*
- E. *Character: the identity of a linear park is rarely established solely with landscaping. Manmade elements - lightposts, seawalls, bridges, railings, fences, and buildings - play a critical role in establishing the "feel" of a linear park. Seattle has some wonderful examples, such as the western portion of Queen Anne Boulevard, where light standards and retaining walls have been designed to complement the neighborhood and the views of Puget Sound. There are many other areas of the City's existing boulevard system, however, that were not given the same attention to detail. The City should reinforce the unique character of our neighborhoods by carefully selecting the manmade elements to be incorporated in our linear parks, and using natural materials whenever possible.*
- F. *Safety: The system must be designed to protect the safety of its most vulnerable users. This suggests separating modes when possible and slowing motor vehicles when required to assure the bicyclists and pedestrians can safely share the right of way.*

METHODS

Within these definitions we developed our recommendations in the following way:

- First, we assembled as many existing plans for linear park elements as we could find. (Those we used are listed in Appendix A). Although a number of excellent plans for boulevards, bicycle routes and even hiking trails had been developed independently over the years, they had never been assembled as a single system.
- Once we had reviewed the various plans, we created a composite map, reflecting the system that would be created if all the various plans were implemented.
- With the composite map in hand, we visited each route to assess it's potential as a part of the City's open space system, and added or deleted elements as a result of our observations.
- We then reviewed our findings with certain key individuals who had been involved in creating some of the source material upon which we had relied, and
- Finally, we prepared a map and this narrative to describe our recommendations.

As you will see, the task became far more complex than we first imagined. To make the narrative and the map as easy to follow as possible we broke the city into areas and described all the linear park elements in each area before moving on. We also exercised poetic license in naming (or renaming) the elements of our proposed system, according to these rules:

- *any proposal that had its origins in the Olmsted Plan was given the name the Olmsteds originally intended.*
- *routes running generally north and south were called Boulevards, while those running east and west were called Parkways.*

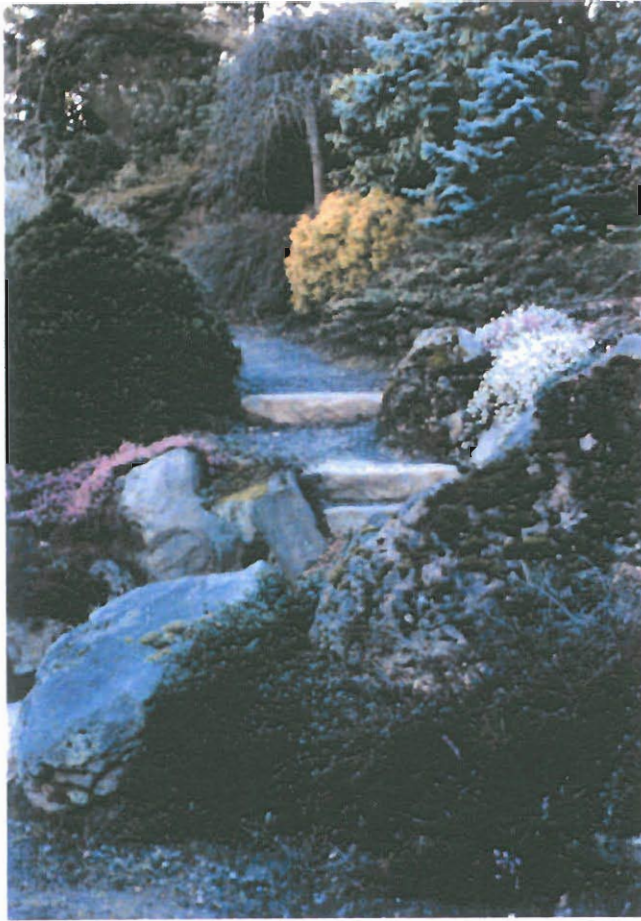
routes with numeric names were given more colorful titles.

In general, the routes we have identified as Boulevards and Parkways are intended to be shared by cyclists and motor vehicles unless separate parallel routes are designated on the map.

Bicycle trails are intended for use by all manner of muscle-powered transport - including strollers, runners and cyclists, unless separate parallel walking trails are provided; and

Walking trails are planned as the exclusive domain of the pedestrian.

Linear park elements originally conceived by the Olmsteds are marked with an asterisk; those conceived by Bogue with double asterisk.

PROPOSALSSOUTHEAST SEATTLE - (A)

1. THE LAKE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD SYSTEM:

The grand shoreline park that extends from Seward Park along Lake Washington Boulevard is Seattle's best known linear park. Developed early in the century almost precisely as the Olmsted's envisioned it, the Lake Washington Boulevard system has recently been improved by a series of restoration projects funded by the Seattle 1-2-3 Bond Issue. These projects have helped to restore the character and continuity of the boulevard, and provide wonderful examples of what could be done in other areas of the City.

Although it lacks the continuous shoreline access that characterizes the Boulevard to the north, Seward Park Avenue South is a beautiful route with water views along most of the distance to the city limits. There are three parks along the way, although access is sometimes difficult to find. Spot improvements that should be considered along this portion of the boulevard include:

- *stone markers like those recently placed along Interlaken to mark Seward Park Avenue South as a boulevard;*
- *definition of an entry route to Martha Washington Park;*
- *additional shoreline acquisitions through the Metro mitigation fund;*
- *a stronger connection to the route ascending Dead Horse Ravine, and control of the illegal dumping that occurs there.*

*2. BEACON BOULEVARD

The second Olmsted boulevard in southeast Seattle runs south along the ridge of Beacon Hill. Unlike the shoreline system, Beacon boulevard was never fully developed, and today it provides a major opportunity to improve the quality of the public open space in one of Seattle's most diverse and interesting communities. The right-of-way was originally planned as a formal boulevard, with a wide median for planting, but much of that median remains devoid of trees - or even grass. In the late 1970's the City landscaped a portion of the median, but the design is not very imaginative and like much of Beacon Hill, it is strangely devoid of trees.

At relatively modest expense, Beacon Boulevard could be completed. Specific improvements would include:

- *appropriate landscaping along the entire route;*
- *curbs in areas where they are needed to eliminate parking on the median;*
- *bicycle lanes along the entire route; and*
- *public art at appropriate locations.*

3. THE BEACON HILL TRAIL

This trail was popularized by Harvey Manning in his guide book for urban hikers (Footsore 1). It begins as an informal path through the greenbelt to the south of Jose Rizal Park and eventually opens out upon the wide green City Light right of way begins at Maple Hill Park and that extends South beyond the City limits. Even though utility towers rise along most of the route, the right-of-way has been recognized by the community as a great resource for its with rolling hills, broad meadows, and views of both the Olympics and Cascades.

- *We suggest that the Department work with the neighborhood, City Light (and possibly other jurisdictions) to develop a plan for the preservation and enhancement of the Beacon Hill Trail.*

4. MARTIN LUTHER KING AND RAINIER BOULEVARDS

Portions of Rainier Avenue, Martin Luther King Way, and Renton Avenue South were also mentioned as possible boulevards during the neighborhood workshops. These streets are dominated by dense commercial development along much of their length, but they each merit consideration because of their importance to the livability of Southeast Seattle.

North of Columbian Way, Martin Luther King Way is characterized by the mature trees and wide

lawns of the Rainier Vista community, and by significant amounts of undeveloped land and greenery on both sides. After crossing the commercial zone at Rainier Avenue, MLK passes under the terraced gardens of the Mt. Baker Apartments, the Martin Luther King Park and the Seattle Tennis Center. It is the only thoroughfare to bisect the new park on the lid of I-90, and continues north past Powell Barnett Park to Madison Street near the arboretum.

This portion of Martin Luther King Way seems to meet the traditional criteria for boulevard designation, and with some improvements, could become a major source of pride for the community.

Renton Avenue south of Henderson Street also is worthy of consideration, chiefly because it is relatively unspoiled by commercial development and provides a link with the new park at Kubota Gardens.

The case for designating Rainier and Martin Luther King Way South of Columbian Way cannot be made under the traditional criteria. They cannot be deemed open space connectors because there simply aren't many public parks in the Rainier Valley. They do not pass through natural areas or along shorelines, and careless development is rampant along their edges.

Nevertheless, the character of these streets is extremely important to the future of the City. They are the 'Main Streets' of Southeast Seattle, and their treatment will either contribute to or frustrate the community improvement initiatives now underway. We have recommended that they be designated in the hope that the City will invest in the improvement of these corridors and begin to change the land use practices that have often resulted in chaotic development.

Rainier Avenue actually has great potential. It was originally one of Seattle's major street car routes, and the vestiges of 'street car suburbs' are still visible in Columbia City, Hillman City and elsewhere along the route. These historic neighborhoods could provide the focal point for community development and reinvestment, and boulevard improvements should be designed to contribute to that effort.

Martin Luther King Way south of Columbia represents a more difficult challenge. There are no adjoining parks, no historic districts, and few areas with a strong visual identity. Nevertheless, this thoroughfare sets the tone for the adjacent neighborhoods and cannot be ignored.

These boulevards and trails, running north and south, would tie into other boulevards that run east and west from Lake Washington across the Rainier Valley to Beacon Hill:

*5. **BRIGHTON BEACH PARKWAY**

The southernmost of these was originally conceived by the Olmsteds to link the Rainier Beach area with Beacon Boulevard. The current proposal follows the Olmsted route through Dunlap Canyon and then along South Henderson Street to Lake Washington. The portion of the route that winds through the canyon has qualities similar to Interlaken Boulevard, but the eastern sections, along Henderson, will require a lot of work.

6. **OTHELLO PARKWAY**

During the neighborhood workshops, citizens identified Othello Street as a potential boulevard and bicycle route. It's a good suggestion. The road leads from Beacon Boulevard and Van Asselt park through the landscaped campus of Holly Park, across the valley past Othello Park and connects with Seward Park Avenue South just at the point where good views of Lake Washington begin.

7. GENESSEE PARKWAY

About two miles north, Mayor Royer proposed a new Boulevard along Genessee, Rainier, and Columbia Way to the northeast corner of Jefferson Park. Like Othello, this Boulevard provides both a connection between major open space resources and an opportunity for community development. If the Boulevard will encourage people to travel through the Rainier Valley rather than around it, they may become more aware of what the Columbia City and Genessee Districts have to offer, and patronize the businesses in those areas.

In addition to the improvements necessary to create the boulevard, we suggest the following:

- *The bicycle route should divert from the boulevard to in the Genessee Business District to avoid the heavy traffic along Rainier and Genessee. After crossing Rainier from the west the bike route should continue on Alaska and through Genessee Park to Lake Washington Boulevard.*
- *The western portions of Genessee Park are almost entirely devoid of trees or park facilities of any kind. In light of the shortage of sports fields, the Department should explore a better use for this land.*

*8. CHEASTY BOULEVARD

A beautiful country road and a part of the original Olmsted system, Cheasty Boulevard has been damaged by the obliteration of its connection with Mt. Baker Boulevard in the Rainier corridor. This connection was severed to accommodate automobile traffic on Martin Luther King Way and Rainier, and a pedestrian bridge is the only remaining gesture to the integrity of the Olmsteds' Plan. It will probably prove too costly to restore the continuity of this boulevard for automobiles, but some less costly improvements could reestablish the value of this resource for pedestrians, cyclists, and those who care about the appearance of the district:

- *The entry to Cheasty Boulevard from Martin Luther King Way is almost impossible to find. The no-man's land between MLK and the greenbelt should be landscaped, and the entrance marked appropriately.*
- *DCLU should require appropriate land use along the Boulevard;*
- *The refuse in the woods at the northern end of the Boulevard (including huge oil storage tanks and refrigerators) should be removed;*
- *The southern entrance along Beacon should be marked appropriately;*
- *The Department should continue its effort to preserve the Cheasty Greenbelt, and explore the potential for a bicycle and pedestrian path extending from the Boulevard through the greenbelt to Bayview Street. This route could provide a safe crossing of Rainier and an alternative link to Martin Luther King Boulevard near the tennis center.*
- *In the event the pedestrian bridge is ever replaced, the Department should advocate for a design that is more consistent with the historic character of the Olmsted system and nearby Franklin High School.*



THE DUWAMISH VALLEY - (B)

Even in the Olmsted era, the Duwamish Valley presented a difficult challenge. The Olmsted Plan includes two crossings, one at Georgetown, and another well south of the present city limits. Our proposals closely parallel those original routes.

*1. THE OXBOW BRIDGE

The Oxbow Bridge provides an opportunity to link the Beacon Boulevard system with the Duwamish River Trail. We suggest creating a bicycle route from Beacon Boulevard along Military Road and Airport Way to the south edge of Boeing Field. From there, the main trail would lead across the Bridge, and a short spur route would lead north to the Museum of Flight. With the current traffic congestion in this area at rush hour, it is conceivable that a safe, clearly delineated bicycle route could also encourage some Boeing workers to commute by bicycle.

*2. GEORGETOWN TRAIL

The idea of a Georgetown Trail, via the Lucille Street Bridge, first surfaced during a neighborhood workshop. Selecting the best route for the trail will require more study, but one good possibility begins at Columbia Way and proceeds west on Snoqualmie to Maple Hill Park and then south to Cleveland High School.

After crossing the Lucille Street Bridge, the route would proceed south along airport way past the historic brewery, steamplant and City Hall buildings, via Bailey street and Carleton Avenue to the Port of Seattle's proposed shoreline park at 8th Avenue South.

3. SPOKANE STREET

The third crossing is the bicycle trail now being constructed as a part of the West Seattle Bridge project. This trail will tie into bicycle lanes along East Marginal Way, leading to Pioneer Square and the Central Waterfront.

4. EAST DUWAMISH TRAIL

In addition to these passages, citizens of the area have identified the potential for an East Duwamish trail, linking the various shoreline access points that have been promised by the Port of Seattle. At first glance, this idea did not seem to hold much promise, but on closer examination, it seems worth further investigation.

South from Spokane Street, a wide railroad right-of-way runs along the west side of East Marginal Way. It appears that these tracks receive little use, and could soon be made available for railbanking.

If that is the case, the right of way would seem to have extraordinary potential as a bicycle trail. It is wide enough to provide a landscaped buffer against the highway and plenty of room for bicycle and pedestrian paths. A portion of the right of way adjoins Federal Center South, which is already nicely landscaped and could provide both shoreline access and a resting point along the way. There may be potential for commuter use as well as recreation, since the right of way continues to Boeing Headquarters and beyond.

- *We suggest that the Department work with Engineering to investigate the potential for acquiring this right of way for a trail under the terms of the City's agreement with Burlington Northern.*

Clearly, the development of good pathways for bicycles and pedestrians across the Duwamish depends on the improvement of the few bridges that cross the river.

- *We recommend that the Department become a strong advocate for including good bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the rehabilitation or replacement of the First Avenue South Bridge (and eventually Oxbow and 14th South Bridges as well).*

5. THE DUWAMISH BIKEWAY

The Seattle Engineering Department has worked diligently with a number of public agencies and community organizations to develop a major bicycle trail along the western shore of the Duwamish River. The trail offers unusual close-up views of the industrial waterway at a series of shoreline access points, and provides the connection between the shoreline parks to the north and King County's Green River Trail.

The industrial character of this area presents a major challenge, and a host of issues must be addressed if this trail is ever going to achieve its full potential as a linear park:

- The Route through City Light

The County has been negotiating to obtain an easement through the City Light substation property south of the City limits, but the issue is still unresolved.

- South Park Neighborhood Shoreline Park

The convergence of street ends along the River near the residential district creates the potential for developing a linear park that could be the catalyst for community development in South Park.

We recommend that the Department explore this concept with the community during the neighborhood workshop in the Greater Duwamish District.

Shoreline Access

In return for a series of street vacations, the Port of Seattle promised the City that it would develop a series of shoreline access points on both sides of the Duwamish River. While some efforts have been made to fulfill that commitment (most notably at Terminal 105) the condition of most of these access points raises serious doubts about whether the Port is serious about fulfilling the spirit of its commitments. Several of the access points remain unimproved, and those which have been developed are surrounded by chain link and barbed wire. Indeed, both T 105 and Kellogg Island were locked during site visits.

We recommend that the Department raise the issue of the Port's compliance with the City administration in an attempt to get the Port to develop the system as it promised.

The idea of boulevard development in the City's major industrial area would seem at odds with the Olmsted's intentions, but it is worth considering on several grounds:

- given the configuration of Seattle, sections of the open space system will remain isolated unless a way is found to cross major industrial zones;
- the Duwamish Industrial area is one of the nation's most productive, the home of the world's largest aircraft manufacturer, and one of the world's leading ports. Rather than turning our backs on these resources, a way should be found to incorporate them within the fabric of our open space system;
- a substantial segment of the region's workforce is employed in these areas, and their environment deserves the same consideration as that of the downtown workforce.
- landscaped boulevards could help to improve the environment both by reducing air pollution and by encouraging thoughtful design as companies modernize their facilities.
- since most international visitors to the City enter from the South, the Duwamish Industrial area is, in fact, Seattle's "front yard", and its appearance creates a lasting impression in the minds of thousands of visitors each year.

In light of these issues, we have suggested four routes within the industrial area for Boulevard designation.

6. AIRPORT WAY BOULEVARD

Airport Way links the residential pocket of Georgetown with the International District, and Downtown with the King County airport. Portions of the route have already been landscaped and new industrial development has been focused along this corridor.

7. PIONEER BOULEVARD (4TH AVENUE SOUTH)

One of the few continuous routes through the industrial area, 4th Avenue South is also a major entryway into downtown. It passes between the two historic railroad stations, and currently forms a hard edge between the International district and Pioneer Square. A more thoughtful treatment of this street could soften that border and help to encourage redevelopment in the area north of the Kingdome.

8. **ROYAL BROUGHAM PARKWAY**

The Harborfront Plan dictates that this route will become the major carrier for traffic from I-5 to the State Ferry Terminal. In addition, the City and County have plans to concentrate the region's professional sports facilities along this corridor, making it even more important as a symbol of the City's character.

9. **SPOKANE PARKWAY**

The Spokane Street corridor is the second busiest thoroughfare in the state, and passes through the heart of Seattle's heavy industrial zone. Yet it provides the major link with the great open space resources of West Seattle and Vashon Island, and spectacular views of the city and its harbor. Boulevard designation may open the way for making this corridor more beautiful by planting trees in the areas below the bridge and eliminating billboards.



WEST SEATTLE - (C)

West Seattle probably has more potential open space resources than any other district of the City. Miles of Saltwater beaches, spectacular views of Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountain range, Elliott Bay and the City's skyline, established regional parks, and Seattle's largest greenbelts provide an extraordinary natural environment. However, many of the natural resources of the area have not yet been protected, and the rapid development now underway may soon foreclose some of the best opportunities for linear park development.

The topography of the area creates three major open space systems: the saltwater shoreline, Longfellow Creek, and the West Duwamish Ridge.

21. WEST RIDGE BOULEVARD

The greenbelt on the hills west of the Duwamish constitute Seattle's second largest contiguous open space. When combined with Westcrest, Riverview and Puget parks, and adjacent natural lands owned by the University of Washington and the Community College system, this area has the potential to become one of the City's greatest assets.

The West Ridge Boulevard is intended to provide the unifying element for that system of open space resources. It begins with Highland Park drive, which ascends the ridge from the Duwamish, passing through the greenbelt to a point near Riverview Park. From there, the Boulevard continues in two directions: due south along 9th Avenue southwest to Westcrest Park; and north by way of Webster, 12th, Holly, and 16th to Puget Park. From there, the route descends to the Delridge Playfield by way of SW Dawson and 22nd Avenue Southwest.

We also propose a spur trail for bicycles and pedestrians ascending through the greenbelt along the old engineering department road from Highland Park Drive to the north end of Riverview Park.

The Boulevard and trail would provide the unifying elements for a magnificent series of parklands, ranging from the formality of the Chinese Garden at the Community College arboretum to the urban wilderness of the West Duwamish Greenbelt and Puget Park.

- *To fully realize the potential of these resources, we suggest that the Department develop a unified plan for all the open space lands along the West Duwamish Ridge. We also suggest approaching the State of Washington to request designation of all or a portion of Pigeon Point as a State Park, and development of the South Seattle Community College Campus in a manner that complements the open space lands that surround it.*

2. LONGFELLOW CREEK TRAIL

Longfellow Creek, one of Seattle's few perennial streams, has been the object of an intense restoration effort by the citizens of the Delridge Valley. They have also developed a detailed plan for a trail along the creek bed, which passes through the West Seattle greenbelt and other natural areas the City is attempting to acquire with bond funds.

There are a host of obstacles, however. The biggest of these is the Parks Department fence surrounding the West Seattle Golf Course. The Department has been very, very resistant to any proposals for 'mixed use' of the land now devoted to Golf, not only in West Seattle, but at Jefferson and Jackson Parks. This policy, which has been defended on the grounds of concerns about vandalism and liability, stands in contrast to the policies of cities like Victoria, where running trails wind through the rough on the edges of public golf courses.

The Department is in the midst of developing a Golf Master Plan, and a major expansion of the West Seattle Course is in the works. Certainly there must be a way to include provisions for the Longfellow Creek trail as well as a trail from the creek to Camp Long on the hills above.

- *We suggest that the Department explore the possibilities for a Longfellow Creek Trail (and similar trails at Jackson and Jefferson) to diversify the recreational uses of the open space lands devoted to golf.*

*3. Alki Boulevard

The saltwater shoreline extends nearly five miles from the mouth of the Duwamish River around Duwamish Head and Alki Point to Lincoln Park, Fauntleroy Cove and the high bluffs beneath Marine View Drive. The Olmsted Brothers originally designated the shoreline route as a boulevard for about half of this distance. The Mayor's Open Space Policies (1987) propose extending the Boulevard designation along the remainder of Harbor Avenue to the West Seattle Bridge, and along Fauntleroy Avenue past Lincoln Park and east ascending the ridge along SW Barton Street. In addition, the Mayor proposed Boulevard designation for California Avenue SW as it ascends through the greenbelt at Duwamish Head to the viewpoint overlooking the City.

Site visits to this Shoreline system of linear parks reveal the following issues:

- Reclamation of industrial land

The right of way between Spokane Street at Seacrest Park passes through a derelict industrial area in which fences, railroad tracks and industrial slag heaps obstruct the view and deny public access. Much of this area is slated for redevelopment as a shopping center. This development could provide the opportunity to create the boulevard character that is lacking along this section of Harbor Avenue. In addition, the development could provide a linear park along the shoreline with bicycle and pedestrian trails, landscaping, and (conceivably) restoration of the outfall of Longfellow Creek.

- *We suggest that the department work closely with the DCLU, engineering and the developer to explore these possibilities.*

- Rehabilitation of Alki Boulevard

The shoreline from Duwamish Head to Alki Point are among the city's greatest resources. Green lawns and bike paths like those along Washington Boulevard would make this a truly spectacular linear park, but instead much of the public land along the shore is a no-man's land of asphalt. A forest of utility poles lines the southeast side of the Boulevard, and the buildings and fixtures within the park lack a consistent character.

- *We believe that a major rehabilitation of Alki park and boulevard would be an extremely wise investment. We recommend that the Department explore the possibility of securing funds for this project as mitigation for Metro's Alki sewage treatment project.*

- Public Access

The continuous public access to the shoreline ends abruptly near Alki Point. For most of the way to Lincoln Park, residences stand between the boulevard and the shore. Where the Department has obtained property, beautiful parks provide windows on the Sound, but there are too few of them.

- *We suggest that the Department consider using a portion of the Shoreline Improvement Fund to acquire additional shoreline properties in this area.*
- *We also recommend that the Department work with the federal government to eliminate the parking lot that currently separates the recommended Boulevard from the Alki Point Lighthouse, and replace it with appropriate landscaping.*

- Marine View Drive Southwest

This route ascends from Fauntleroy Cove to provide spectacular views of Puget Sound, including large areas of the Sound which are not visible from any other point in the City. The City has recognized the route as a protected view area, and *we are suggesting it be designated as an extension of the Alki Boulevard system.*

To connect these three major open space systems, we are proposing a number of boulevards that will run east and west across the ridges and valleys of West Seattle.

5. FAIRMOUNT PARKWAY

Beginning at Seacrest Park, Fairmount ascends through a heavily forested gorge to West Seattle High School and Hiawatha Park.

6. ADMIRAL PARKWAY

Mayor Royer recommended designating the eastern half of this route as it rises to the top of the ridge and the spectacular views of the City skyline. We suggest extending the designation west to provide a link with Schmitz Park and panoramic views of Puget Sound.

7. **FAUNTLEROY PARKWAY**

Everyone who has taken the state ferry to Vashon Island knows this route as the fastest way from the West Seattle Bridge to the Fauntleroy terminal, and the nearby neighborhoods suffer from constant streams of commuter traffic. Nevertheless, we feel very strongly that Fauntleroy deserves Boulevard designation. It is the City's chief connection to Lincoln Park and, perhaps more important, to ferries that provide the only public access to the countryside of Vashon Island and the Kitsap Peninsula. The Islands and the Sound are among Seattle's most important natural resources, and the routes that open them to the public should certainly be celebrated as part of the open space system.

*8. **SYLVAN PARKWAY**

This route begins at Highland Parkway and crosses West Seattle by way of Holden Street, Delridge, Sylvan Way and Morgan, joining Fauntleroy as it turns south to Lincoln Park. Along the way it passes through the West Duwamish and West Seattle greenbelts and the wooded campus of the Highpoint housing project.

9. **BARTON PARKWAY**

The southernmost route of the West Seattle Boulevard system is intended to provide a strong connection between Westcrest Park and Roxhill, Fauntleroy and Lincoln Parks to the West. This linkage is extremely important if Westcrest Park is to fulfill its potential as a part of the Park system.

The Western portion of this route, has already been recommended for designation. It offers spectacular views of the Sound and the Olympics, although one must ignore a forest of utility poles to enjoy them. To the east, Barton Street widens out to become an ocean of asphalt, discouraging pedestrians from crossing to Roxhill Park. In light of the increasingly dense residential development in this area, (including a large retirement complex) a planted median would offer amenity and provide a safer crossing.

Henderson Street provides the final link to Westcrest, and it, too, will require substantial improvement.



CENTRAL SEATTLE - (D)

The Central Area presents a much more complicated task than the neighborhoods to the south, for the simple reason that there is less natural land. While the lakeshore neighborhoods and North Capitol Hill have been very well served by the Olmsted system, there are few major parks in the inland communities, and little likelihood of acquiring new ones. The task is to make the most of what we have, to provide better access to the Olmsted system, and to seize opportunities to provide better facilities for underserved areas.

The Mayor's Open Space Policies essentially reiterated the importance of the Olmsted Boulevard system along Lake Washington and through the arboretum and Interlaken Park, and added boulevards on three sides of Volunteer Park. In addition, the Mayor recommended designation for Madison Street along its entire distance from Lake Washington to Puget Sound. These designations are important, but they do little for the heart of the Central Area, which has been badly underserved in the past. Our recommendations are intended to provide new linear park resources in this area.

*1. **LAKE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD/ARBORETUM/INTERLAKEN BOULEVARD**

This system has recently been improved with Seattle 1-2-3 bond funds and is in generally good condition. However, there are a number of spot improvements that would further enhance the system:

- *the aqueduct in the Arboretum Park and the bridge along East Interlaken both need restoration;*
- *the sound wall that was intended to reduce noise in the Japanese Garden needs to be completed along the entire eastern perimeter.*
- *the ecology blocks blocking automobile access to the Interlaken bicycle path should be replaced with bollards.*
- *much of the metal safety railing along Interlake was replaced by a wood railing, which looks much more natural. However, some sections of the rusty metal remain and should be replaced,*

- *The bicycle and pedestrian path that links the two parts of Montlake beneath the 520 highway needs to be marked so that people can find it.*

In addition, we are recommending boulevard or trail designation for a number of other short segments to further unify the system. These include:

- **Portage Bay Parkway** - This short route along Calhoun and Fuhrman will provide a level shoreline connection between Montlake Boulevard, and the University Bridge.
- ***Capitol Hill Boulevard** - By designating 10th Avenue East from Roanoke Park to Prospect, we will complete a loop route around Volunteer Park, connecting to the northern branch of Interlaken Boulevard. The designation of a short segment of East Galer would provide the link the Olmsteds intended between the south branch of Interlaken and Volunteer Park.

2. **MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD**

This boulevard continues through the Central Area from Southeast Seattle to intersect with Madison near the Arboretum.

3. **JOSE RIZAL BOULEVARD**

12th Avenue begins at the Southern edge of Volunteer Park and extends to Pacific Medical Center and Jose Rizal Park on Beacon Hill, providing the only bridge across the Dearborn Valley. The street defines the eastern edge of the International District and passes through the campus of Seattle University.

Much of the route is non-descript, with some less-than-desirable land use patterns. But the strong visual elements at the southern end of the route give it potential. Furthermore, Boulevard designation could help to encourage better development along the edges, strengthen Seattle University's attempts to beautify its campus, and reinforce the community development now underway in the International and Yesler Atlantic Districts.

4. **YESLER PARKWAY**

Yesler Way is one of the most important streets in Seattle's history. It was the original "Skid Road", the dividing line between the respectable and the raucous sides of the City. It was the original street car line to one of the earliest Seattle Parks. Today it remains one of the City's most interesting streets, and it is becoming more interesting with each passing day.

Nowhere is Seattle's diversity more evident. From the rich history of the Waterfront and Pioneer Square, the street rises to become the northern edge of the International District, the central avenue of the City's oldest housing project and the informal capital street of the Central Area, then disappears into the forested hills of Leschi. Along the way there are beautiful views of the Sound and the city, and several important parks and playgrounds. Yesler deserves special treatment. In addition to Boulevard designation:

- *We suggest that the Department establish a foot trail from the east end of Yesler across the old streetcar bridge to Leschi Park.*
- *We also recommend that the Department adopt Justina Boughton's plan for a 'Yesler Greenway' extending from I-5 to the Harbor, to integrate the existing fragments of open space in that corridor.*

5. I-90 BICYCLE TRAIL

The creation of I-90 has provided the chance to develop a linear park system and bicycle trail across the Central Area, with connections to Mercer Island and the East Side Communities. The nature of that system remains at issue, however, and the Department is in the midst of a planning process that will determine the character of the parklands in the corridor.

- *We urge the Department to resist attempts to greatly reduce the open space area that was originally conceived in this area, and to press for better integration of the City's plans for housing commercial activity, transportation, and open space within the corridor.*

DOWNTOWN - (E)

The City's 1985 Downtown Plan included a series of recommendations for linear parks, including a number of street parks in the Belltown and International District areas. In addition, three major boulevards were planned.

1. HARBORFRONT BOULEVARD AND LINEAR PAR (ALASKAN WAY)

For generations, the City was cut off from its waterfront by railroad tracks and traffic. Now work is underway to increase the open space along the harbor and provide a bicycle trail and landscaping along the entire central waterfront.

2. WESTLAKE BOULEVARD

The creation of a boulevard along Westlake is intended to strengthen the identity of the area, and to provide a connection between Westlake Center and South Lake Union Park. The plan calls for returning Westlake to a two-way traffic pattern, widening the sidewalks, and providing landscaping along the entire corridor. In addition, bicycle lanes will be provided to create an entry to downtown.

3. BELLTOWN BOULEVARD (3RD AVENUE)

The Downtown Plan envisioned a major expansion of the residential population of the Regrade, and in just five years, that vision has come true. New housing is rising rapidly in the Belltown District, and to strengthen the neighborhood character of the area, the plan designated Third Avenue as a boulevard from Stewart Street to Seattle Center. This boulevard would mark the western edge of the Belltown Housing District, and extend improvements made along Third Avenue through the recent Metro Tunnel Project northward to create stronger connections between the heart of the City and Seattle Center.



QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA - (F)

The Olmsted Plan left an indelible mark on parts of Queen Anne and Magnolia, especially where the Boulevards and Parks they planned provide magnificent views of Puget Sound. But these features have been isolated from one another and from the rest of the City's open space system, by the forces of development in the Interbay valley. Our goal in this area should be to integrate these resources, and to make them more accessible to the rest of the City.

i. SEATTLE CENTER

The Center is a rare open space resource near the heart of the City, yet it is walled off from its surroundings. Within the past few months the Center's leaders have taken the first steps to change that by demolishing Building 50 to make way for a grand new entrance to the Center grounds from Broad Street. The current redevelopment plan for the Center would add another ten acres of open space.

Mayor Royer recommended boulevard designation for Broad Street as it rises from the waterfront to the Center, as well as the portion of 5th Avenue that passes through the Center Grounds. In addition, we recommend boulevard treatment for Mercer Way and Olympic Way as it passes

Kinnear Park and connects with 8th Avenue West and the Queen Anne Boulevard system. This would provide a new link between the Center and the historic boulevard system on Queen Anne Hill.

Another necessary connection is, of course, the link between South Lake Union and Seattle Center. Although they are separated by just a few blocks, those few blocks are Death Valley for cyclists and pedestrians. The City continues to search for a solution to this problem, primarily from the perspective of traffic flow.

- *We urge the Department to join with the Center to advocate for good pedestrian and bicycle facilities between South Lake Union and Seattle Center as part of traffic improvements in the Mercer Corridor.*

2. THE GALER STREET WALKWAY

The stairways in the Galer Street right of way create a defacto pedestrian trail from Lake Union to the Sound. However, three barriers to the trail remain, and they are formidable: Aurora, Dexter and Westlake Avenues. At least one private developer has indicated a willingness to pay for a footbridge across one of these roads.

- *We suggest that the Department work with engineering and DCLU to attempt to secure the needed linkages to complete the Galer Street Walkway.*

The Interbay Industrial area effectively severs most of the possible ties between the Queen Anne Boulevard system and that of Magnolia, so the most must be made of the ties that remain:

3. ELLIOTT BAY PARKWAY

Myrtle Edwards and Elliott Bay Parks stretch along the shoreline north of Broad Street, but there is no corresponding boulevard connecting the Harborfront with Magnolia Boulevard. Elliott Avenue could serve this purpose, together with the Magnolia Bridge. As repairs are made on the bridge, design elements could be added to mark the structure as a part of the boulevard system.

*4. GILMAN BOULEVARD

The eastern portion of Gilman Drive together with Howe and Olympic Way provides one of the few gentle ascents of Queen Anne Hill. For that reason it is already a major bicycle route between Interbay and Seattle Center. Since the Parks Department owns a sizable undeveloped parcel in the midst of Interbay, Gilman Boulevard could be conceivably completed as an integral element of the development of the parkland. This would establish a true greenway across the valley, and fulfill another part of the original Olmsted plan.

- *In light of the importance of this potential connection, we suggest that the Department consider developing a boulevard across their property as an element of the site plan for Interbay.*

5. DRAVUS PARKWAY

Dravus Street currently provides the only passage across Interbay between Fisherman's Terminal and Armory Way. It represents an essential link between Queen Anne and Magnolia and a possible connection between the two boulevard systems.

*6. **THE MAGNOLIA BOULEVARD SYSTEM**

On the western edge of Interbay, the elements of a circular boulevard have been identified, but never completed. Thorndyke Avenue West was part of the Olmsted Plan, but the quality of its treatment varies with the elevation.

- *We suggest that parking in median area on Thorndyke be prohibited and the area landscaped. We also suggest planting trees along the lower areas of the Boulevard and introducing other design elements to strengthen its identity as a part of the Olmsted system.*

North of Dravus, the designated boulevard follows Gilman Place west to Government Way and the entrance to Discovery Park. This route, too, needs work, and Discovery Park certainly needs a grander entrance.

The break that occurs at this point in the boulevard system creates a dilemma. If a circular route is to be completed, the Department must either develop a segment of the boulevard across the Southeast corner of the Park, or more clearly establish the perimeter roads as part of the Boulevard system.

- *We suggest that the Department address the issue of routing the boulevard and attempt to secure the resources to carry out improvements along Gilman and Government Way as partial mitigation for the Metro sewage treatment plant construction.*

7. **THE NORTH PUGET SOUND TRAIL**

Harvey Manning, in his inimitable style, has identified a spectacular shoreline walking trail from Pioneer Square all the way to Edmonds. The route connects some of Seattle's most magnificent natural resources, and has to be considered as a part of our system. But there's a catch. Segments of the trail are only passable at low tide. When the tide comes in, the hiker is forced to higher ground, and along portions of the route this means private property or the main line of Burlington Northern's railroad. Nevertheless, the route has extraordinary potential.

- *We suggest that the Department explore the potential of the North Puget Sound Trail, and measures which would provide greater access and safety.*



THE INLAND WATERWAY: LAKE UNION AND THE SHIP CANAL - (G)

"...an Ideal system would involve taking all the borders of the different bodies of water, except such as are needed or likely to be needed hereafter for commerce..."

The Olmsted Plan

Not all Seattle neighborhoods have shared equally in the Olmsted heritage. By the time they made their plans, there were many areas in which industrial development had already overtaken nature, or railroads had cut off the shoreline from public use. Those communities simply have never enjoyed the same quality of open space as those that adjoin the Olmsted System.

That was certainly true of the neighborhoods that lie near Lake Union and the ship canal -- the working shorelines of the City. But during the past twenty years, as old land use patterns have slowly changed, those communities have been given a second chance. This time the open space must be reclaimed rather than preserved, but the community has been making the most of the opportunities, creating Magnuson Park where the runways of a naval air station used to be; Montlake playfield atop a landfill; and Gasworks Park from the wreckage of a coal gasification plant. But the most significant achievement may be the Burke-Gilman Trail, a veritable Olmsted Boulevard for bicycles and foot traffic.

In 1988, the City adopted a plan to eventually extend the Burke-Gilman Trail along Burlington Northern right of way all the way to Golden Gardens Park, and to create a second trail on the south shore of the canal from the Ballard Locks to South Lake Union. Parts of this plan is already being implemented. When it is complete, it will be a complex and diverse system, offering runners, walkers, cyclists and motorists four connected loop routes along the city's inland waterway.

While the City's existing plans for this system are quite thorough, our site visits and interviews raised several issues.

University Shoreline Trail

A marvelous footpath follows the southern shoreline of Union Bay and the Montlake cut, but there are only fragmentary elements of a trail on the north side. It is possible that a better trail system could be created on the University campus in conjunction with the University's 1991-2001 General Physical Development Plan.

- *We suggest that the Department review the University's Master Plan and submit comments raising this possibility.*

Mallard Cove

The existing bicycle route on the east shore of Lake Union is lacking a connection at Mallard Cove near Roanoke Street.

Ballard Bridge

Pedestrians and cyclists face a treacherous barrier when they attempt to get across the 15th Avenue corridor south of the Ballard Bridge. Funding for a link beneath the bridge was provided by the Open Space Bond issue, and that project should receive quick attention.

Ballard Historic District

The Burke-Gilman Trail route is presently planned to run along Shilshole Avenue from 45th Street to Market.

- *We suggest that the City designate Ballard Avenue as a pedestrian trail through the historic district.*



NORTH SEATTLE - (H)

Although Seattle doesn't have a Central Park, north Seattle certainly does -- Greenlake. The park is so heavily used that traffic jams are common on the trails. North Seattle neighborhoods also have shoreline parks at Matthews Beach, Magnuson Park, Gasworks, Golden Gardens and Carkeek, but with the exception of Ravenna Boulevard no linear parks were developed to connect the North's major open space resources until the development of the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Our plan for North Seattle would replicate the model of Ravenna Boulevard, creating linear parks between Greenlake and the other major open space resources of the northend.

1. STONE WAY BOULEVARD/WOODLAND PARK BIKE ROUTE

Stone Way provides a direct arterial the Burke-Gilman Trail to Woodland Park and Greenlake Drive. The street is bordered by a mix of land uses and a forest of utility poles, and will require substantial improvement. We suggest Woodland Park Drive as the bicycle route in this corridor because Stone Way carries such a high volume of automobile traffic.

2. **FREMONT BOULEVARD**

The Fremont Bridge is a critical part of the Inland Waterway open space system and connects the proposed boulevards on both shores. We suggest continuing the boulevard designation from the Bridge to Woodland Park. The street is heavily wooded, and provides beautiful views of the canal and the northeast Queen Anne greenbelt. A branch of the Fremont Boulevard would also extend west along 46th to Market Street in Ballard.

*3. **NORTH OLMSTED BOULEVARD**

The Olmsteds had originally planned to continue the boulevard system from the west side of Greenlake along the edge of Woodland Park through Ballard and across the ship canal, tying into Magnolia Boulevard. This portion of their system was never completed, although vestiges of the boulevard exist in the area around the northeast corner of the zoo. We suggest establishing a boulevard on streets that follow the original route as closely as possible, from Greenlake Drive to Market Street.

*4. **GOLDEN GARDENS BOULEVARD (NW 80th)**

Mayor Royer recommended NW 80th as a boulevard linking Greenlake and Golden Gardens. To avoid the heavy auto traffic on that route, we are suggesting that NW 77th be developed as the major bicycle thoroughfare.

5. **THE INTERURBAN TRAIL**

Long ago, the Interurban streetcar carried passengers between Seattle and Everett. Although the streetcars discontinued service decades ago, much of the right-of-way remains, and it provides an extraordinary opportunity to recreate the historic connection with areas north of the City. From Greenlake, the trail would follow street right of way along NW 77th to Linden, then north to join the old interurban route at 92nd. From there, the trail would be separated from autos in the green right-of-way left to us by the trolleys.

6. **HALLER LAKE BICYCLE TRAIL**

The Haller Lake Trail begins at the northern tip of Greenlake, and weaves through city streets to the campus of North Seattle Community College. From there, the route joins College Way Boulevard, proceeding north to Haller Lake, Ingraham High School, and Jackson Park.

Site visits to these routes raised several issues:

- **The open space potential of North Seattle Community College.**

The NSCC campus is surrounded by increasingly dense residential development with few parks. Substantial state lands remain on the south, east and north edges of the campus, however, creating the opportunity for a loop trail and permanent natural areas.

- *We suggest that the Department contact NSCC to explore the possibility of preserving some of the remaining open space areas for use by the community.*

- Haller Lake Shoreline Access

The nature of the residential development around Haller Lake does not lend itself to large scale public access. But a number of street ends do exist which could be developed as access or view points to this beautiful lake.

- *We suggest the Department work with Engineering and the Haller Lake Community to develop at least one formal shoreline access point.*

In addition to the boulevards and trails that emanate from Greenlake, we are suggesting a number of other linear parks in North Seattle:

**7. THE ESPLANADE

The winding roads on the high bluff between Golden Gardens and Carkeek provide spectacular views of Puget Sound and the Olympics. We suggest a boulevard and bicycle connection between the two parks.

8. CARKEEK PARKWAY (8th AVENUE NW)

Given the paucity of open space resources in the inland areas of Ballard, and the need for a bicycle route to the north, we wholeheartedly agree with the Engineering Department's effort to improve 8th NW as a major bicycle route, and we suggest that landscaping and other boulevard elements be added as well.

- *We suggest that the Department work with Engineering to secure the necessary resources as partial mitigation for the Metro pipeline project that will carry efficient from Carkeek to West Point.*

9. SALMON BAY BOULEVARD (14th AVENUE NW)

14th Avenue NW leads from the campus of Ballard High School to the shores of Salmon Bay. It was originally designed with a wide median, which could provide a beautiful stretch of green through a fairly barren area. In addition, the school district is in the midst of planning to rebuild Ballard High School. With some good planning the new building could be designed on the axis of the boulevard, creating a magnificent entryway for the new school.

- *We suggest that the Department ask the Rice administration to change Mayor's Royer's recommendation to delete a portion of 14th Avenue NW from Boulevard classification.*
- *We also suggest that the school district be contacted regarding the possibility of designing the new school to incorporate the boulevard as an entryway.*

10. JACKSON BOULEVARD (15th AVENUE NE)

Jackson Park is virtually the only major open space in the far northend of the city. We suggest developing a parkway along 15th Avenue Northwest to provide a tie between Jackson Park and the Olmsted system. Jackson Boulevard would begin at Pacific Street on the University campus, cross Ravenna Park on the existing art deco bridge and proceed north across Thornton Creek to 125th Street. There the Boulevard would turn three blocks west to tenth avenue, the main entry to Jackson Park.

****11. MEADOWBROOK BOULEVARD (RAVENNA AVENUE NE)**

Ravenna Avenue provides one of the few arterials in north Seattle that defies the urban grid. Winding north from Ravenna Park, it passes Dahl field and a huge pea-patch, then heads north through the Thornton Creek natural area to Meadowbrook Playfield. Here, the boulevard could turn north on 35th Avenue to connect with Sand Point Parkway. A bicycle route would continue east along 105th and turn south on 45th to provide a connection with the Burke-Gilman Trail at Matthews Beach Park.

In addition to these boulevards running north and south, our plan suggests two routes from east to west:

****12. SAND POINT PARKWAY**

Mayor Royer recommended designating Sand Point Way as a boulevard from the Montlake Bridge to Matthews Beach Park. We suggest continuing the boulevard north to 125th, and west along 125th to the intersection with 10th Avenue NE, the proposed Jackson Boulevard. From here the Sand Point parkway would jog northwest along Roosevelt to 130th, where it will cross Interstate 5 to North Acres Park, Haller Lake and Bitter Lake, before turning south along 3rd Avenue Northwest. The Parkway would end at the edge of Carkeek Park, where visitors have their choice of heading due south along Carkeek Boulevard (8th Avenue NW) or along the Esplanade.

Because this route is heavily travelled by autos, we suggest a parallel route for bicycles on safer streets. Northeast 120th is a quiet route across Northeast Seattle, in part because its continuity is broken just west of Lake City Way by the Thornton Creek ravine. A bicycle and pedestrian bridge at this point would create a wonderful route.

- *We suggest the Department work with Engineering and the community to establish this bicycle route.*

At the Jackson Parkway, cyclists would have the option of turning south toward Ravenna Park or north to Jackson Park. At present, there isn't much about Jackson Park to attract a cyclist or a hiker. Golfers have clearly established their dominion with chain link and barbed wire. In light of the fact that Jackson Park is the only major open space in the far northend neighborhoods, we would suggest that the Parks Department should reconsider this monopoly.

- *We suggest that the Department consider redefining the borders of the golf course to create a loop trail for cyclists and pedestrians around Jackson Park, in addition to establishing a playground for children near the main entrance.*

The main bicycle route would continue west on Sand Point Parkway to North Acres Park, providing connections to the Haller Lake Trail system. The community has suggested another loop trail around Bitter Lake. At this point, the main cycling route would turn south along the interurban trail, with connections to Carkeek and Greenlake.

13. 92ND STREET CONNECTOR

92nd Street provides one of the few relatively quiet crossings of Interstate 5 between Greenlake and Jackson Park. We suggest that this route be designated as the primary bicycle route for connecting the Jackson Boulevard and Haller Lake Trail systems.

In addition to these recommendations, we identified the need for a number of spot improvements in North Seattle:

- Montlake Boulevard Median

The Parks department and the University have recently completed a number of improvements in this corridor, but the medians between Husky Stadium and 45th have never been planted.

- *We suggest that the Department contact the State Department of Transportation to suggest that this median be landscaped to establish the integrity of the boulevard system in that area.*

- Ravenna - Burke-Gilman Connection

The continuity of the system is broken by the lack of clear linkages between Sand Point Boulevard and the Burke-Gilman Trail and Ravenna Boulevard.

- *We suggest a signed bike route and formal landscaping to establish connections for bicycles and hikers between the Burke-Gilman and Ravenna Boulevard.*
- *We also suggest that Blakely and Union Bay Streets be designated as a boulevard to connect Sand Point and Ravenna.*

- Magnuson Park/Burke-Gilman Connection

The Department has long recognized the need for a stronger (and safer) tie between the park and the trail, and is already working to see that this problem is addressed.



ISSUES

Several critical issues are beyond the scope of this survey:

A. HOW WILL WE PAY FOR ALL THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS?

The elements of this plan are numerous, but we believe they can be completed over time without an undue drain on public resources. Every street proposed for boulevard designation will eventually require repair, providing the opportunity to change its configuration. In addition, a variety of resources could be directed toward various aspects of this plan, including:

1. Major Public Works Projects

The Parks Department has a recently established a practice of securing financing for projects as mitigation for disruptions caused by large public works. Seacrest Park, for example, was financed almost entirely by funds from Metro in recompense for the Renton Effluent Treatment Pipeline.

A second strategy involves careful coordination of public works so that Boulevard or Trail improvements can be made as an integral part of the larger project. The construction of the Harborfront Trail in conjunction with a combined sewer overflow project is one good example of this approach.

Several of the projects we have recommended might be financed in this way:

- Metro's secondary treatment projects could help to finance boulevard and trail improvements along Alki, 8th Avenue NW, Gilman Boulevard, Government Way, and the Burke-Gilman Trail extension;
- The Drainage and Wastewater Utility has creative leadership, and could have reason to contribute to projects like the Longfellow Creek Trail and the Meadowbrook Trail;

- The regular arterial improvements carried out by Engineering could be designed to reflect the linear park plan; and,
- Capital improvements by Water and City Light could be reviewed for the possibility of coordinating them with boulevard and trail projects.

2. Private Development Projects

Once a linear park plan is adopted, it may be possible to require developers of private projects to complete portions of the system in conjunction with their projects.

3. Utility Easements

The linear parks themselves may have significant value as corridors for underground utilities. The SPRINT agreement, which financed the recent extension of the Burke-Gilman Trail, is one example of a project that was financed by easement fees.

4. Brokering Other City, State and Federal Programs

Other agencies of the government to have goals that are complementary to the development of the linear park system. For example:

- The City Arborist and Director of Engineering are developing an initiative to plant 100,000 trees in the City during the next four years. Why not establish the proposed boulevards and trails as the top priority for this effort?
- The City Council recently voted to expand the Seattle Conservation Corps. Much of the landscaping needed to carry out these recommendations could employ the Corps, creating a double public benefit.
- The neighborhood matching fund is already being used for a number of parks-related projects, and could help to fund segments of this plan.

5. Private Contributions

There are a number of private parties that could have an interest in contributing, including adjacent property owners, major corporations and private foundations.

6. Street Vacation Proceeds

Currently the City uses the fees generated by street vacations to subsidize the general fund. Open Space advocates suggest dedicating these proceeds to the preservation of open space lands and the development of the parks system. Since vacations represent a sacrifice of public right-of-way, there may be logic in using the funds to improve other rights-of-way as linear parks.

7. Voter Approved Measures

The overwhelming support of the 1989 Open Space Bond Issue indicates the public could be willing to support additional funding to improve the open space system.

B. SHOULD THE CITY CHANGE ITS POLICY TO ENCOURAGE UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING TO ENHANCE THE CITY'S LINEAR PARK SYSTEM?

In the 1960's, Victor Steinbruck called the public's attention to the damage inflicted on the cityscape by the "black forests of utility poles". In the decade that followed, the City of Seattle's policy encouraged neighborhoods to bury utilities by creating local improvement districts (LIDs) to share the costs. This policy resulted in the beautification of many affluent areas, but few middle or low-income neighborhoods. The practice was halted in the late 1970's, when low-income residents of Madrona protested the costs imposed by an LID and won the support of the Mayor. A further rationale was that the LID taxes did not cover the full cost of the undergrounding, so that ratepayers were, in effect, subsidizing wealthy property owners.

As one travels throughout the City today, it is possible to see the issue in a somewhat different light: since many wealthy areas got the benefit of the program before it was halted, while poor and middle-income areas did not, one could argue that halting the program deprived these lower-income neighborhoods of the ratepayer subsidy wealthy areas already had received. Furthermore, the general public was the biggest loser, losing spectacular views from major parks and boulevards to the visual blight of poles and wires.

The full potential of Seattle's linear park system will not be realized unless this blight is severely reduced. To accomplish this:

- *The City should consider re-establishing an undergrounding program for parks, boulevards, trails and protected view corridors, funding the program through general rates or utility tax revenues.*

Since the boulevard and trails system is a public resource, it is appropriate that the costs of improving the system should be shared by everyone. Spreading the cost of improvements across the entire rate base will spare low and moderate income homeowners the high costs of LID's and vastly improve our City's open space system. To minimize the impact on rates, the City should commit itself to a long-term program for undergrounding and take every opportunity to "piggyback" on other capital projects.

- *As a first step, we recommend that the Department of Parks and Recreation request the Mayor's support for an analysis of the costs and benefits of undergrounding utilities along the recommended system of linear parks.*

C. WHAT ADDITIONAL REGULATORY MEASURES SHOULD APPLY TO BOULEVARDS AND TRAILS?

The Mayor's Recommended Open Space Policies contain several proposals, including control of curbcuts and view blockage, and priority for public improvements, such as landscaping, lighting, and repaving.

In addition to these measures, and a new initiative to underground utilities, we suggest:

- eliminating billboards along linear park routes;
- forbidding parking within boulevard medians; or on landscaped areas within the right of way;
- forbidding adjacent residential property owners from paving over the planting strips along the boulevards.

D. HOW WILL THE SYSTEM BE MAINTAINED?

Developing a maintenance strategy for this system was well beyond our scope, but we would offer a couple of observations:

- the existing streets recommended for boulevard designation already require maintenance. The new expense of this plan should be calculated to reflect only the additional costs of maintaining the boulevard characteristics;
- new trails and boulevard features should be carefully designed to prevent the large maintenance costs associated with problems such as the drainage issues along the Burke-Gilman Trail;
- a maintenance plan for the system should include the use of the Seattle Conservation Corps or other job training programs acceptable to organized labor;
- the City should consider establishing a maintenance endowment for the system. One possible source is the Burlington Northern Railroad. The City's agreement with the railroad allows the City to acquire BN right-of-way for trail development in return for forgiving their historic obligation to remove rails and ties from street right of way and restore the streets. Site visits conducted in the preparation of this report suggest that there may be many abandoned spurs within the city where this obligation has never been enforced. It is conceivable that a survey of these rails would provide the basis for negotiations with the railroad that could yield a substantial amount of money for maintenance or improvement of the system.

E. WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THE FREEWAYS?

The appearance of the City's limited access roads probably have a greater impact on the image of the City than all of the other streets combined. With the exception of Spokane Street, this survey does not address those thoroughfares, chiefly because it was deemed beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Plan. Clearly, these corridors - I-5, Aurora, I-90, and SR-520, deserve careful consideration in a separate study.

5. HOW DOES SEATTLE'S SYSTEM OF LINEAR PARKS FIT WITHIN THE REGION?

This report gave careful attention to the potential regional connections, especially in the trail system. We have highlighted the ties with the county's bicycle trail system and recommended the development of hiking trails that extend well beyond the City limits. We also have paid special attention to the critical importance of the ferry system to the overall sense of open space for Seattle's people.

It was not our charge to recommend boulevard or trail improvements outside the City, but the spirits of the Olmsteds and Bogue will not rest easy unless we make a few final comments. The City of Seattle and its Metropolitan area are surrounded by national parks and wilderness areas, as well as state and regional parks. In addition, the City Council has recently established the Cedar River Watershed as what may be America's largest municipally-owned natural reserve.

The impact of these tremendous resources on the quality of life in our region would be magnified greatly if the Olmsted principles were applied to this enormous regional landscape.

We suggest that the Department advocate with regional and state officials for the planning, designation and improvement of State Parkways to connect the most outstanding natural resources of Western Washington.

The potential for such a system of scenic roads will disappear within our lifetime if we do not act to protect the most beautiful of our highways from suburban sprawl, indiscriminate clearcutting and other damaging practices. But if we act now, we can preserve (and even improve) the State's open space system as a lasting gift to our children.

APPENDIX A**SOURCE MATERIALS**

- Kelly, Guillet and Hern, 1981, Art of the Olmsted Landscape
- Zaitzevsky, Cynthia, 1982, Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System
- Rogers, Elizabeth Barlow, 1987, The Rebuilding of Central Park
- Seattle Board of Park Commissioners, 1909, Parks, Playgrounds and Boulevards of Seattle, Washington, (the Olmsted Plan)
- Bogue, Henry, 1911 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Seattle
- City of Seattle, Office for Long Range Planning, 1987, Mayor's Recommended Open Space Policies
- City of Seattle, Department of Engineering, 1989, Seattle Urban Trails Concept Plan
- Byers, Lagerway, Marshall, Owen, Sugimura, Tufts, et al, 1988, Proposals for the Lake Union/Ship Canal and Duwamish River Open Space Systems
- City of Seattle, Land Use and Transportation Project, 1984, Land Use and Transportation Plan for Downtown Seattle
- Powers, Peter and Travis, Renee, 1989, Touring Seattle by Bicycle
- Manning, Harvey, 1977, Footsore 1: Walks and Hikes Around Puget Sound

Public Access Opportunities for Longfellow Creek

- LONGFELLOW CREEK
- Existing Access
- Future Access - Near Term
- Future Access - Long Term
- Alternative Connections

