

**MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**SEHOME  
HILL  
ARBORETUM**

**Prepared for the**

**City of Bellingham, Washington  
And  
Western Washington University**

### **Sehome Arboretum Board Members:**

Merrill Peterson – Chairman  
Bill Managan  
Byron Elmendorf  
Carolyn Wilhite  
Dave Engebretson  
Kevin Burke  
Marvin Harris  
Michael Steed  
Pam Terhorst  
Paul Brower  
Paul Leuthold  
Tim Wynn

### **Consulting Master Planners:**

JGM Landscape Architects  
David McNeal, FASLA  
Michael Brown  
Linda Dart

## **List of Figures**

---

Master Plan	Figure 1
Views	Figure 2
Sign Systems	Figure 3

## **Appendix A**

---

Master Plan Alternative 1 (No change)  
Master Plan Alternative 2 (Great Loop Plan)  
Master Plan Alternative 3 (Radial Plan)  
Entrance Existing Conditions  
Entrance Option A  
Entrance Option B  
Entrance Option C  
Views  
View Clearing  
View Bridge  
Entrance Portal  
Sitting Stones  
Sign Systems

## **Appendix B**

---

Comments from Open House #1

## **Appendix C**

---

Comments from Open House #2

## **Appendix D**

---

Comments from Open House #3

## **Appendix E**

---

Preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Cost

Incorporated P.S.  
Site Planning  
Urban Design  
Park and Recreation Planning



Principals: David McNeal, FASLA  
Theodore Wall, ASLA  
Associate: Craig Lewis, ASLA

September 12, 2002

Mr. Marvin Harris  
Parks Operations Manger  
Parks Operations Center  
1400 Woburn Street  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Re: Sehome Hill Arboretum Master Plan Update

Dear Mr. Harris:

We are pleased to submit this Master Plan Update for Sehome Hill Arboretum. The plan documents the process of examination and evaluation of our staff, the Arboretum Board and the community-at-large. The Plan updates the previous plans by responding to changing conditions surrounding the Arboretum and use patterns within the Arboretum. Simultaneously, the Plan remains steadfast to the Sehome Hill Arboretum Policy, as jointly approved by the City Council of the City of Bellingham and the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University.

We appreciate the opportunity to have worked with the Board and the community to assure the continued well-being of this unique resource.

Sincerely,

JGM Landscape Architects

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David McNeal", written over the printed name.

David McNeal, FASLA  
Partner-in-Charge



## **Executive Summary**

The City of Bellingham contracted with JGM Landscape Architects of Bellevue, Washington to prepare this update of the master plan. JGM met with the Sehome Hill Arboretum Board on numerous occasions, walked the site and prepared 3 alternatives for development for Board and community review and comment. The alternatives ranged from “no change” to a modest level of improvements.

Two public workshops were conducted and a wide range of community input was received. All of the alternatives were consistent with the policies that currently guide the Board’s decisions. Upon evaluation and consideration of the community input the Board directed JGM to incorporate a new “Great Loop” trail into the Arboretum’s trail system.

This Master Plan edition represents:

- Modification of a loop trail that had been proposed in the 1978 Master Plan, as well as in a 1989 update to the Arboretum trail plan.
- Three new trailheads added at public streetends along the Arboretum’s eastern margin.
- Addition of primary and secondary trails (connecting the eastern trailheads) adding 2.16 miles of new trails to the existing 5.27 miles of trails currently in the Arboretum.
- Minor modifications to the parking in the 25<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way near the vehicle entrance.
- Addition of a new “Integrated Outdoor Learning Environment” sponsored by WWU along the Huntoon Trail.

Generally, the community comments echoed a “less development is better” theme. This Master Plan Update reflects the community’s will. All of the alternatives that were considered and the community comments have been included in the Appendixes.

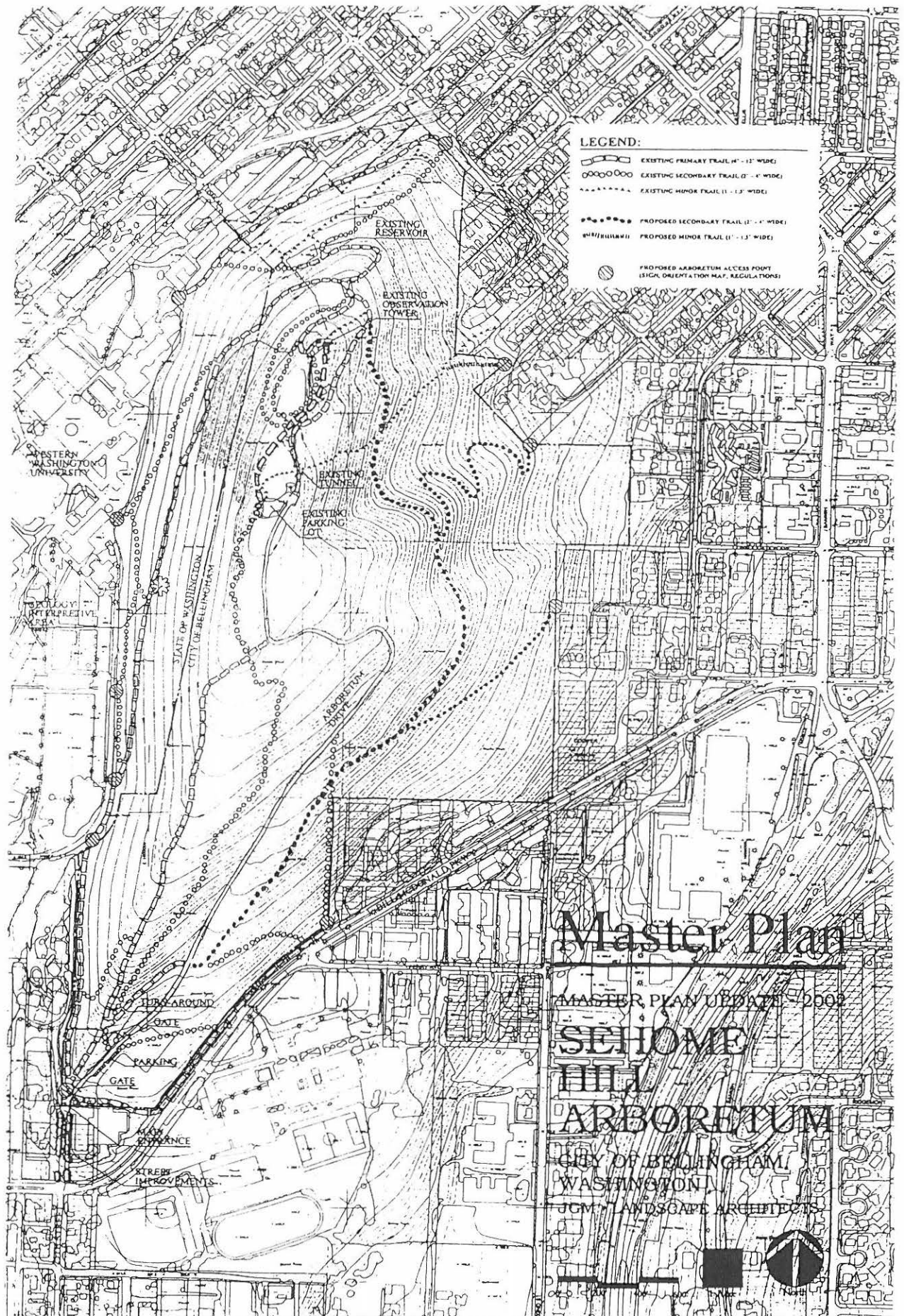


Figure 1

## **Purpose**

---

The Arboretum Board's purpose for the Master Plan Update is to maintain a current overview of appropriate capital and maintenance strategies as caretakers for this unique urban forest.

The Sehome Hill Arboretum Board selected and contracted with JGM Landscape Architects in October 2001 to prepare an update of the Arboretum's Master Plan. The purpose of the "update" was to identify, examine and evaluate the changes or direction of surrounding development and use patterns and their effects or influences on the Arboretum. The primary concerns to be addressed in the Master Plan Update were:

- Views
- Potential trail and landscape expansion
- Existing locations and condition of trails
- Utilities
- Vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation
- Parking
- Arboretum identity
- Accessibility
- Signage
- Community linkages (greenways, schools, neighborhoods, university)

The Scope of Services defined requirements for developing planning alternatives that addressed these concerns and the associated implementation costs. The Scope also suggested the process for engaging the Community-at-Large in order to understand their concerns and needs. The consultant was to work with the Arboretum Board throughout the planning process, including public workshops and a final presentation of the "Draft" Master Plan.

## **The Planning Process**

---

The Arboretum Board met with the master planner throughout the planning process during their regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The following brief chronology of meetings documents the planning process:

**October 18, 2001:** The master planner met with the Board in a kick-off "visioning" session. Each member was invited to share their visions, concerns and hopes for the Arboretum and the master plan update. The topics covered were: visibility, accessibility, parking, trails, relationship with the University and their new Institutional Master Plan, way finding, interpretive signage and sites, seating/benches, artwork in the Arboretum and views, tower access and selective view pruning and/or thinning of trees.

**November 1, 2001:** The Board held a special meeting convening on-site at the parking lot near the top of Sehome Hill. The Board and master planner walked the main trails of the site discussing specific visions and/or concerns. Views, interpretive signage, benches, the quarry classroom/interpretive site, the University's proposed east campus access road and the main vehicular and south pedestrian entrance to the Arboretum were discussed. It was also noted that access from the eastern edge of the Arboretum is non-existent and that some campsites have been found in the eastern wooded areas of the Arboretum.

**December 13, 2001:** The master planner met with the Board to review some preliminary master plan alternatives for consideration. If approved these alternatives would be refined incorporating the Board's comments into a presentable graphic format for use in a community open house. The alternatives are best defined by the nature of the trail system. The alternatives are:

- **No Action Alternative:** Make any minor route adjustments and continue to maintain the trail system in its current state. Adjustments or changes to the entrance, increased interpretive and wayfinding signage, the outdoor geology classroom/interpretive display and accessibility improvements could also be considered as discretionary improvements in this alternative.
- **Great Loop Alternative:** This Alternative would expand the trail system by creating a new 6' wide primary trail (with 2' shoulders on each side) along the eastern slope climbing gently from south to north connecting with the Huntoon Trail making it possible to walk around Sehome Hill on a 1.7 mile circuit. Additional neighborhood trail links were proposed to connect the trail system with the neighborhood to the east. Options for changes to the main entrance, signage, parking, wayfinding, benches, viewpoint pruning and thinning and a possible future "view bridge" may be considered as options within this alternative.
- **Radial Alternative:** This Alternative would enhance limited access to the neighborhood along the eastern boundary of the Arboretum. The "limitation" is that the access trails are steep, direct linkages to the top of the hill. Options within this alternative are the same as the Great Loop Alternative.

The Board reviewed the Alternatives and approved including all of them in the upcoming Community Open House. All 3 Alternatives are included in Appendix A.

**November 29, 2001:** The master planner presented some preliminary conceptual sketch alternatives related to trail, entrance, view point pruning and thinning of blocking vegetation, sign systems and a view bridge concept that would create an accessible viewpoint and forest canopy interpretive display. The Board reviewed and discussed the concepts and requested the master planner refine the alternatives further.

**January 24, 2002 - Community Open House #1:** The preliminary conceptual alternatives were placed on display at Sehome High School. Members of the Arboretum Board and the master planner were in attendance to answer questions and/or discuss the alternatives with the attendees. Attendance was relatively light due, in part, to extremely heavy rain and to some confusion as to the date of the Open House. The attendees were invited to sign in and to review the exhibits. Each was also invited to write comments with paper and pens or on "Post-It" stickers and place them on the exhibits. A summary of these comments can be found in the Appendix of this document. The exhibits on display were:

1. Aerial Photo of Sehome Hill
2. Alternative 1 – No Change (Overall Site Map)
3. Alternative 2 – Great Loop Plan (Overall Site Map)
4. Alternative 3 – Radial Plan (Overall Site Map)
5. Option A – Entrance Detail Plan
6. Option B – Entrance Detail Plan
7. Option C – Entrance Detail Plan
8. Entrance Portal/Sitting Stones .
9. View Map (of Overall Site)
10. View Clearing/View Bridge
11. Sign System Options

Immediately following the Open House the Board discussed their impressions of the community's input and decided to schedule a second Community Open House. A special emphasis in publicizing the event was a common concern. A complete transcript of the attendee's comments for Open House #1 is included in Appendix B.

**February 28, 2002 - Community Open House #2:** The preliminary conceptual alternatives were on display again at the second community open house. The exhibits were the same as presented at the first community open house. A transcript of the attendees comments is included in Appendix C.



## **Master Plan Elements**

---

The following elements of the 2002 Master Plan Update are:

### **Circulation:**

**Community Linkages:** The existing Arboretum trails link the neighborhoods to the north and south. WWU is directly linked to the Arboretum on the west. The neighborhoods to the east currently do not enjoy a recognized trail connection to the Arboretum. The master plan proposes 3 secondary trail connections to be located at selected public street ends on the eastern margin of the Arboretum.

To the southeast the Connelly Creek Natural Area trail presents a unique greenway connection. The connection between the Arboretum and Connelly Creek can be achieved via pedestrian improvements along and across Bill McDonald Parkway.

**Vehicular System/Existing Conditions:** Vehicular access to the Arboretum is via 25<sup>th</sup> Street from Bill McDonald Parkway at the southwestern corner of the site. Twenty Fifth Street is a public right-of-way in the City of Bellingham. WWU's campus is located on both sides of 25<sup>th</sup> north of the parkway. As a visitor approaches the Arboretum entrance a service road to Fairhaven College and another to WWU's Commissary branch off to either side. The geometry and alignment of the roads, as well as the parking area immediately inside the Arboretum, compromises the entrance experience. Twenty Fifth Street gives way to Arboretum Drive upon entering the site. This 2-lane road ascends to a parking lot near the summit of Sehome Hill. The parking lot at the top of the hill appears to meet current parking demand very well. The 25-space parking lot immediately inside the Arboretum entrance at the bottom of the hill appears to currently serve as an unregulated WWU student parking lot.

**Vehicular System/Proposed Modifications:** Three entrance alternatives were developed and considered by the Board (Appendix A). The Board recommends minor modifications to the entrance area. In particular, the Board recommends adoption of limited-time parking to discourage unregulated parking in the Arboretum (see Proposed Visibility Modifications). In addition, the Board recommends that the City of Bellingham strongly discourages parking in the 25th street right-of-way, north of Bill McDonald parkway. The Board will participate in continued discussion with WWU as they develop alternatives for a new vehicular access to the eastern side of campus.

**Pedestrian Trail System/Existing Conditions:** Three classifications of existing pedestrian trails serve the Arboretum. The classifications and their respective lengths are:

- Primary Trail (6' – 12' wide) 2.64 miles
- Secondary Trail (2' – 4' wide) 1.89 miles
- Minor Trail (1' – 1.5' wide) .68 miles

The primary trail's surfacing varies from asphalt to crushed stone to compacted earth. The current condition of the asphalt paving varies from good to poor. The secondary and minor trails are predominantly compacted earth. Limited sections of the secondary system have crushed rock surfacing. The conditions of the secondary and minor trail systems vary with erosion degrading the surfacing on steeper slopes or gradients. Accessible routes are not clearly marked.

**Pedestrian Trail System/Proposed Modifications:** Expansion of the trail system is proposed (See Figure 1) as well as some suggested modification to the trail standards. The proposed modifications and increased lengths and the total lengths are:

<u>Trail Type (and width)</u>	<u>Length Increase</u>	<u>Proposed Trail Length</u>
• Primary Trail (6' – 8' wide)	0 miles	2.64 miles
• Secondary Trail (2' – 4' wide)	1.04 miles	2.93 miles
• Minor Trail (1' – 1.5' wide)	.16 miles	.84 miles

The primary trails should all be paved with crushed stone. The secondary and minor trails should be a compacted earth surface with stairs and/or water bars on steeper slopes or gradients. Accessible routes should be paved with asphalt or crushed surfacing in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The accessible routes and parking stalls shall be clearly marked, maintained and the regulations enforced.

**Bicycles:** Bicycles are permitted only on Arboretum Drive. No change to this existing policy was considered.

**Pedestrian Furniture:** Opportunities exist along existing trail segments to develop small resting areas where Arboretum users could rest and enjoy the natural setting. Development would be limited to small seating area/areas using native stone and/or timbers with an emphasis simple non-intrusive design.

#### **Accessibility:**

Access to the primary aspects of the Arboretum is a goal of the Board. Steep topographical and dense forests make this goal a challenge. While access to the top of the observation tower would be difficult and costly to achieve, a panoramic video viewing station will be considered. Accessible trail improvements will also be incorporated into the plan. See Pedestrian Trail System/Proposed Modifications (See Figure 1).

**Views:**

**Existing Conditions:** The maturing vegetation limits views from Sehome Hill. Views from Sehome Hill, when and where the vegetation has been pruned or thinned are dramatic. While saving the forest canopy and enjoyment of territorial and regional views appear mutually exclusive; both are goals to be incorporated into the master plan. Historically, the road to the top of the hill was constructed so residents of Bellingham could enjoy the expansive views. The views were possible because all of the old-growth forest had been removed. As the second-growth forest matures it is rapidly eclipsing the views from the viewing tower constructed near the summit. Some localized clearing was undertaken in recent years at the northwest margins of the tower base. Given recent growth this view is quickly disappearing.

**Proposed View Modifications:** A view analysis of selected vistas was conducted. View “windows” were identified. Selective pruning and thinning of the forest is recommended to preserve and enhance the views. Each view will be framed by existing native vegetation. This “framing” will enhance the view by creating greater visual depth and perspective. To accomplish success with this approach will require more frequent pruning of selected branches and trees. This will eliminate the unpopular and drastic appearing limited “clear-cuts” as an approach to maintaining views (See Figure 2). The vistas to be maintained from the observation tower are:

- Mount Baker
- Downtown Bellingham/Bellingham Bay
- San Juan Islands
- Canadian Coast Range



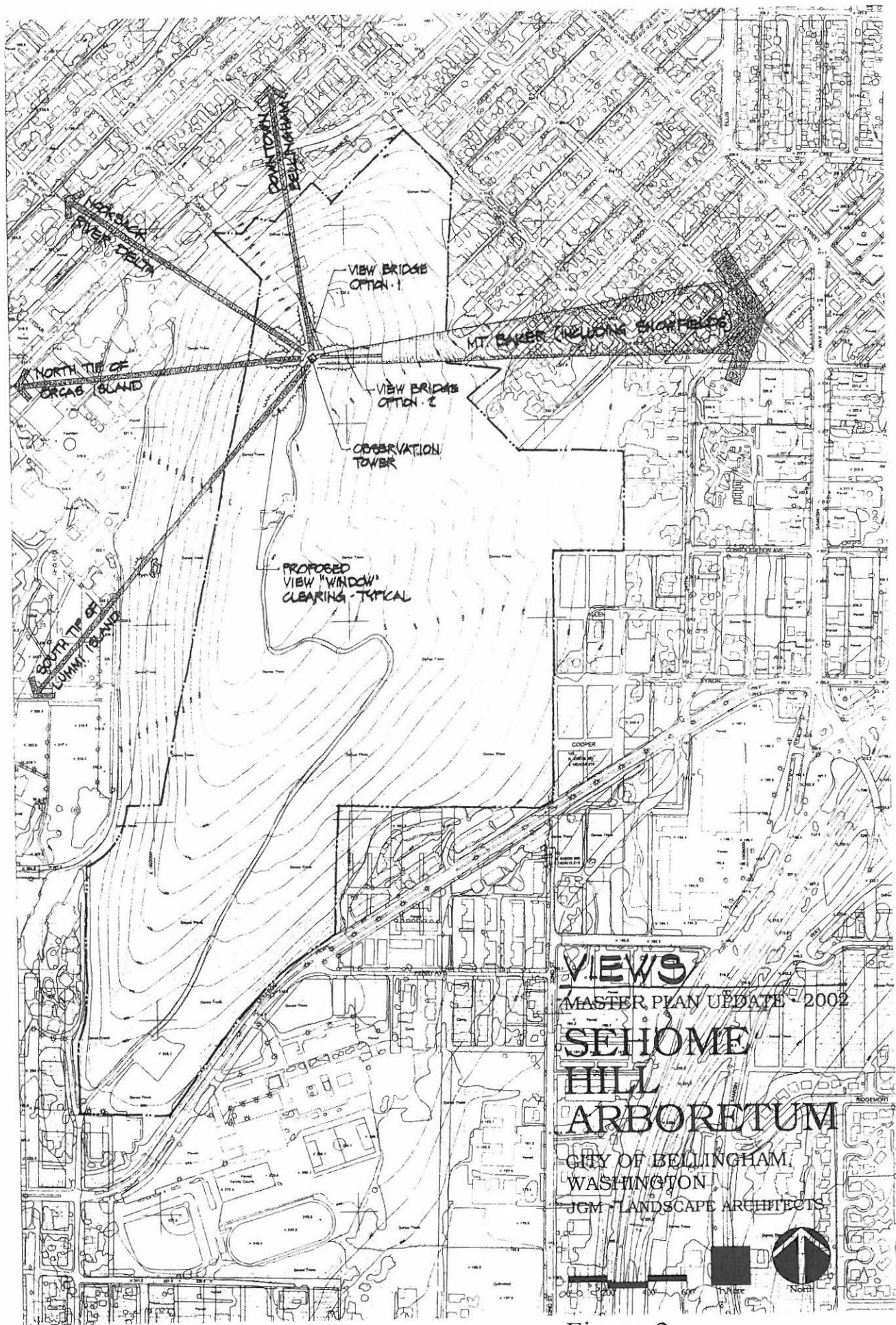


Figure 2

### **Visibility:**

**Existing Conditions:** Sehome Hill is a highly-visible, natural landmark in the City of Bellingham. The fact that the hill is Sehome Hill Arboretum is not as widely “known”. The vehicular entrance, the edges and the arboretum’s mission do not enjoy the same visibility as its namesake hill. Some signs identify the Arboretum while other trail linkages remain unmarked. Maps, regulations and other visitor information are not consistently or conveniently available at or near the existing entrances. The eastern margins of the arboretum have no formal trail access.

### **Proposed Visibility Modifications:**

**Trailheads:** There is a need to develop a consistent trailhead marker that will serve as a visible icon to the community that this is an entrance to Sehome Hill Arboretum. In addition, the marker would incorporate regulations and a trail map of the arboretum (See Figure 3). Appropriate trail sign and trailhead markers would be located at primary trail junctions and parking lots.

**Main Entrance:** The current vehicular access is somewhat hidden and poorly defined. The 25<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way and the existing Arboretum parking near the entrance are used primarily by WWU students. There is a need to create greater visibility for the Arboretum along the Bill McDonald Parkway and at the 25<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.

Removal of the existing unregulated parking along 25<sup>th</sup> Street, street improvements and consideration for “regulated” short term (2-4 hours) parking along the street would remove the “driving through the parking lot” approach to the Arboretum. Street trees and additional signage could further enhance the entrance experience. Other modifications within the Arboretum’s entrance include a defined, regulated (3 hour limit) visitor parking lot, a round about and two vehicle control gates. One control gate would be located immediately inside the Arboretum boundary. Its purpose would be to control vehicular access to the Arboretum and the parking. The second control gate would be to control access to the Arboretum but allow access to the lower (entrance) parking lot. It would be placed immediately inside the roundabout.

**Signage:** There are three existing signs identifying the Arboretum. They are a standard City of Bellingham Park Department sign. In addition, there are limited trailhead signs, one at each parking lot and one at the WWU Huntoon Trail trailhead. Internally there are two types of interpretive signs. These small, steel fabricated signs appear to have been installed in 2 increments; the second employing steel angles that resist bending better than the flatbars of the first installation.

**Signage:**

**Entrance Sign:** Develop an appropriate vehicular sign at the Arboretum's entrance similar to the existing Park Department signs. Also place a trailhead marker adjacent to the parking lot. (See Figure 3).

**Trailhead Signs:** Install trailhead signs at every trailhead. Signs shall be appropriate scale and materials and shall be sited in a visible, accessible location. Each sign will identify Sehome Hill Arboretum and have a trail map, a "You are here" locator, rules and regulations. (See Figure 3).

**Trail Markers:** Trail markers shall be located only at junctions of primary trails.

PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE

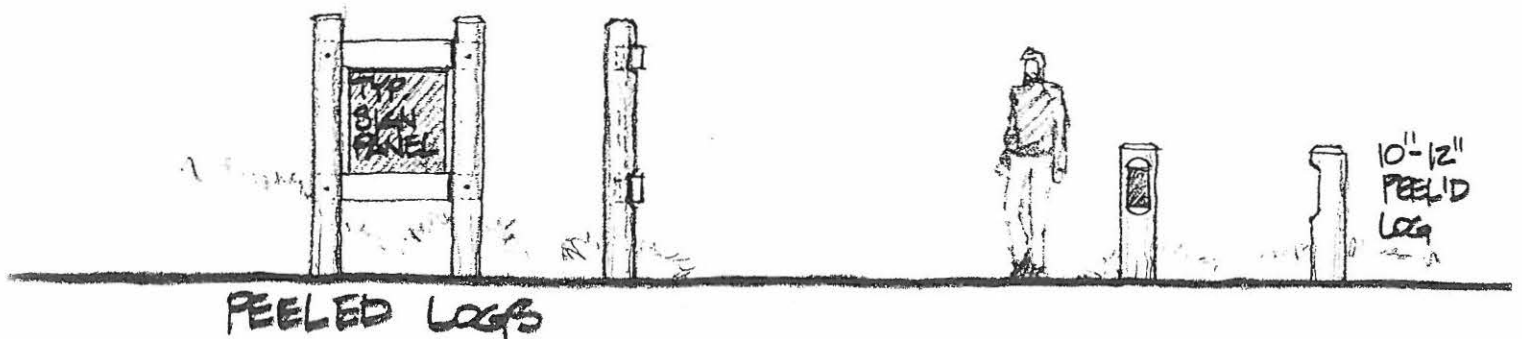
TRAIL MARKER

FRONT

SIDE

FRONT

SIDE



## SIGN SYSTEMS

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Figure 3

**Utilities:**

Sehome Hill Arboretum plays host to a water reservoir and a communications tower. The lidded reservoir is located about midway up the northwestern slope of the hill. The structure is relatively unobtrusive with the exception of the overhead electrical lines that serve the facility. The communications tower is located at the top of the hill, immediately adjacent to the parking lot. The tower and the fenced support structures are visually disruptive. Their close proximity to the parking lot and the tunnel leaves little room to screen the facility with planting and still permit access for maintenance. A combination of buffer planting and paint for the structures is recommended. Paint colors should be recessive, non-reflective and similar in shade and hue of the surrounding landscape colors of the stone, earth and/or tree bark.

Undergrounding of all overhead electrical and/or telephone lines is recommended. Re-vegetate all of the currently cleared utility corridors unless portions of them coincide with desired vistas.

**Vegetation Management:**

The Sehome Hill Arboretum Policy states: “only native plants may be planted on Sehome Hill.” Unfortunately, years ago after the hill had been logged volunteers planted English Ivy to stabilize the hillside. Today the ivy thrives in the shade of the second growth forest. But the ivy is not alone – periwinkle and English holly also compete and thrive at the peril of native species. Removal or elimination of these non-native species along with new plantings of native species will foster more vigorous native plant communities.

**Coordination with Other Plans and Agencies**

---

The Sehome Hill Arboretum is dedicated open space in the Bellingham community. The master plan update acknowledges its relationship to the community as well as the unique relationship between the City of Bellingham and Western Washington University. The Board and master planner coordinated the Master Plan Update with the following plans:

***Western Washington University Institutional Master Plan (IMP)***

The Institutional Master Plan (IMP) designates Sehome Arboretum (District 8) as natural open space that is used for both active and passive education and recreation. The Arboretum is managed under an interlocal agreement between the City and Western. The purpose of the agreement is to preserve and maintain the Arboretum in its natural state to the greatest extent possible. The Arboretum provides educational, aesthetic, recreation and research opportunities for both the public and the campus community,

The IMP proposes changes to campus vehicular access. South College Drive will be removed. The University will study the area along the southwest corner of the Arboretum as a potential secondary circulation route. The circulation element of the plan suggests a major campus

bicycle route and a secondary vehicular route be located between Fairhaven College and the Arboretum. Currently a narrow, dead-end service road is located in this corridor. The corridor is very narrow-bounded by the college buildings on the west and an almost vertical rock cliff with native vegetation interspersed on the east. Expansion of the corridor's width without modifications to the existing college buildings would necessitate excavation and restoration of the affected City-owned Arboretum land. The resultant slopes would be very steep and expensive to restore.

The Arboretum master planner met with WWU's planning consultant and discussed the preliminary conceptual alternatives for the Arboretum, WWU's study for the access corridor will probably not be completed by the time the Arboretum Master Plan Update is complete. Any potential impacts to the Arboretum related to WWU proposed access road proposed will be reviewed and assessed by the Arboretum Board.

### ***Integrated Outdoor Learning Environment***

As stated in Western's IMP, a primary use for the arboretum should be for educational purposes. Its location adjacent to the campus offers a well-suited location for outdoor learning. The lower hard surface portion of the Huntoon Trail is proposed as a location for small learning resources such as representative rock samples, tree and other plant specimens for hands-on investigations and other displays that provide integrated teaching and learning tools. A small, rustic covered (and open) structure and the abandoned sandstone quarry next to the Huntoon Trail would serve as a central location for these and other learning resources.

### ***Bellingham Greenways- Guide Map – 1996***

This map was reviewed to identify trail linkages with the community. Of particular note is the trail connection potential with the Connelly Creek Trail. The Sehome Hill Arboretum Policy specifically restricts bicycle riding to Arboretum Drive only. The Greenways Guide Map suggests bicycles be permitted on Huntoon Trail as well – an inconsistency with current Arboretum policy.



## **Appendix A**

---

Exhibits Shown at Public  
Open House #1 & 2



**LEGEND:**

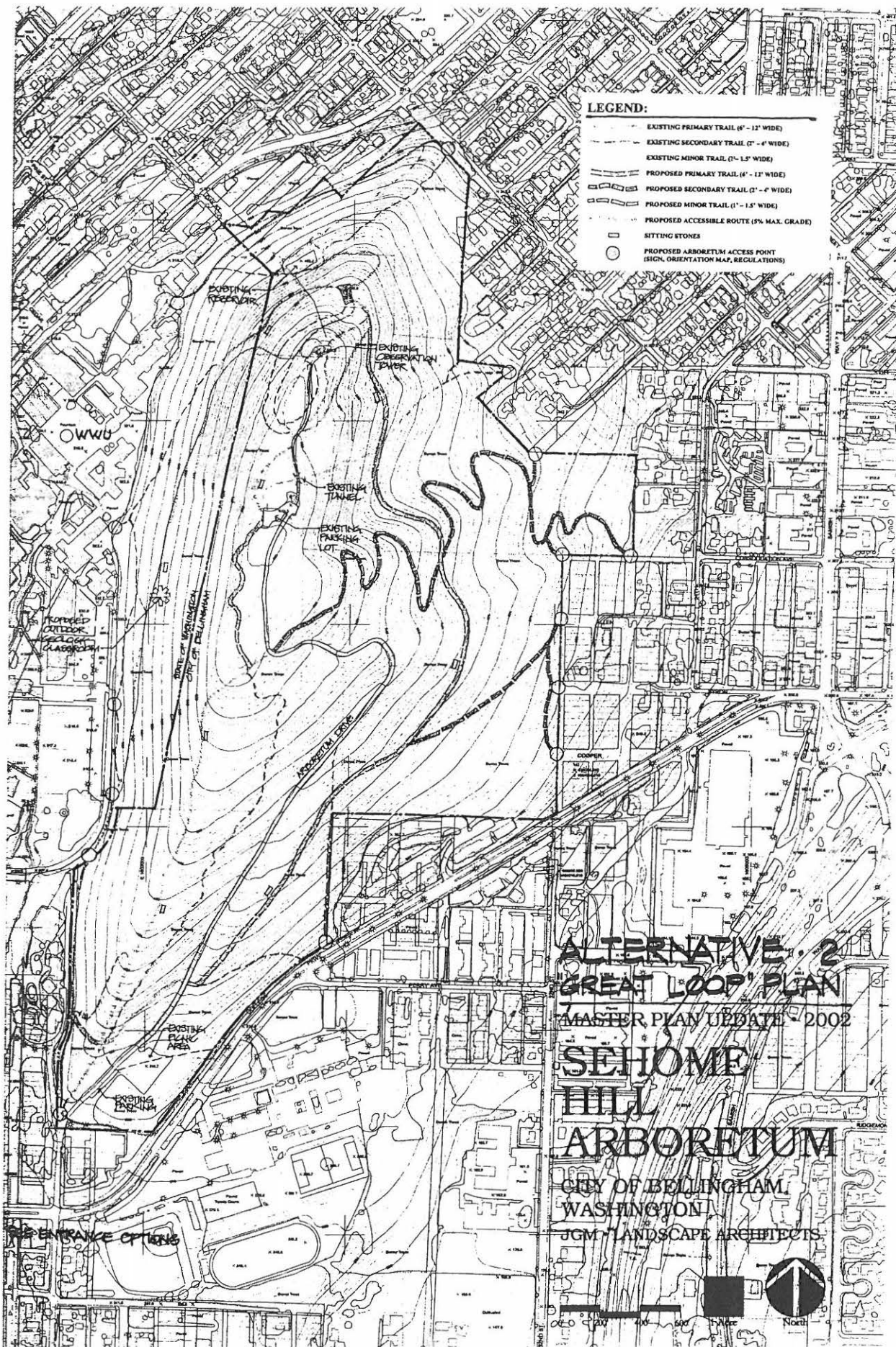
- EXISTING PRIMARY TRAIL (6" - 12" WIDE)
- EXISTING SECONDARY TRAIL (2" - 4" WIDE)
- EXISTING MINOR TRAIL (1" - 1.5" WIDE)
- PROPOSED PRIMARY TRAIL (6" - 12" WIDE)
- PROPOSED SECONDARY TRAIL (2" - 4" WIDE)
- PROPOSED MINOR TRAIL (1" - 1.5" WIDE)
- PROPOSED ACCESSIBLE ROUTE (5% MAX. GRADE)
- SITTING STONES
- PROPOSED ARBORETUM ACCESS POINT  
(SICK, ORIENTATION MAP, REGULATIONS)

**ALTERNATIVE 1**  
**NO CHANGE**  
MASTER PLAN UPDATE - 2002  
**SEHOME HILL**  
**ARBORETUM**  
CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON  
JGM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

SEE ENTRANCE OPTIONS



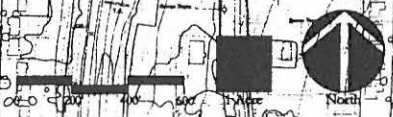




- LEGEND:**
- EXISTING PRIMARY TRAIL (6" - 12" WIDE)
  - EXISTING SECONDARY TRAIL (2" - 4" WIDE)
  - EXISTING MINOR TRAIL (1" - 1.5" WIDE)
  - PROPOSED PRIMARY TRAIL (6" - 12" WIDE)
  - PROPOSED SECONDARY TRAIL (2" - 4" WIDE)
  - PROPOSED MINOR TRAIL (1" - 1.5" WIDE)
  - PROPOSED ACCESSIBLE ROUTE (5% MAX. GRADE)
  - SITTING STONES
  - PROPOSED ARBORETUM ACCESS POINT (SIGN, ORIENTATION MAP, REGULATIONS)

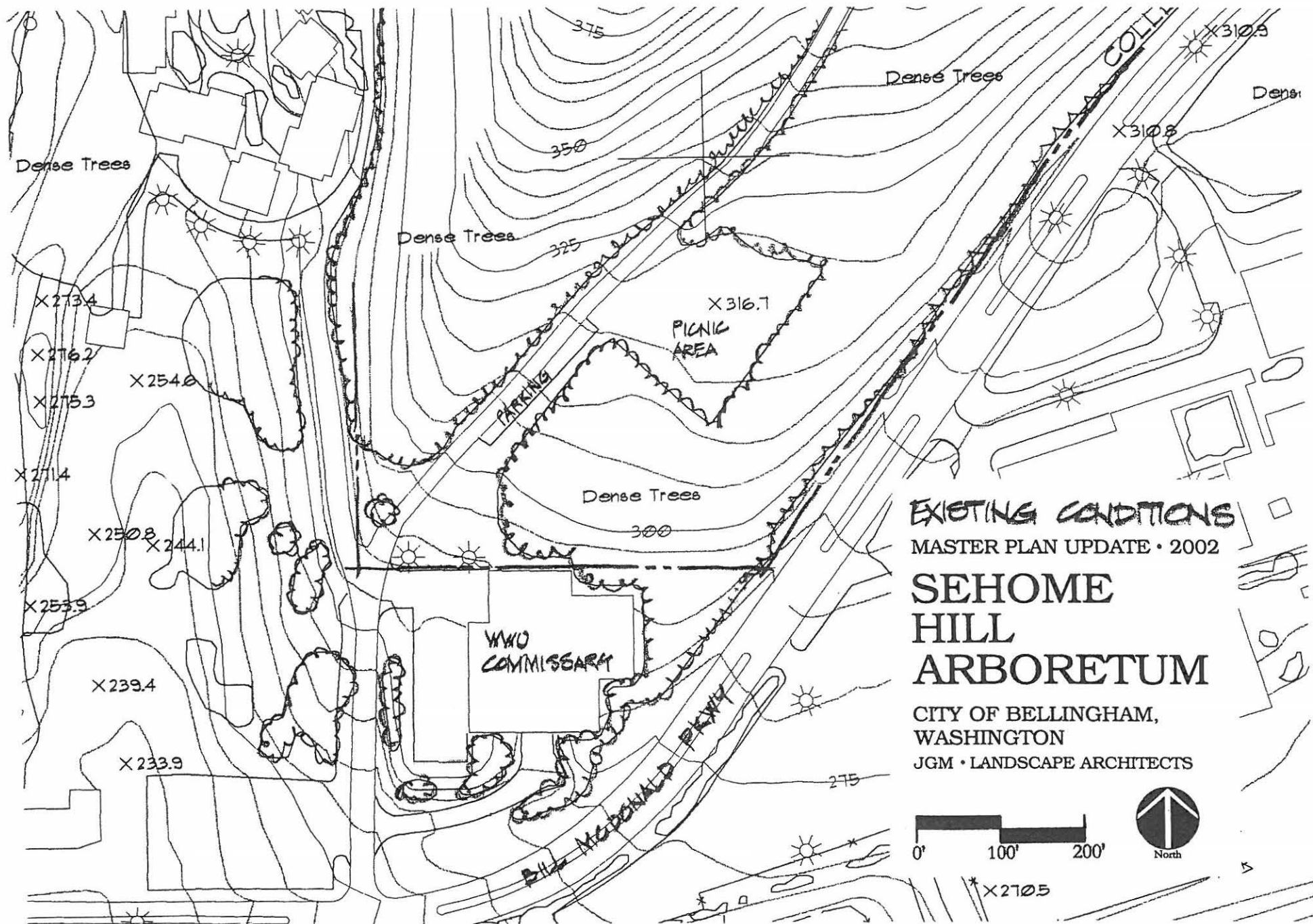
**ALTERNATIVE 2**  
**'GREAT LOOP' PLAN**  
MASTER PLAN UPDATE - 2002  
**SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM**  
CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON  
JGM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

ENTRANCE OPTIONS









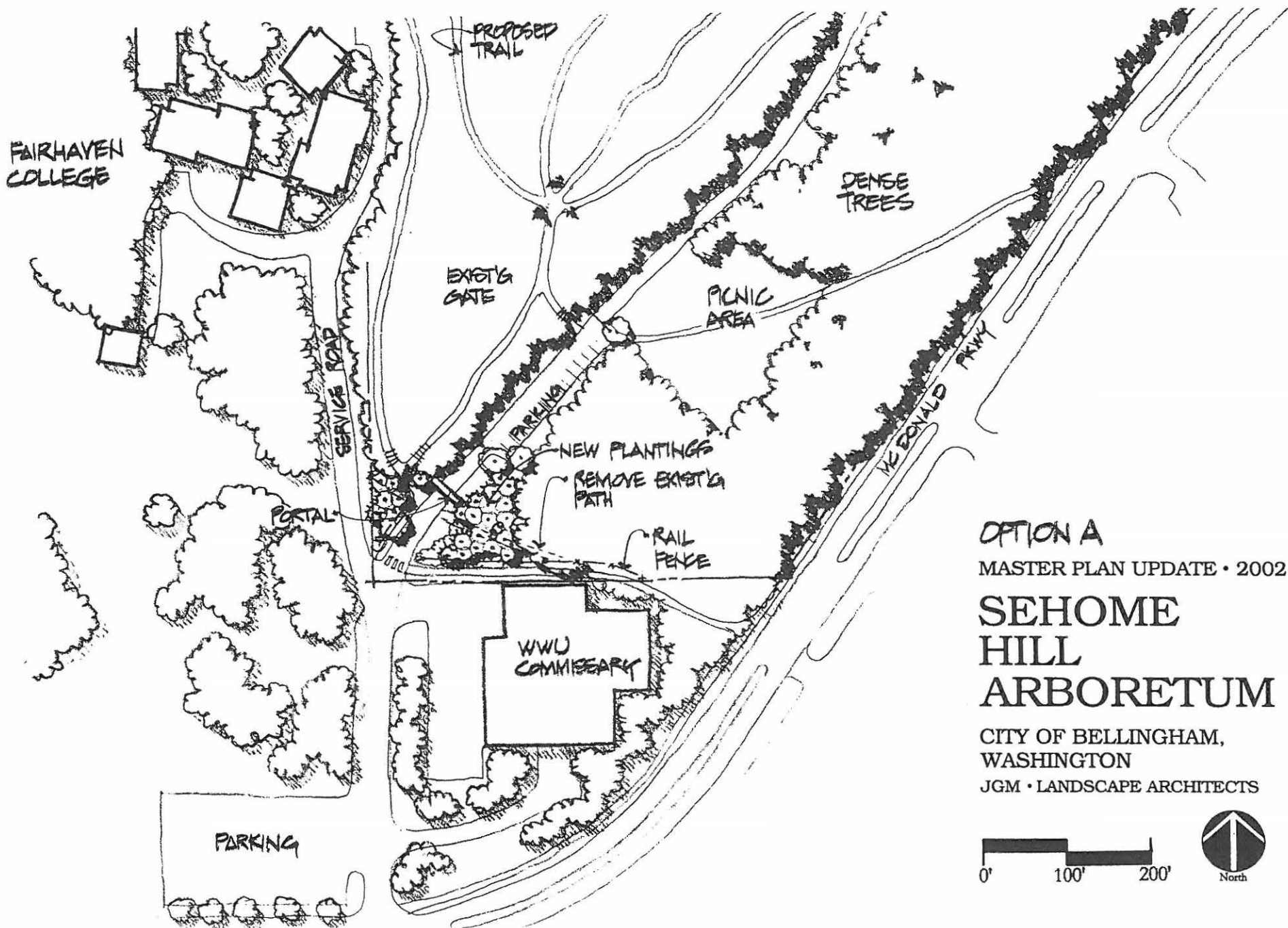
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



FAIRHAVEN  
COLLEGE

PROPOSED  
TRAIL

RELOCATE  
EXIST'G  
GATE

DENSE  
TREES

PICNIC  
AREA

NEW  
ENTRANCE

TURN-A-  
ROUND

RELOCATED  
GATE  
PARKING

FENCE

NEW  
PLANTINGS

WWU  
COMMISSARY

MC DONALD  
PARK

PARKING

OPTION B

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

0' 100' 200'



FAIRHAVEN  
COLLEGE

PROPOSED  
TRAIL

RELOCATE  
EXIST'G  
GATE

DENSE  
TREES

PICNIC  
AREA

TURN-A-  
ROUND

PARKING  
RELOCATED  
GATE

PORTAL

NEW WWU ROAD

NEW  
PLANTINGS

WWU  
COMMISSARY

MC DONALD PKWY

PARKING

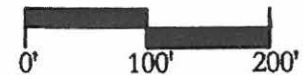
OPTION C

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

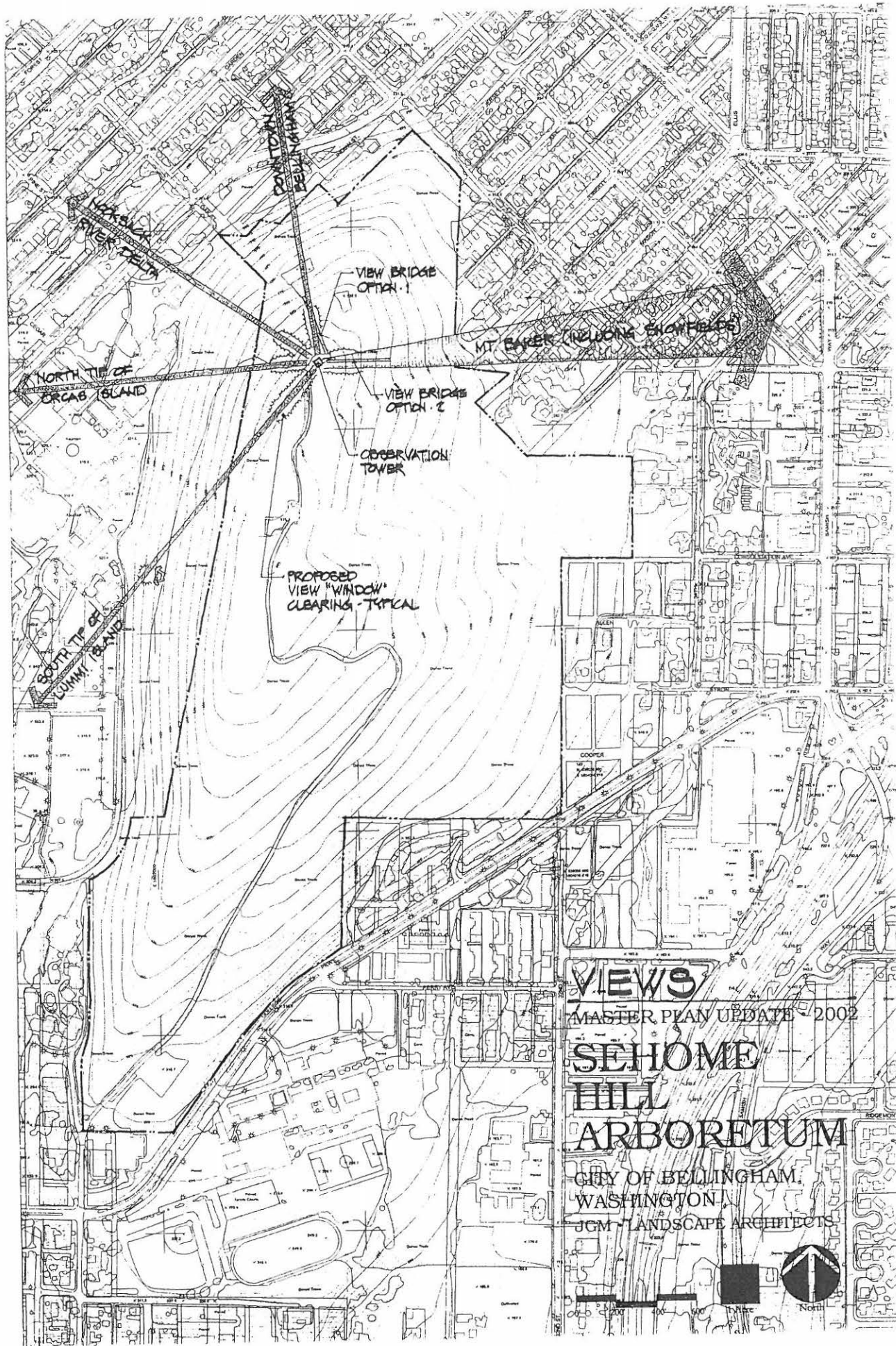
# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM

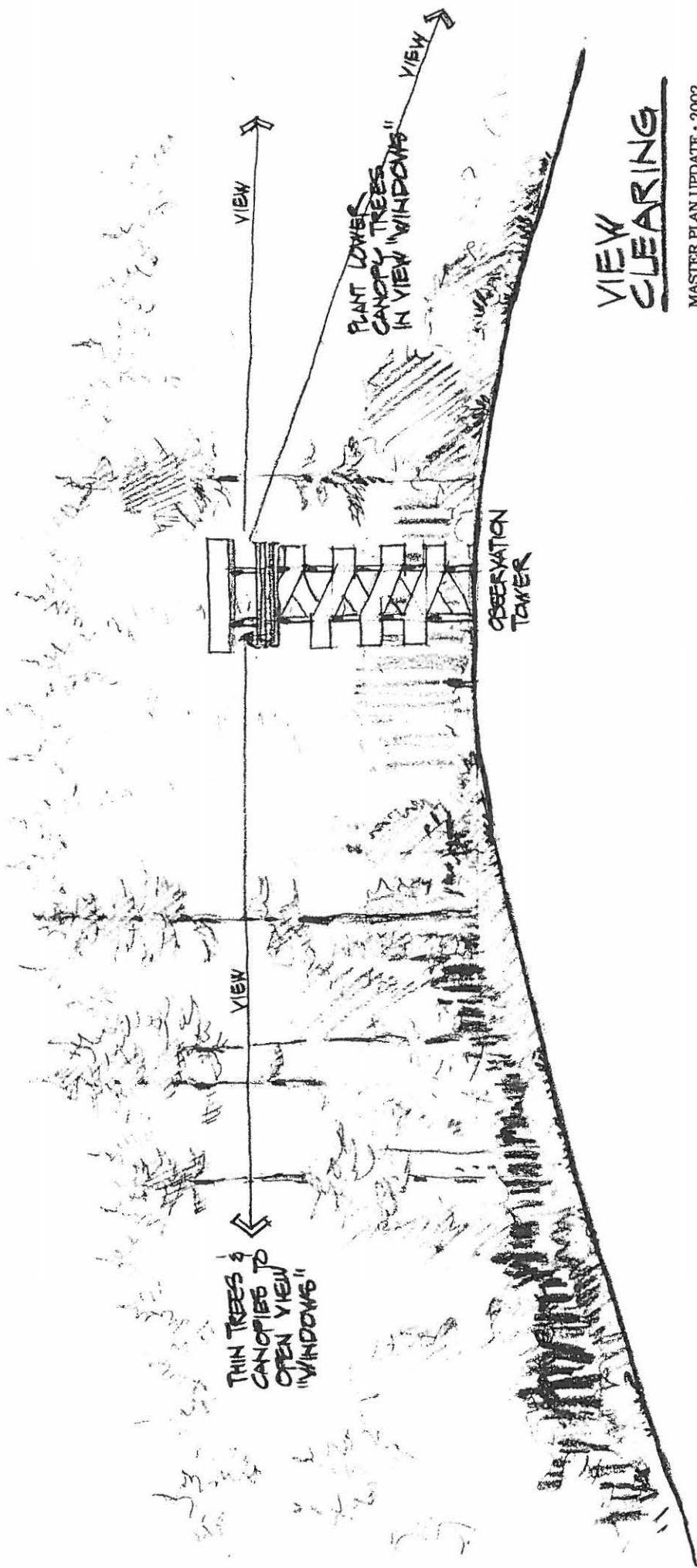
CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS









## VIEW CLEARING

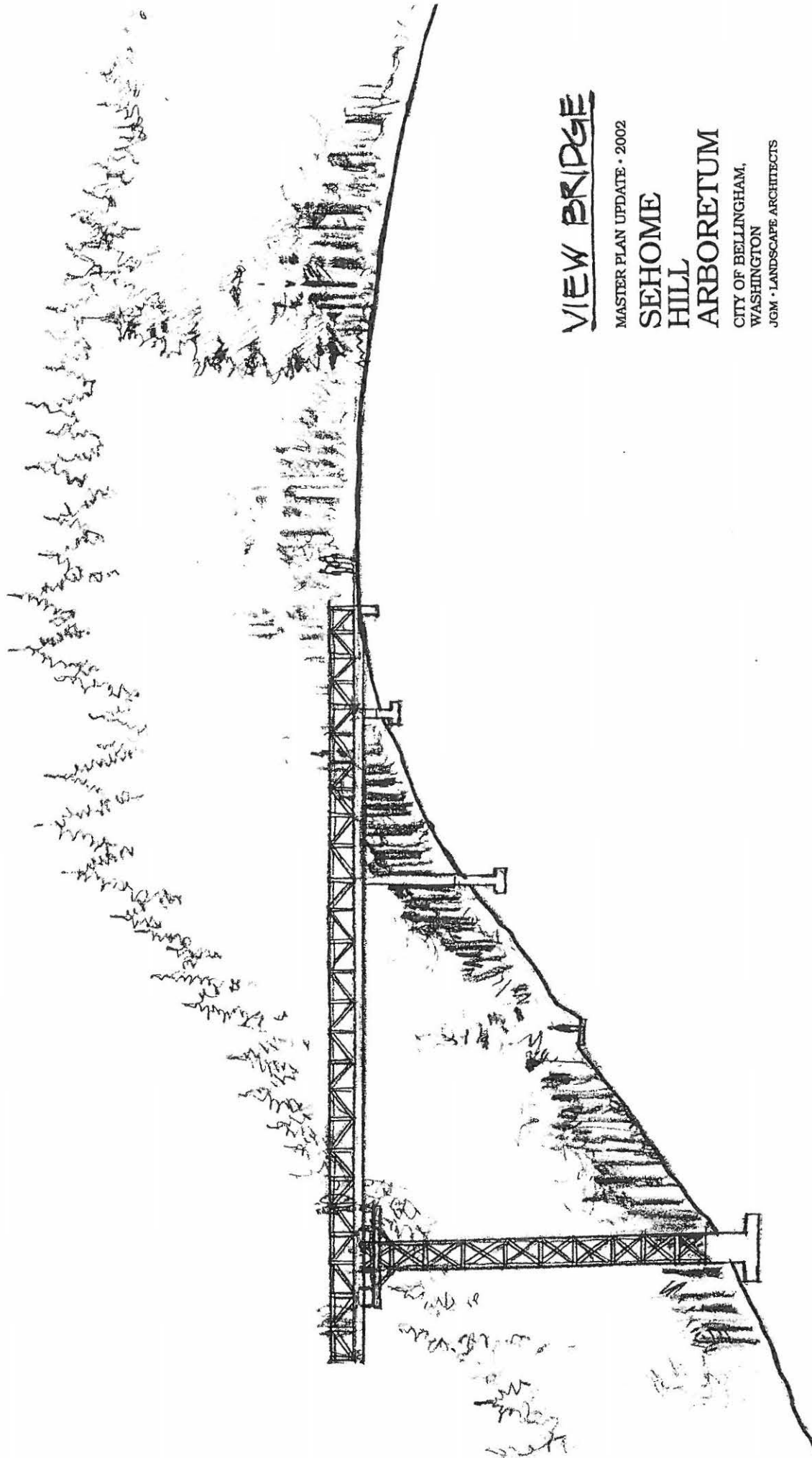
MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

SEHOME  
HILL  
ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS





# VIEW BRIDGE

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

SEHOME

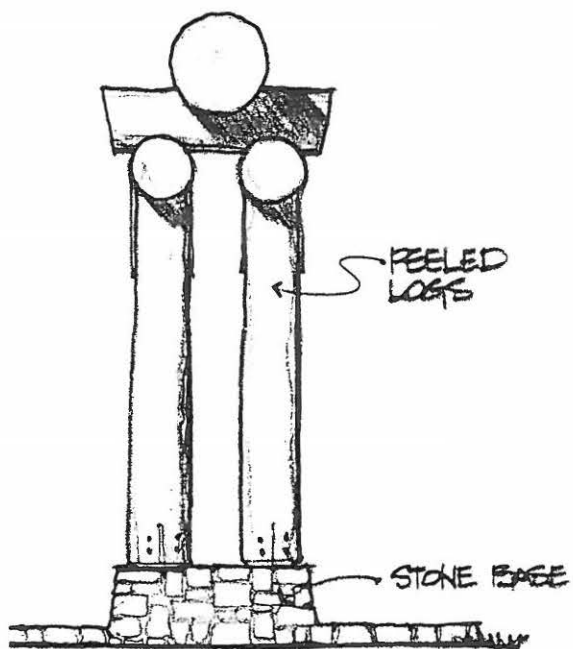
HILL

ARBORETUM

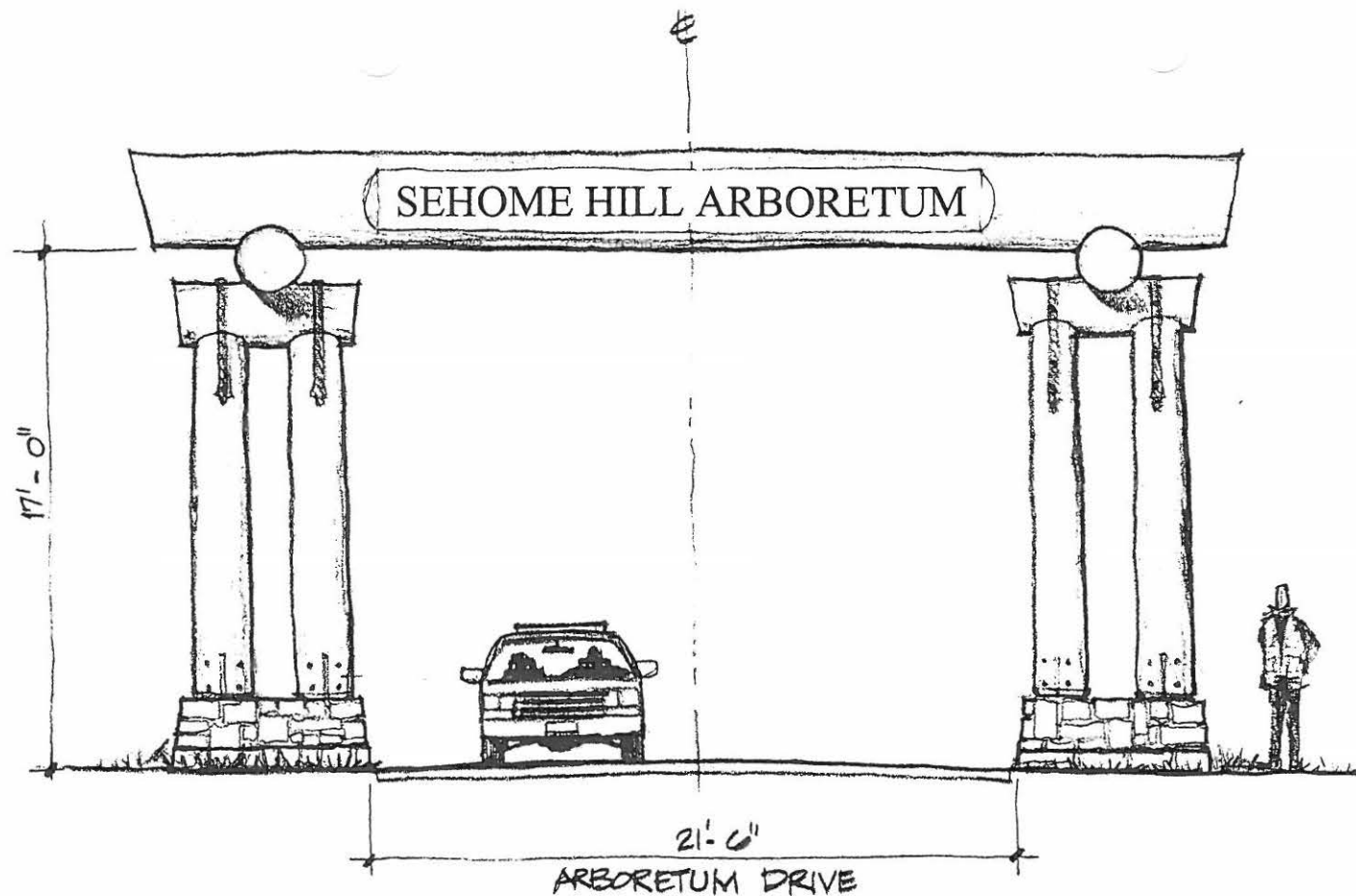
CITY OF BELLINGHAM,

WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

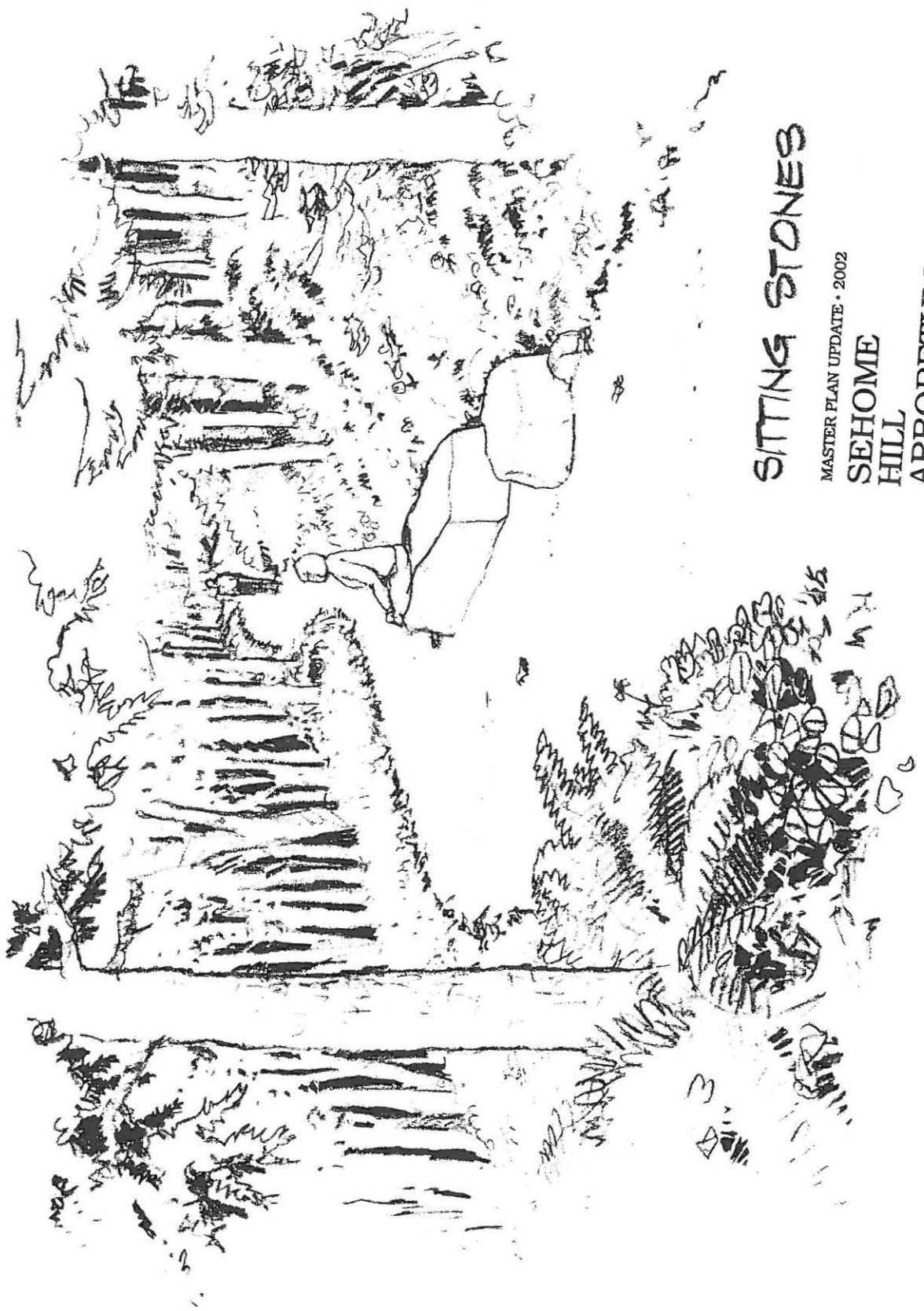
ENTRANCE  
PORTAL

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

SEHOME  
HILL  
ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



# SITTING STONES

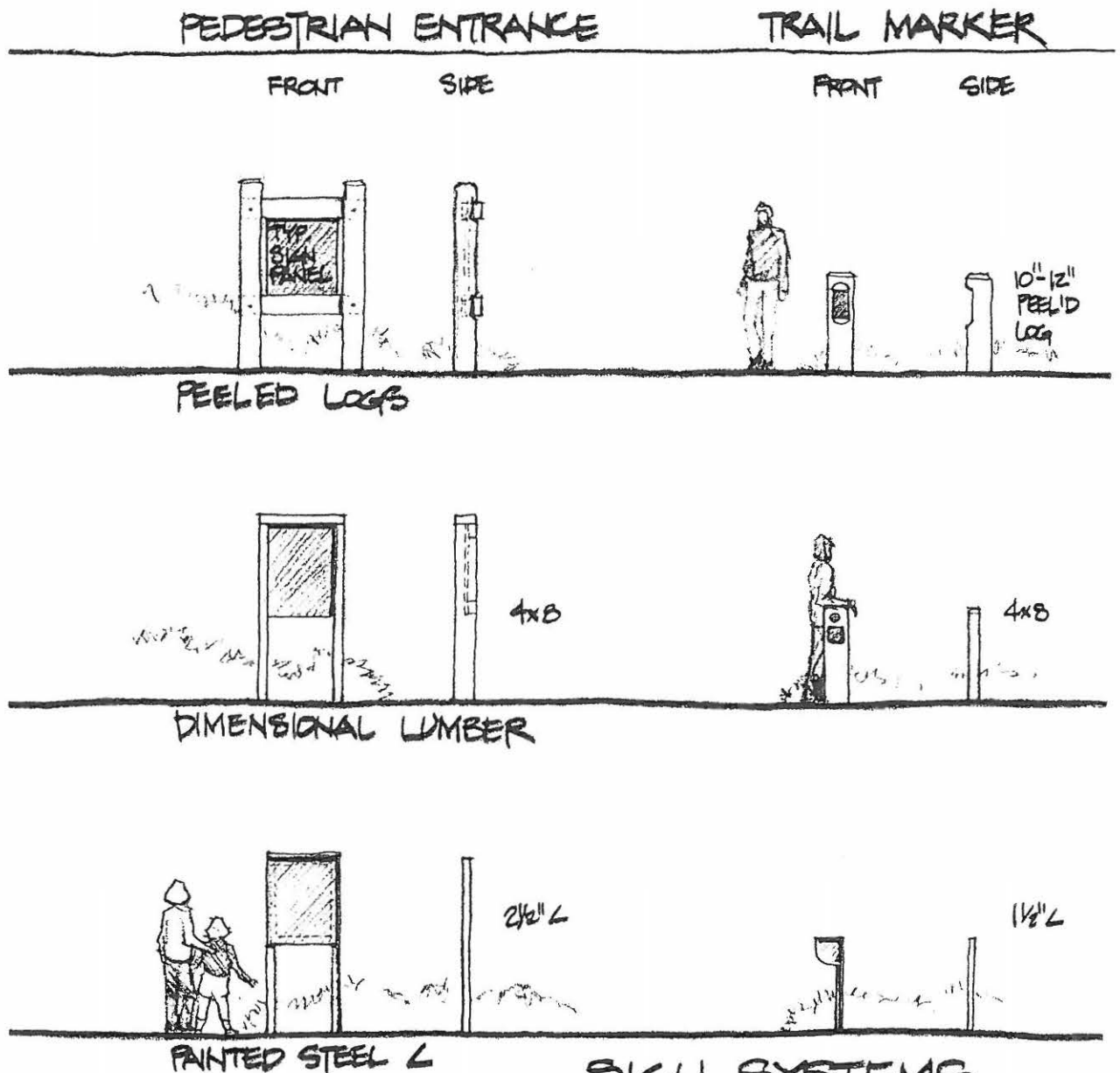
MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

SEHOME  
HILL

ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



## SIGN SYSTEMS

MASTER PLAN UPDATE • 2002

# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM

CITY OF BELLINGHAM,  
WASHINGTON

JGM • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

## **Appendix B**

---

Comments from Public  
Open House #1

## Appendix #B

### Open House #1

### Sehome Hill Arboretum Master Plan Update

**COMMENTS** (from the Thursday, January 24, 2002 Public Open House held at Sehome High School from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.)

NOTE: These comments have been transcribed from “Post-it” notes written by attendees to the Open House. The **Bold type** represents the titles of the displays and the standard type the attendee’s comments.

#### **SEHOME ARBORETUM 1997 AERIAL PHOTO**

1. This (area of the photo) has been logged and build on.
2. Connect the median with a planted overpass to the Connely/Padden Creek Ecosystem.

#### **ALTERNATIVE 1 - NO CHANGE**

1. To me the word Arboretum suggests as natural a place as possible, with minimal trails and a place to educate ourselves and others about nature. As my daughter grows I hope that natural places remain in Bellingham, with as little construction as possible. The Arboretum, in it’s current state, is one such natural place an my “vote” is that it remain so, which appears to suggest Alternative 1 – No Change. The proposed Primary Trails on Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 (6’-12’) seems very intrusive and not necessary. I think the gentleman’s idea about special permits for the roads that exist for elderly or handicapped makes good sense if accessibility is the reason for redoing the master plan. That would allow elderly and handicapped access to the beauty and wildness of the arboretum with minimal cost (maintain existing road) and minimal intrusion. Marsha Burly.
2. As an avid outdoors person (with my friends) I don’t always want to have to get out of town to experience a serene and natural setting. What makes the Arboretum an Arboretum is that it is in as natural state as possible. There is already a road up to the top and a wheelchair accessible trail. Whenever I go to the Arboretum I encounter others who also enjoy the serenity. It won’t be very serene if more trails/roads are put in. There are plenty of places to go that are well marked and easily accessible. Those people who truly appreciate nature know about the Arboretum. If you add more access the lovely peace will be destroyed, as will some trees and other vegetation. So often improvements

## Appendix #B

are actually degradations. After all, can one really improve on Nature? Please, respect the Arboretum for the jewel that it is in its current state. Thank you.

3. Additional Signage on B. Mac. Parkway, NO Improvements! Anyone can find the Arboretum; it's the large bunch of trees high above the City!
4. Leave it the same. Monty Thompson.
5. Existing trails on the eastern side would be fine if marked and maintained – more could use them without making them 4' wide. Granted, running into tarp shelters can be scary when alone, and could be remedied by better access.
6. NO CHANGES. This is the only natural area that has been preserved in any way.
7. We think the true uniqueness of the area comes from just that, it is unique. It is not a "sterilized" park. Leave it as wild as possible. Make as few changes possible. Steve and Catherine Carey.
8. NO Paving – NO Manicuring.
9. As a member of the track & XC teams of Sehome as well as a frequent runner of the Sehome Hill Trails, I feel the trail system is best as is in its state that is more natural than 50 years ago. It seems like these trail revision plans would turn the hill into more of an ugly highway system than a park. Also, more trails means more people. I like the park because it's quiet and serene; I don't want everyone and their Uncle on Sehome Hill. Other park revisions I have seen make the park ugly and obviously a triumph of man to build concrete trails. I want Sehome Hill to stay natural. Let it be!

### ALTERNATIVE 2 – "GREAT LOOP" PLAN

1. I like alternative #2 – nice loop trail. John Hodge.
2. Animal overpass.
3. Ring trail is a great idea when you can afford it. East Side entrances are real important now that the new construction is done.
4. NO more PAVING – NO CLEARING.
5. This is a place for hiking – can't think this trail would be beneficial because it would increase the foot traffic too much.
6. Try to incorporate any changes so that they don't unnecessarily impact the natural character of the Arboretum.
7. Don't make the new trails so wide. Two feet maximum is all that needed for width.
8. I like the concept of loop trail.

### ALTERNATIVE 3 – "RADIAL" PLAN

1. Clear selectively both existing viewing (old parking areas) and do not build a view bridge.
2. I like this alternative the best – plus, I think the existing trails need some maintenance.
3. How come there is not an Interpretive Center with volunteer or student staff.

## **Appendix #B**

4. Liberty Street Valley Trail to Road.
5. Definitely my preference for the new trail options. Less impact will result. The Arboretum should stay as wild as possible; we don't need another City Park. Concerned Hiker.

### **ENTRANCE OPTION A**

1. I think the existing entrance is just fine.
2. No new entrance, no new construction. The intimate entrance is nice.
3. No new entrance. No new construction
4. Do we really need a new entrance, more construction? Everyone who cares already knows where the arboretum is.
5. End use of Arboretum parking spaces (especially at base of hill) as WWU form resident parking.
6. I like it the way it is already.

### **ENTRANCE OPTION B**

1. No large new road please
2. No changes in road or entrance. Steve Carey
3. No changes in road entrance. Lisalea.
4. Prefer this system. Prevent students from parking in Arboretum parking spots.

### **ENTRANCE OPTION C**

1. I like this proposal best. It solves the traffic problem and the portal is wonderful.
2. Don't make service road as connection to main campus.
3. NO new road. No Cutting.
4. Portal is a bad idea! No new roads or cutting are needed. Better signage on Bill McDonald Parkway would be a much better alternative.
5. Existing entrance is more than adequate.
6. Shared entrance is good. Option B would be a hazard on a very busy street.

### **ENTRANCE PORTAL**

1. I like trees not logs.
2. Don't like a big entrance at all. Steve Carey
3. Rock benches seem like they might be neat. One has to worry about graffiti though. The entrance looks like the gate from Jurassic Park. Let the park speak for itself. **NO** ridiculous log contraption can say what it can.
4. I like this entrance concept.



## **Appendix #B**

### **SITTING STONES**

1. I like the sitting stones and the Arboretum drive entrance.
2. NO "memorial" benches please!
3. Do not enlarge any trails.
4. Only sitting stones where it's already cleared if needed.

### **VIEWS**

1. I think it would be very difficult to develop views from trails without doing a lot of clearing of trees. I don't think it would be desirable to do.
2. I prefer the bay/island/city view.
3. I think its okay to trim a few branches to enhance the views.

### **VIEW CLEARING**

1. In favor of judicious limbing of trees and thinning of trees to improve view from tower.
2. I am perfectly satisfied with the current tower. It seems like it gives a better view than the proposed ramp tower. Improved viewing is good as long as cutting is very selective.

### **VIEW BRIDGE**

1. This is cool, when can we afford it.
2. Is cost of view bridge justified based on likely use by handicapped visitors? I would doubt it.
3. I think this structure may be too intrusive for such a natural setting. John Hodge.
4. I'm not sure about this. Is it possible to make a wonder structure? Perhaps smaller viewpoints would be better.

### **SIGN SYSTEMS**

1. Prefer peeled logs for signs. Don't put up too many signs.
2. Peeled logs are in line with the yellow-striped logs that mark trail entrances. Love this new fiberglass material.
3. Please do not use steel signs. The peeled logs are by far the best.
4. I agree steel is ugly and reminds me of giant obtrusive structures. Peeled logs would be good.

## **Appendix #B**

5. I don't like the metal signs.

### **General Comments:**

I was hoping tonight for some sort of presentation, which would explain the concept we're after. Is it an Arboretum or a forest preserve? If it's a preserve, let's leave it wild. But if it's an Arboretum, perhaps there should be areas cleared a bit and little groves of trees planted – trees, which might originally have, been in the hill.

I don't see the focus here. But I'm very impressed by all the hard work of the Board and the Parks Department – and especially the wonderful drawings. Mindy Newby.

## **Appendix C**

---

Comments from Public  
Open House #2

March 20, 2001

TO: Sehome Arboretum Board of Governors

FROM: Paul Leuthold

RE: Comments on Sehome Master Plan

Having reviewed the public comment forms, my opinion is as follows:

- Trails: It appears that there are mixed feelings regarding the addition of any new trails. I personally like the additional "loop trail" concept. Any new trails from the east should be secondary in nature and limited to 3.
- Signage: Improve wayfinding with "low impact" signage, peeled logs or wooden frames. Enhanced signage at the trailhead would be beneficial.
- Sitting stones: Keep the number very limited. I believe these could be supplemented with fallen logs strategically located.
- Existing View Tower: Continue selective trimming to allow views.
- New Tower: Interesting concept but I cannot support the expenditure or destruction of environment
- Entry Way: There was very little input from the public. I personally like Option A.
- Misc: Reveg area (with native plants) where water line was installed.

# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM BOARD MINUTES

March 21, 2002

**PRESENT:** Merrill Peterson, Marvin Harris, Carolyn Wilhite, Paul Brower, Dave Engebretson, Kevin Burke, Pam Terhorst, Byron Elmendorf, Tim Wynn, Michael Steed

**ABSENT:** Paul Leuthold

**GUEST:**

**I. MEETING MINUTES:**

**II. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

Update of Sehome Hill Arboretum Master Plan: The Board reviewed and discussed the verbal comments and written comments received from the two Master Plan UpDate Open Houses. The Board agreed that the majority of the user comments received during the open houses echoed "Less Development is Better". To assist analyzing the comments received and establishing a direction for the next phase of the master plan update, the board divided up the plan into several elements which includes views, entrance (road location and entrance features), other amenities, signage, trails, new horizontal tower and WWU Master Plan interface. The Board discussed the plan elements and developed the following comments:

**Views:**

The Board agreed that selective pruning could be done to reopen view windows to Downtown Area/Bellingham Bay, the San Juan Islands, Mt. Baker and the Canadian Cascades.

The development of a video viewing station located in the parking lot at the top of the Arboretum was introduced as a method to provide a panoramic view site, which would accommodate ADA access. A viewing station similar to the facility at Whatcom County Parks Tenant Lake could be developed using the communications tower on top of the hill as a camera location. The Board agreed on the merit of this concept and agreed on the potential for future considerations.

**Entrance:**

The Board agreed with the majority of the open house comments that the entrance to the Arboretum should be simple and that a more formal portico was not needed. Both Board and public comments reflected the traffic and congestion problems with the 25th Street entrance, however, the development of a new access from Bill McDonald Park Way could be planned with WWU in future years.



The Board expressed an interest in cleaning up the non-arboretum parking problems near the entrance gate and developing appropriate informational and regulatory signage.

#### **Other Amenities:**

After hearing the public comments, the Board agreed that any new viewing areas should be limited to existing viewsapes and developed in natural non-traditional manner.

The Board agreed that the informal outdoor classroom as proposed by WWU should continue as previously approved.

#### **Signage:**

The development of a good way finding, directional and informational signage system should be pursued. Sign system design should have a natural theme appearance with specific elements made from materials both durable and easy to maintain.

#### **Trails:**

In general trails to be maintained and developed to a footpath scale (normally tread wide enough for one-way traffic in single file. Existing wider trails on the west side to be maintained a existing widths to meet higher demands for WWU usage. Although several people commented that they did not want to see expansion in the current trail system (including the proposed loop trail), the Board believed that the loop trail would open the Arboretum to a broader number of users. Development of a trail using a somewhat constant contour elevation to circle the hill will provide this experience.

The Board also agreed that access from the east should be limited to a few access points and that the development smaller feeder trails which connected to a larger trail from the east would work best.

Efforts should be made to close off some of the social trails and discourage the development of these small trails of convenience.

#### **New Horizontal Tower:**

The Board agreed that the horizontal tower concept was good, however, public comments were relatively negative. Development of the tower would be expensive and would not be a priority for future funding.

#### **WWU Sehome Hill Arboretum Master Plan Interface:**

The Board will continue to review and respond to concepts and proposals as WWU implements and continues the planning process for the University. The interface of the Arboretum's western border to the University is important to both plans and the Board will continue to welcome logical pedestrian scale access and improvements to the Arboretum.

## **Appendix D**

---

Comments from Public  
Open House #3

# **SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM MASTER PLAN UPDATE MEETING**

## **Presentation of Draft Plan Modifications**

**November 14, 2002  
Sehome High School  
7:00 to 9:00 pm**

**Community attendance: 9 individuals**

### **COMMENTS BY CATEGORY:**

#### **TRAILS**

- No change – maintain obstacle free
- Some trails are neglected
- Limit additional trails to minor, narrow footpaths
- Destruction of trail/forest from new water line to Oak Street needs new planting or re-vegetation
- No Changes to something simple and nurturing
- Negative feelings of Alternative 2
- Discourage unauthorized trail building
- Maintain rustic character – incremental improvements
- Additional trails will decrease quality of habitat and add to maintenance cost
- Would volunteer for cleanup and maintenance if there were public announcement
- Won't be serene if more trails/roads are added
- If you add more access the lovely peace will be destroyed as well as trees and other vegetation

#### **EDUCATION USES**

- Promote educational value – not to attract "drive-bys"
- Minimal trails – a place to educate ourselves and others about nature
- Need an interpretive center with volunteer or student staff

#### **COMMENTS IN GENERAL**

- Do nothing
- Maintain low budget items
- Need center stripe through corners – Sweep shoulders for edge visibility
- Speed bumps (low type)
- Bottom parking area – 3 hr. meters (deter WWU student storage)
- Keep rustic, undeveloped area where new comers feel safe and welcome
- Maintain but add nothing new
- Not to much sanitation
- Can one really improve nature
- Is it an arboretum or a forest preserve
- No memorial benches
- No new paving

## **VIEWS**

- Tree trimming (habitat impact/for the birds and selective trimming in season)
- Sparse thinning
- Bridge impractical out of place
- Aesthetic value of seeing only woods
- Tower exists – keep views open with periodic cutting
- Bury power lines
- Cut scraggly maples
- Top some trees to North and East
- Trees to east block freeway noise
- “Views” should be trees themselves

## **SAFETY**

- Random natural places to sit
- Use large stones already near trails
- Use fallen Doug Fir trunks
- Prefer entrance B for access and safety

## **PICNIC AREA**

- Good spot – Keep native and natural
- Include BBQ pits
- No grass, lawn mowing weed eaters
- No maintenance native ground covers

## **SIGNAGE**

- Improve add signage including: maps (you are here) rules at trail heads (no bikes at all access points) and free paper maps –return recycle boxes
- Sign system lacking
- Low impact signs – peeled wood
- No steel
- Large signs are obnoxious

## **ACCESSIBILITY/ENTRANCE**

- Portal entry goes overboard
- Need larger sign closer to Parkway
- No place to legally park from North or East
- Option A preferred
- Plan “C” gives away a lot for little benefit
- Plan “b” provides permanent private entrance separate for WWU traffic and convey sense of value to Arboretum and community
- Move South entrance to Parkway (away from intersection) with park (picnic) and playground
- Limit road width

## **Appendix E**

---

Preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Cost



## **Opinion of Probable Construction Costs**

### **Sehome Hill Arboretum Master Plan Update 2002**

September 20, 2002

#### **Introduction:**

The following cost information assumes a contractor in a public, competitive bid process would implement the proposed trail improvements depicted in the Master Plan. The costs are very preliminary and are presented for budget purposes only. They have been prepared without benefit of a soils report or a topographic and tree survey. Furthermore, the cost of permits, fees, taxes, construction contingencies and trail structures (such as retaining walls, bridges and signage) are not included in the following cost opinions.

#### **Standard Trail** (2' - 4' wide):

This trail may require some grading along the steeper slopes it traverses. Allowances for imported crushed stone is included in the cost per lineal foot (\$21.00). The length (5,492') multiplied by the cost per foot equals: **\$115,332.00**

#### **Minor Trail** (1' - 1.5' wide):

This narrow trail requires no grading, Grubbing of existing shrubs and groundcovers and compacting the existing soil is all that is required. Cost per lineal foot (\$12.00) multiplied by the proposed length (844') equals: **\$10,128.00**

#### **Total**

**\$125,460.00\***

\*Does not include permits, taxes, fees, surveys, construction contingencies and trail structures such as retaining walls, bridges or signage.