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**From:** President's Office [mailto:presidentsoffice@bbg.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 29, 2006 2:24 PM  
**To:** SR 520 DEIS Comments  
**Subject:** SR 520 Project  
**Importance:** High

<<WDOT - 9.27.06 - email.doc>>

Scot Medbury

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September 29, 2006



Paul Krueger, Environmental Manager  
Washington State Department of Transportation – SR 520 Project  
414 Olive Way, Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Krueger:

**I-0488-001** I was dismayed to learn of proposals under consideration by the Washington State Department of Transportation to replace the SR 520 floating bridge in such a way as to cause massive adverse impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum, a collection of woody plants of international importance. As a leading historian of the development of the Arboretum, I am deeply concerned about the potential disruptions to Washington State's most valuable living collection of woody plants. I respectfully ask for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the Arboretum was designed by the Olmsted Brothers landscape architectural firm between 1904 and 1939 as the centerpiece of their plan for a park and boulevard network for Seattle. Today, the Arboretum is the largest open green space in central Seattle and provides an invaluable park experience for local people as well as visitors to the city. It welcomes some 250,000 visitors a year.

The Arboretum is the only collection in Washington State to be officially designated a State Arboretum. The living collections are among the finest in North America, with world-class holdings of oaks, maples, hollies, and many other plant groups. Already the first two collections are leading collections in the North American Plant Collections Consortium, a major new conservation and stewardship initiative of the American Public Gardens Association. Any development that impinges on this international treasure must be assessed with the greatest care and consideration for future generations.

In the early 1960s, the northern part of the Arboretum was cut through east-west by SR 520; only after huge public process were plans for an additional highway running north-south through the Arboretum abandoned. Key elements in the Arboretum's historic taxonomic collections were displaced at that time. Proposals on the table today present an equally destructive series of options, which, if implemented, will impact adversely on the most ecologically sensitive parts of the Arboretum, including the wetlands in the north.

I was also surprised to learn that despite requests by most neighborhood communities for an independent assessment of construction alternatives, most notably a tunnel, those requests have not been pursued.

I believe strongly that just such a study should be commissioned forthwith.

Sincerely,

Scot Medbury  
President

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**I-0488-001**  
**Comment Summary:**  
Arboretum (Concerns)

**Response:**  
See Section 9.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.