



The Eastlake News

Spring 2015

Mark your calendar for these neighborhood events!

Third Open House to discuss East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza – Thurs., March 19, 6:30 to 8:30pm at TOPS-Seward School, 2500 Franklin Ave. E. See article, p. 8

Public meeting hosting our District 2 King County Councilmember Larry Gossett – Tues., March 24 7 p.m., at TOPS-Seward School library, 2500 Franklin Ave. E. Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 2

Eastlake Egg Hunt -- Sat., April 4, 10:45 a.m. Rogers Playfield, 2501 Franklin Ave. E. See article, p. 5

Public meeting on neighborhood parking, preservation and design – Mon., April 6, 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School. Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 2

Eastlake tree walk led by Arthur Lee Jacobson – Sat., April 18, 10 a.m. to noon (refreshments at 9:30 a.m.). Begins at Roanoke street-end park (corner of Fairview Ave. E. and E. Roanoke St.). Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 13

Public tour of the Colonnade area – Sun., April 19 Noon to 2 p.m. at the existing I-5 Colonnade Open Space, then 2-4 p.m. at the possible south expansion area (now fenced off--enter near corner of Franklin Ave. E. and East Galer St. Colonnade events are sponsored by ECC and Seattle's Neighborhood Matching Fund. See article, p. 17

Public presentation on Eastlake's heritage of buildings, featuring architect and historian Susan Boyle – Wed., April 22, 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School. Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 24

Public meeting to discuss the conditions and potential of the Colonnade area and to brainstorm about possible improvements/expansions – Thurs., April 23 6:30 – 9 p.m. at Agora Conference Center, 1551 Eastlake Avenue

Public workshop on potential skate features for the Colonnade area – Thurs., April 30, 6:30-9 p.m. at Agora Conference Center, 1551 Eastlake Avenue

Public workshop on designing Fairview Green Street – Wed., May 6 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School. Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 3

Public workshop on potential bicycle features for the Colonnade area – Thurs., May 7 6:30-9 p.m. at Agora Conference Center, 1551 Eastlake Avenue.

ECC's Spring Celebration –Thurs., May 14 5:30-7 p.m. at Mammoth, 2501 Eastlake Avenue. \$5 wine, \$4 draft beer, \$3 nonalcoholic draft soda. Have fun and meet your neighbors at ECC's twice-annual celebration. See article, p. 4

Public meeting to discuss design ideas and alternatives for the Colonnade area – Wed., May 21, 6:30-9 p.m. at Agora Conference Center, 1551 Eastlake Avenue

Public meeting on the July 4th fireworks, public safety, and emergency preparedness – Tues., June 3, 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School. Sponsored by ECC. See article, p. 6



Plus Life of a
Steam Plant:
the early years
p. 20

And more!

Eastlake Community Council
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The Eastlake News is a quarterly publication of the Eastlake Community Council. We welcome comments, articles or images for possible publication; please include a contact phone number. Articles may be edited for length and clarity. Articles in the newsletter represent the view of the author and not necessarily the ECC. Please send submissions to info@eastlakeseattle.org or by U.S. mail to the return address on the back of this newsletter. For advertising contact Kevin Haywood, Jr. at advertising@eastlakeseattle.org.

The deadline for ads and submissions is: Jan. 20 for spring issue; April 20 for summer issue; July 20 for fall issue; October 20 for winter issue. Publication schedule is as follows:

Spring - March, April, May
 Summer - June, July, August
 Fall - September, October, November
 Winter - December, January, February

Masthead artwork sketch by Victor Steinbrueck. Other artwork sketches by Karen Berry.

Public Meetings at TOPS-Seward School



King County Councilmember Larry Gossett Speaks at Tues., March 24 public meeting



ECC welcomes Councilmember Larry Gossett, featured speaker at our Tues., March 24 public meeting, 7 p.m., at the TOPS-Seward School library, 2500 Franklin Ave. E. Eastlake is part of Gossett's district 2, and he is an important voice for improved bus service for our neighborhood. First elected to the King County Council in 1993, Gossett has long been an advocate for programs that help inner-city youth and reduce racial and class disparities in our local criminal justice system, and has spearheaded efforts to eliminate black-on-black violence.

April 6 public meeting on neighborhood parking, conservation, and design

The Mayor and City Council by unanimous resolution designated Eastlake as a residential urban village and adopted the 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan as "consistent with the goals and policies of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan" and as "representing the wishes of citizens of the Eastlake Neighborhood." The neighborhood plan's first goal on community development is to "Preserve the traditional diversity and scale of Eastlake development."

Unfortunately, the City has permitted bulky and out of character new buildings in Eastlake, which quickly exceeded its housing goals and goes further beyond them with each passing year. Meanwhile, the City has flouted the neighborhood plan with Land Use Code amendments that: (a) allow greater height, bulk and scale for new commercial and residential buildings, while reducing the space for yards and trees; (b) exempt new buildings from on-site parking requirements; and (c) repeal the required pause to reconsider further development in neighborhoods which have reached their housing targets.

What can be done to tailor development to a neighborhood's traditional

diversity and scale? For its Tues., April 6 public meeting (7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School, 2500 Franklin Ave. E.), ECC welcomes nearby neighborhoods to hear and discuss presentations from City officials and consultants. First the Department of Planning and Development's Gordon Clowers will report on a City Council-mandated review of parking policies that may lead to restoration of the requirement that new buildings have some parking on-site.

Then about 7:45 p.m., consultant Kjrjstine Lund will report on her efforts on behalf of the City Council to develop legislation for neighborhood conservation districts to protect important buildings and design characteristics, as the City's current landmark and special review district legislation is not as widely applicable. In a final portion of the meeting we will discuss how the City's current design review process is working and what can be done to improve it (for

background, see the "documents for public review" section of ECC's web site, <http://eastlakeseattle.org>).

Whether or not you can come to the April 6 public meeting, ECC wants to

hear your ideas and questions on these issues, to info@eastlakeseattle.org or by U.S. mail at 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102-3278.



Fairview Green Street public workshop is Wed. May 6

Your participation is welcome and needed at a second public workshop (Wed., May 6, 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School) that will review and amend the latest draft of the Fairview Green Street Design Concept Plan, soon to be available in the Documents for Review section of the ECC web site, eastlakeseattle.org.

Fairview Avenue E., pictured above, is one of the best things about our neighborhood—a quiet, leafy place to walk and enjoy the lake. But Fairview

needs improvements allowing pedestrians, bicycles, local traffic, and parking to coexist safely while solving drainage and flooding problems. In response to the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan, the City classified Fairview between Fuhrman and Hamlin streets and between Roanoke and Newton streets as a "neighborhood green street." But to protect Fairview from unwise changes and qualify for City-funded and developer-funded

continued on page 4



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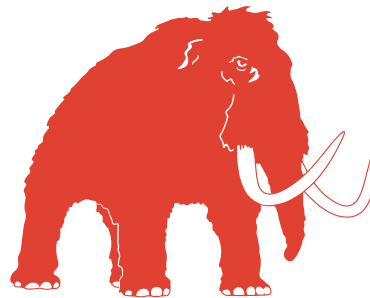
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improvements, the neighborhood needs to work out a Green Street Design Concept Plan and get the Department of Planning and Development and the Seattle Department of Transportation to adopt it as a joint director's rule. Whether or not you can come on April 6, please send your suggestions, reactions, or questions soon to info@eastlake-seattle.org or on paper to ECC, c/o Lake Union Mail, 117 E. Louisa #1, Seattle 98102. Questions are also welcome.

ECC's Spring Celebration is Thurs., May 14 at Mammoth

Have fun and meet your neighbors at the Eastlake Community Council's twice-annual celebration. The next one is Thurs., May 14, 5:30-7 p.m. at Mammoth (2501 Eastlake



Avenue, 206-946-1065) with \$5 wine, \$4 draft beer or ale, \$3 draft soda or root beer. The sandwich menu and 40+ drinks on tap are listed at <http://mammothseattle.com>, also linked on Facebook.



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State Board to Hear Appeal of City's Permit for "Ride The Ducks" Facility by Public Park



the last few years made a difference and are now part of the record on which the appeal is based. But now that the City has failed to enforce the law, we must convince the state board to overrule Seattle's decision.

Please donate on-line at <http://thelogfoundation.net> or make out a check to the Log Foundation, noting the purpose as for "Ducks appeal legal fund" and send c/o Rob Widmeyer, 2017A Fairview Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98102. The donations are NOT tax deductible.

On Feb. 18, 2015, the Eastlake Community Council, the Floating Homes Association, and the Log Foundation jointly appealed to the Washington State Shorelines Hearing Board a Jan. 29 decision by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development.

If allowed to stand, the City decision grants Ride the Ducks a permit for a ramp where its amphibious trucks would enter and leave Lake Union, adjacent to Terry Pettus Park (pictured at right) and the houseboats near Fairview Ave. E. at Newton St. Background and links (including to the appeal itself) are on the "documents for review and public comment" section at <http://eastlakeseattle.org>.

Many people have asked how they can help at this point. The answer is simple: help us pay the attorneys who will argue the appeal. Your hundreds of letters and e-mails and other efforts over



Eastlake Egg Hunt is Sat., April 4

Neighborhood volunteers are again needed to assist the Easter Bunny in preparing baskets and hiding eggs around Rogers Playfield (2501 Franklin Ave. E.) for kids to find on Saturday, April 4 -- and also to prepare each child's basket with its surprise. Kids should arrive by 10:45 a.m. to receive their basket, with the actual Egg Hunt starting at 11. Parents or other donors are asked to drop off by March 29 at 2323 Franklin Ave. E. a basket with grass and labeled with the child's name, plus a cash donation (\$3 suggested, but any amount is welcome; or donate on-line at <http://eastlakeseattle.org>). To help or if you have questions call 206-715-8762 or e-mail coordinator Christy Elton at christyelton@gmail.com. The Egg Hunt is sponsored by the Eastlake Community Council.

June 3 public meeting about July 4th plans and making Eastlake safer from crime and disasters

At this Wed., June 3 public meeting (7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School, 2500 Franklin Ave. E.), we'll discuss with Police Department representatives their plans for the July 4th crowds and traffic. We'll also engage about recent car prowls, break-ins, drug problems, and disorderly behavior, and about emergency preparedness, and anything else you want to bring up.

See ECC's web site, <http://eastlakeseattle.org> on best practices for crime prevention and emergency preparedness; and hot lines and web sites to report different infractions. Below are highlights; we welcome your ideas and volunteer help. And please send your e-mail address to info@eastlakeseattle.org to be contacted about urgent crime or emergency issues as they arise.

911 and (206) 625-5011. Police urge immediately phoning 911 if you see any law-breaking or expect it imminently. The officers can't respond if you don't alert them, and are more likely to patrol Eastlake if there's a history of 911 calls. Nothing is too small to report, and a crime need not have been committed. There are plenty of 911 operators and they know where to route calls, so please don't hesitate. An alternative to 911 is the Police Department's non-emergency number, (206) 625-5011 (dial 2 and then 8 to reach a dispatcher). It's for something suspicious but you're not sure it's criminal; for late reporting of a non-emergency crime with no suspects nearby; or to report noise or parking infractions. Definitely do call one or the other number when you see



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actual or suspected law-breaking.

Sex trafficking. With our proximity to I-5 and downtown, the neighborhood sometimes is a location for arranging or following through on paid sex. If a crime is in progress, call 911. An on-line alternative to the non-emergency number is to file an anonymous tip at redlighttraffic.org.

Neighbor-to-neighbor cooperation. Your block or dock will be safest by preparing together. Please share phone numbers, e-mail addresses, Twitter and Facebook accounts, and get to know one another well enough for mutual alerts and problem-solving about suspicious or risky situations. Blockwatch can but doesn't have to involve a whole block; there's also safety in cooperation of several residences or businesses, nearby houseboats or liveboards, or within an apartment, condo, or office building. For more: <http://www.seattle.gov/police/programs/Blockwatch/default.htm>.

Report graffiti. Quick removal of graffiti discourages taggers. Seattle requires landowners to remove it promptly, and promises immediate action on public property. Report graffiti (and water pollution and illegal dumping) at 206-684-7587; or <http://www.seattle.gov/util/index.htm>. To join ECC's effort against graffiti: frisky1@mindspring.com.


Emergency preparedness. Please join the neighborhood's efforts to prepare for emergencies. For info, videos and free trainings on emergency preparedness: www.seattle.gov/emergency or (206) 233-7123 (and please let ECC know if you've taken one of these trainings or if you'd like to help create an emergency hub in Eastlake). ECC invites doctors, nurses, and paramedics to join our confidential list to be contacted during a neighborhood-wide emergency: (801) 243-2136 or jeremythueson@gmail.com and info@eastlakeseattle.org. Ham radio or satellite telephone operators are also asked to let ECC know how to reach them in a future emergency.

Eastlake now entirely in West Precinct. For years, Eastlake was divided between the East and West Precincts, but in February, Eastlake was moved fully into the West Precinct, whose headquarters is downtown. The Eastlake Community Council believes this step will make the neighborhood safer. ECC has volunteer liaisons with the Police Department who can help with questions or concerns. ECC wants to hear your ideas and questions about crime issues and prevention, and on emergency preparedness. Please contact us at info@eastlakeseattle.org or by U.S. mail at 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102-3278.

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East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza Off to Great Start with Eastlake Residents!

By Tom Kipp on behalf of the Project Steering Committee

Everyone is cordially invited to learn more about this new public space in Eastlake on Thursday, March 19, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the TOPS-Seward School Library, 2500 Franklin Avenue East. Please come and see the design for this new public space and meet your neighbors!

The public visioning portion of the East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza Project kicked off on December 11, with a spirited, two-hour Open House meeting of 45 active and engaged members of the Eastlake community, followed by a second Open House on February 5, during which 55 community participants further refined ideas presented and discussed in December.

Facilitated by Debi Frausto and HBB Landscape Architecture, with assistance from members of the project's Steering Committee, a broad cross-section of Eastlake residents spent time in small groups, brainstorming ideas for the new plaza and sharing their preferences, before coming together as a larger group to vigorously discuss possibilities for this iconic community space.

The finished project will complete the link between Capitol Hill and Lake Union's Cheshiahud Loop Trail, via the popular East Howe Steps and a thorough revamping of the E. Howe Street Right-of-Way between Eastlake and Fairview Avenues, which passes between two forthcoming developments and will culminate in a new East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza.

Concepts discussed during the first Open House included the notions of a "front porch" for the Eastlake neighborhood—a flexible site that can readily support quiet relaxation, vigorous exercise, and public gathering—and of an "iconic space" that will be both memorable and engaging for the entire Eastlake Community and visitors to the neighborhood.

Steering Committee members and project lead, Brian Ramey, were "stunned by the immediate and overwhelmingly favorable consensus" of the first Open House. The entire committee was also very pleased by the large turnout.

The numerous ideas presented were carefully documented throughout the event and further discussed during subsequent Steering Committee meetings that

led into the rousing second Open House on February 5, at which three design concepts were presented and discussed.

The 55 attendees were encouraged to frankly assess three distinct HBB conceptual designs, then freely "mix and match" from those alternatives by recombining the elements each most wanted to see in the new public space. The eventual results provided HBB with a vivid

framework for a final design that will incorporate the most desirable elements of all three alternatives into a community preferred concept that best utilizes the available space, while still meshing well within the context of the adjacent developments and Fairview Avenue East.

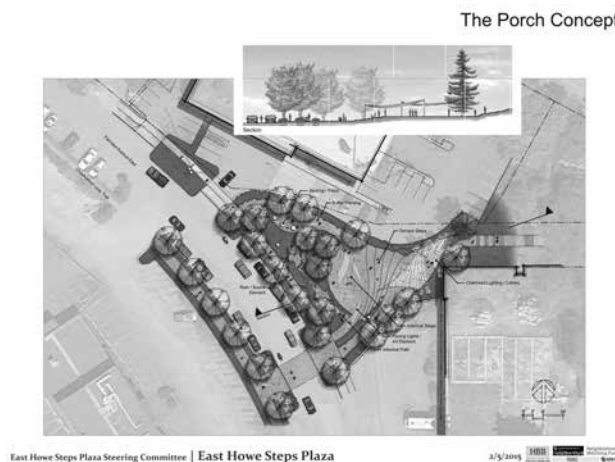
The design concepts examined during the February 5 Open House included "The Porch," a curvy design that flows from an elevated "porch" overlooking the water,

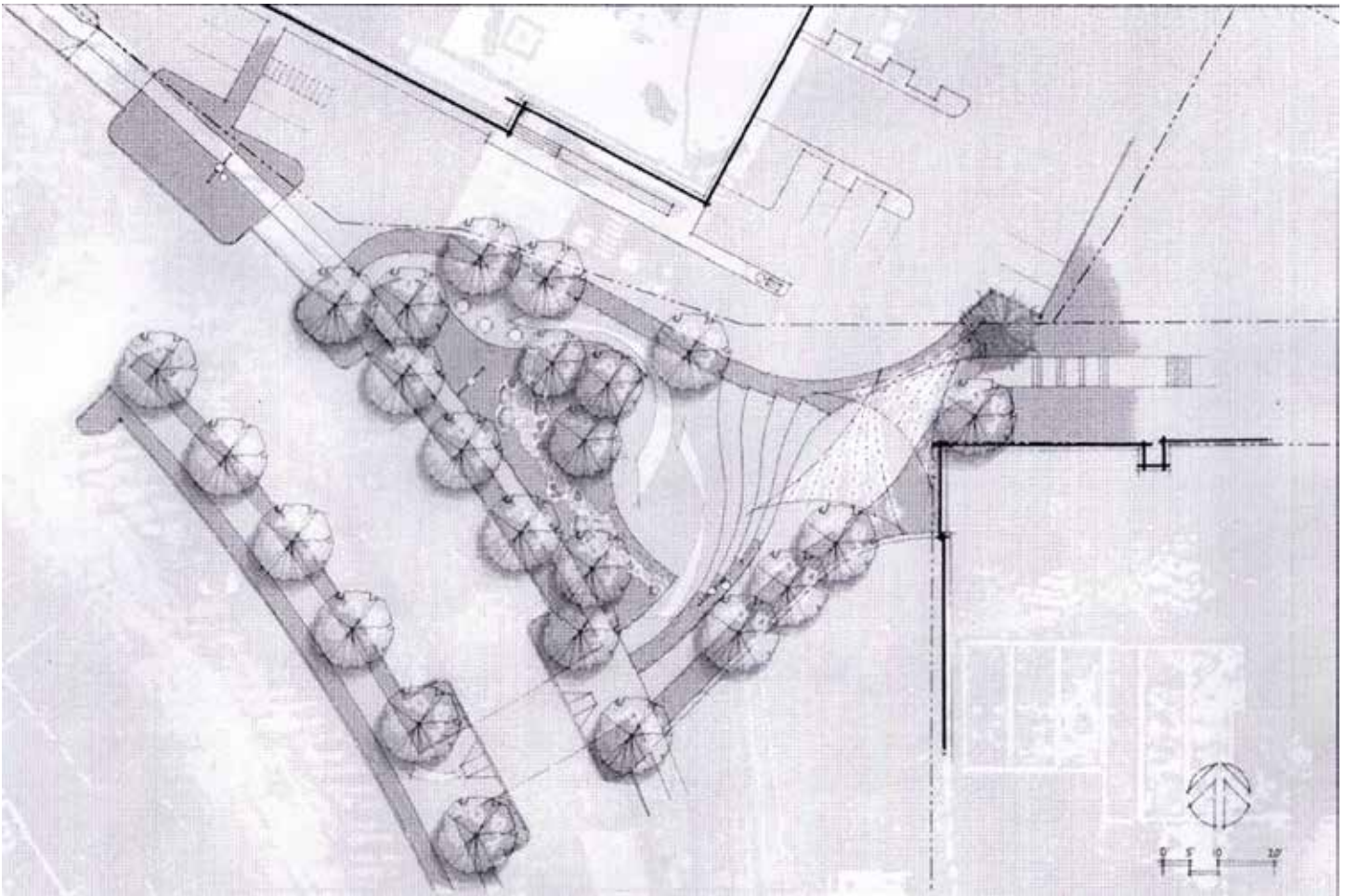
through terraced steps and into a traditional plaza; "Playfully Active," which places a "catwalk/perch" above a variety of witty and playful elements at various elevations, allowing lots of flexible and fun uses for all ages; and "Avenue of Lights," which includes a dazzling use of lighting, color, and various reflective surfaces above, along, and directly underfoot within the pathway, to create a series of "rooms" and a strong connection through the space.

Each design also included varied seating options which could accommodate "exercise stations," along with extensive landscaping that promises to minimize the amount of paved "hardscape" in an area that is currently little besides pavement and concrete.

Another goal is to create a safe, vibrant, and well-integrated crossing between the plaza and the well-known Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop, directly south across Fairview Avenue East.

Ultimately, "The Porch" proved a runaway favorite as the overall design concept, while both flexible, inventive lighting and the catwalk/perch idea found broad support and will be integrated into HBB's final design in some form. The importance of the Fairview Avenue crossing was an additional component that emerged repeatedly during group discussion and will





“The Porch” concept above proves to be a favorite design for the East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza project

also be addressed in the final conceptual plan.

The upcoming third East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza Open House is intended to present the final result of the community visioning: A conceptual design that fits the space and that will be acceptable to all of the stakeholders, including the East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza Steering Committee, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, the Seattle Parks Foundation (the plaza project’s fiscal agent), and the adjacent private property owners, culminating in a new treasure for the greater Eastlake Community.

Please join us at TOPS-Seward School on Thursday, March 19 at 6:30 p.m., and bring your neighbors. The atmosphere will be friendly and fun. Don’t miss out!

You can reach the members of the East Howe Steps Gateway Plaza Project Steering Committee via:
E-mail: easthowesteps@gmail.com
Mail: 117 East Louisa Street #187, Seattle WA 98102
Phone: 206-271-4744

There’s also a website: easthowestepsplaza.com and East Howe Steps Seattle Parks Foundation donation page, and find us on Facebook: East Howe Steps

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Arts Collective is a lively last tenant of restaurant building

Too often, doomed buildings sit empty and unloved, or are invaded, vandalized, or demolished before their time. A better fate has befallen the building at 1823 Eastlake Avenue that housed a succession of much-loved Mexican restaurants (most recently Don Eduardo's, and before that Azteca, Rattlers, and Casa Lupita).

The building is the latest temporary home of Love City Love, an arts collective that makes use of just such opportunities, holding all-ages events while helping keep their venues clean and safe to the very end.

Until the building goes away, Love City Love hosts on Wednesdays from 8 p.m. to midnight an eclectic evening of open mics, live music, poetry, art, and photography (\$5 to 20 suggested donation); and on Saturdays a dance from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. (\$10 cover).

To find out about the next event and when the 1823 Eastlake Avenue venue will disappear, see Facebook (LoveCityLoveSeattle). About Love City Love, see the Jan. 6 article at <http://crosscut.com/author/jake-uitti>. The Eastlake Community Council welcomes public comment about such temporary uses of buildings, to info@eastlakeseattle.org.



Lake Union Seaplane-Vessel Safety Zone



Lake Union is not only full of boats, but it is also an international airport. To help the two uses interact more safely, a seaplane-vessel safety zone for takeoffs and landings will soon be implemented in an area along the lake's north-south centerline just south of the current high-speed boat area (see drawing). It will be 300 feet wide by 3000 feet long and identified by 8 buoys.

Each buoy will extend approximately 5 feet above waterline, and will contain high intensity LED lights, but emit no sounds. Each buoy will have educational signage on its side, and a pilot-controlled seaplane operation warning light on top. Boaters will be advised by the signage to temporarily move a minimum distance away (either to the west or east) during a takeoff or landing. Once the aircraft operation is completed and the lights cease flashing, boaters may re-enter the seaplane-vessel area.

The pilot-controlled lights are intended for use during daylight hours only. The normal practice will be for the lights to be activated approximately one minute before landing or take-off, and will remain on for four minutes. The lights will be disabled during night hours to prevent accidental activation.

The above information is adapted from a more detailed article on the Floating Homes Association website at <http://tinyurl.com/seaplanevesselsafetyzone> which also states: "Our current understanding that the safety zone is not enforceable, but the Harbor Patrol may instruct vessels to move out of the safety zone if it becomes necessary." The article's author, Larry Logue, welcomes questions at ltlarry@gmail.com. ECC thanks Logue, Bill Albert, and other FHA volunteers for their years of discussions with the seaplane operators and public agencies that led to this safety improvement.

Issues raised by increasing run, walk, and bicycle events around Lake Union

Millions of dollars a year (amounts that are growing) are being made from run, walk, and bicycle events that bring thousands of participants onto the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop, of which Fairview Avenue East is the longest part.

While these events raise funds for good causes and also bring taxable revenues to the companies that organize them, they raise issues of neighborhood impact that the City hasn't adequately faced. Among the concerns are noise from Gas Works Park; disruptions from street, bridge, and parking closures; poor outreach by the organizers; and lack of fair-share contributions for use of underfunded transportation infrastructure.

Usually held on a Saturday or Sunday, these events typically require closure of parts of Fairview Avenue East from motor vehicle access and the prohibition of some of its badly needed parking on the east side of Fairview. On busy summer weekends, to prohibit motor vehicle travel and parking is a serious imposition on residents and businesses that has not been adequately considered in the permitting process.

Noise from start and finish ceremonies, usually in Gas Works Park and often very early in the morning, has been a persistent problem not successfully addressed by City agencies despite many promises to do so. Noise travels particularly well across water, and is very noticeable as experienced in the Eastlake neighborhood.

In recognition of the neighborhood impacts of events around Lake Union, the City's Special Events Committee has agreed not to increase the number of these events annually. But any beneficial results are being counteracted by the Committee's allowing existing events to substantially expand.

Despite concerns expressed by ECC, the City will apparently allow the multi-day Obliteride to be expanded for the first time to include Fairview Avenue East (on Sunday, August 9). The May 30 Brooks Trailhead run (formerly the Emerald City run) is being allowed to move from Sunday to Saturday (when the impacts will be greater) and will be almost twice as large this year as in the past (the City would have allowed much more if ECC had not objected to the original proposal for more than three times as many runners).

Outreach to the affected neighborhoods by the event organizers has been poor. Event applicants should reach

out early. It is unacceptable for an affected neighborhood to hear about an event expansion only after its permit has been applied for or approved. ECC's request for information from Obliteride brought this response: "We are not quite ready to share these details as of yet, but will make parking and route information available on our website once we receive approval from the City."

The fees that the City charges for events go mainly for police and traffic operations, with none earmarked for capital improvements to make the Loop safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Upon designating the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop in 2009, the City set aside a few capital improvement funds to implement it, but hasn't done so for years, and the still poor bicycle and pedestrian conditions reflect this lack of funding.

The Eastlake Community Council has asked Seattle's Special Events Committee to require each event that uses the Loop to contribute to a City fund to build bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements on the Loop. All events that gain donations or profits from using the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop must find a way to contribute to a City fund for pedestrian and bicycle capital improvements on the Loop.

ECC welcomes comments and suggestions on the above issues, to info@eastlakeseattle.org or by U.S. mail to ECC at 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102.



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Pedestrians need safe crossing of Eastlake Ave. at Newton Street

Eastlake isn't just a flourishing urban village. It's also a corridor through which tens of thousands of motorists rush daily, many on their way to or from I-5 or SR-520, the University District, South Lake Union, or downtown.

The heavy, fast traffic on Eastlake Avenue makes it dangerous for pedestrians to cross where there's no traffic signal (stop light). The Harborview Injury Prevention Program found in a study of unsignalized crossings of Eastlake Avenue that when pedestrians step into the street, 99 out of 100 motorists don't stop--even though required to by state law. No other street in Seattle has a worse record of driver non-compliance.

A priority of the 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan is to improve pedestrian safety, especially by adding traffic signals (stoplights) where they are missing on Eastlake Avenue. Through the efforts of the Eastlake Community Council, pedestrian countdown signals have been added for pedestrians crossing at Louisa St., Boston Street, and Allison Street. The Seattle Department of Transportation also recently installed a pedestrian-actuated flashing yellow beacon for the crossing of Eastlake Avenue at Blaine Street.

Now ECC is asking SDOT for a pedestrian countdown signal (stop light with walk/wait light) or flashing beacon (without walk/wait light) to enable safer pedestrian crossing of Eastlake Avenue at E. Newton Street. Petition signatures are needed to show there is community support. Please sign the petition and help collect signatures from others. Signers can express a preference for either a stop light or a beacon. To print out a copy of the petition and for further background, a photo, and a map, see the section on pedestrian safety on the ECC web site, <http://eastlakeseattle.org>. For questions or more information, or for paper copies of the petition, contact ECC at info@eastlakeseattle.org or (206) 322-5463.

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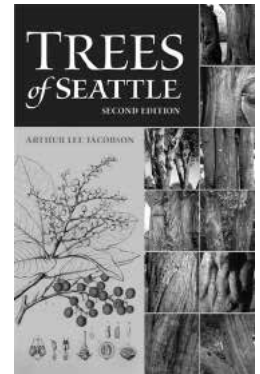
Eastlake Tree Walk is led by Arthur Lee Jacobson on Sat., April 18. Also: Help inventory Eastlake's trees

The renowned Arthur Lee Jacobson, author of *Trees of Seattle* and many other books, will lead the Eastlake Community Council's Tree Walk on Sat., April 18, 10 a.m. to noon, beginning at Roanoke Street end Park (corner of Fairview Ave. E. and E. Roanoke St.). Refreshments (donated by Blue Ribbon Cooking School) begin at 9:30 a.m.

ECC has engaged Jacobson twice for (wildly popular) slide talks, but this is the first tour we've commissioned him to lead, and it is simply not to be missed. To describe Arthur Lee Jacobson merely as a tree expert or tree writer is like saying a redwood is just a tree. He is a wonderful writer and speaker who knows everything about trees and communicates about (and with?) them magically. And he walks his talk, having planted trees and tended them all over the city. Don't miss this special opportunity.

It's so easy to take trees for granted. Trees provide habitat for birds and other creatures, clean air, slope stability, shade, beauty, and noise insulation. They grace our public spaces, and can greatly increase the value of private property. Agencies are less likely to remove trees on public property if the neighborhood is aware and organized. Property owners are less likely to remove or damage a tree if they know more about it.

You can help ECC's tree project by doing an inventory of those on your property, your block, in a park, or anywhere else in the neighborhood. See the section on trees at <http://eastlakeseattle.org> for the inventory form and instructions, including books and web sites for help in identifying and measuring trees. For further information: info@eastlakeseattle.org or (206) 322-5463.



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Streetcar, Rapid Ride, or improve existing bus service?

At its Feb. 23 public meeting, ECC hosted the Seattle Department of Transportation and its consultant for a preview of their Roosevelt to Downtown High Capacity Transit Project Definition Study. The debate was vigorous, with community members concerned that the study could sacrifice Eastlake's quality of life in taking two traffic and parking lanes for exclusive use by streetcar or bus rapid transit and two for bicycles.

ECC's web site, <http://eastlakeseattle.org>, has a section with this same title detailing the concerns and linking to the key documents. Former Mayor McGinn had in 2012 proposed a study like this only for a streetcar or a "bus rapid transit" line with exclusive lanes, without looking at Eastlake Avenue as a whole (such as the impact of a separated "cycle track") or at parking and cut-through traffic problems throughout the Eastlake neighborhood. ECC turned the situation around by working with the City Council to pass the July 15, 2013 Ordinance 124222, whose Attachment D "Eastlake Corridor Transit and Street Improvements" requires of SDOT:

This project will develop and implement a range of transit and street improvements in the Eastlake Avenue corridor connecting the University District, Eastlake and South Lake Union neighborhoods between Downtown and the Roosevelt Link light rail transit station area. ... This project will identify, prioritize, design and construct the highest priority 'speed and reliability' improvements to existing bus service without excluding the potential for longer-term implementation of High Capacity Transit options. The project will also consider an improved right of way profile to best accommodate the corridor's multi-modal demands, along with the recommendations reflected in each of the City's adopted modal transportation plans and the respective neighborhood plans.

Now it appears that SDOT has no intention of carrying out the study as required by Ord. 124222. In its \$1 million consultant contract, SDOT has redefined the project back to the alternatives of a streetcar and exclusive bus lanes, not even mentioning the improvement of existing bus service as an alternative, and saying that the cycle track proposed by the same SDOT office is not a part of the study's scope. And the study is now called "Roosevelt to Downtown High Capacity Transit Project Definition," treating Eastlake as a corridor rather than a community. And despite the requirement of Ordinance 124222 that high capacity transit not be assumed as the goal, the very title of the study now is "High Capacity Transit Project Definition."

Ordinance 124222 allows SDOT to study the Eastlake

Avenue alternatives of a streetcar and a rapid-ride exclusive bus lanes, but ONLY if it also studies the alternative of improving existing bus service. But SDOT's only reference to improvements in existing bus service is as "early implementation projects." Improving existing bus service isn't just something that can be done soon; it's also a positive and much less costly alternative to taking lanes away.

Other problems with SDOT's approach: Although Eastlake's on-street parking is already in short supply (a crisis only to be worsened by loss of parking on Eastlake Avenue

for a streetcar or exclusive bus lanes and cycle tracks that might be on both sides of the street), SDOT's \$1 million study will not include a parking utilization study of the Eastlake neighborhood—on the grounds that there isn't enough money.

And cost is not specified as a criterion for choosing between a street car and bus improvements. A UW study done for SDOT recommends that a streetcar through Eastlake be funded partly by a local improvement district (more property taxes) like the one that partially funds the South Lake Union streetcar. But there is far less land in Eastlake and it is of far less value, so the equivalent revenues would require astronomically higher assessments on every

Eastlake property.

To monitor this SDOT project and join its e-mail list: http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/transit_Udistrict-Downtown.htm. Most urgently, please contact elected officials with your concerns. Mayor: ed.murray@seattle.gov or <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/get-involved/contact-the-mayor>, or P.O. Box 94726, Seattle, WA 98124-4726 or fax to 206-684-5579. The City Councilmembers are sally.clark@seattle.gov, tim.burgess@seattle.gov, tom.rasmussen@seattle.gov, jean.godden@seattle.gov, kshama.sawant@seattle.gov, mike.obrien@seattle.gov, bruce.harrell@seattle.gov, nick.licata@seattle.gov, and sally.bagshaw@seattle.gov. The Council's mail address is P.O. Box 34025, Seattle, WA 98124-4025; fax is 206-684-8587. Please share your message and any reply with ECC at info@eastlakeseattle.org, or c/o ECC at 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle 98102. Questions and comments are always welcome.

Improvements coming for Eastlake's bus service

Seattle voters (and Eastlake voters especially) approved new City funding for King County Metro bus service last November, and Metro has now released details of how these funds will be used. Thankfully, Eastlake stands to



gain some much-needed improvements on all of the routes through the neighborhood.

Beginning in June 2015, routes 25, 66X, and 70 will all have schedule adjustments to improve reliability on weekdays. Metro will analyze data about existing service to improve the on-time performance of buses on all of these routes. Bus schedules will thus better track actual bus performance.

In September of 2015, route 25 will get additional service during peak periods. Route 66X will also have improved frequency during early morning and late evening periods on weekdays, and there will be one additional 70 bus during morning peak periods to reduce overcrowding.

Also in September, Metro will adjust the routes for the 70, 71, 72, and 73 buses. Route 70 will run every 10-15 minutes from 6 a.m. to midnight. Routes 71, 72, and 73 will all become express-only routes at all times of day, and will not stop in Eastlake. This change will hopefully improve reliability and simplify the bus system for Eastlake residents.

For more details about these changes, see Metro's "Metro Matters" blog post Feb. 18, 2015 entitled More Buses in Seattle.

The Eastlake Community Council wants and needs your thoughts on bus service, shelters, etc., and welcomes new volunteers. Contact us at info@eastlakeseattle.org.



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FREE GARAGE PARKING

In Memoriam



Photo credit: Plymouth Housing Group

Dahlbert George, a beloved and respected Eastlaker, (pictured above) died on November 28, 2014 at the age of 62. He had been homeless from 1982 to 2012, when he found supported housing in the South Lake Union neighborhood. An article about his life will appear in the summer Eastlake News. A memorial event is being scheduled; watch the ECC web site's section on upcoming events for an announcement of the date and place. In the meantime, please send along any stories or other information or photos for possible background or use in the memorial article, to info@eastlakeseattle.org, or c/o ECC at 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102, or call 206-322-5463.

This pole at the corner of Franklin Ave. E. and E. Boston St, is no longer being used for utility wires. It has been sitting in a fairly dangerous position for about ten years, when ECC first contacted the City to urge that it be removed. Not only is the heavy pole



resting on just a few small pieces of wood, but it is loosely attached to the other pole. Will this pole fall on someone before the City does something about it? ECC welcomes photos of other poles that look like they need repair or removal.

Comments sought on proposed shoreline improvements at Allison Street end

ECC and the Seattle Department of Transportation invite public comments on a proposed design for shoreline improvements where E. Allison Street meets Lake Union. Currently, the street end offers little in the way of water access or enjoyment of the lake. Pavement almost reaches the bulkhead, where the remaining space is overgrown with invasive Japanese Knotweed.

SDOT and its consultant, J.A. Brennan Associates Landscape Architects and Planners, have worked with the Eastlake community to re-envision the bleak site as a place where people can connect with the aquatic environment. See the drawing at <http://eastlakeseattle.org>. The design proposes an amphitheater-like setting where people can watch the spectacle of planes, boats, fireworks, people and wildlife. A small gravel beach will provide the opportunity to launch kayaks and get to the water's edge. Native plants will provide habitat, define the space, and partially screen it, while still allowing visitors to be seen and to enjoy views of the water from other nearby locations.

The existing concrete masonry unit wall that sits atop the concrete bulkhead will be removed to improve the viewscape. Low-growing native plants will be located along the top of the bulkhead to define an attractive pedestrian zone. Masonry blocks and other materials will be re-used where possible. Bike racks will be provided as well as an ADA-accessible picnic table. The design maintains street end access to adjoining properties as well as most of the informal parking area along the north edge of the street.

Public comments on the proposed design are welcome, to shannon.glass@seattle.gov or by U.S. mail to Shannon Glass, Public Space Management Program, Seattle Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-4996; and to the Eastlake Community Council at info@eastlakeseattle.org or by U.S. mail to ECC, 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102.

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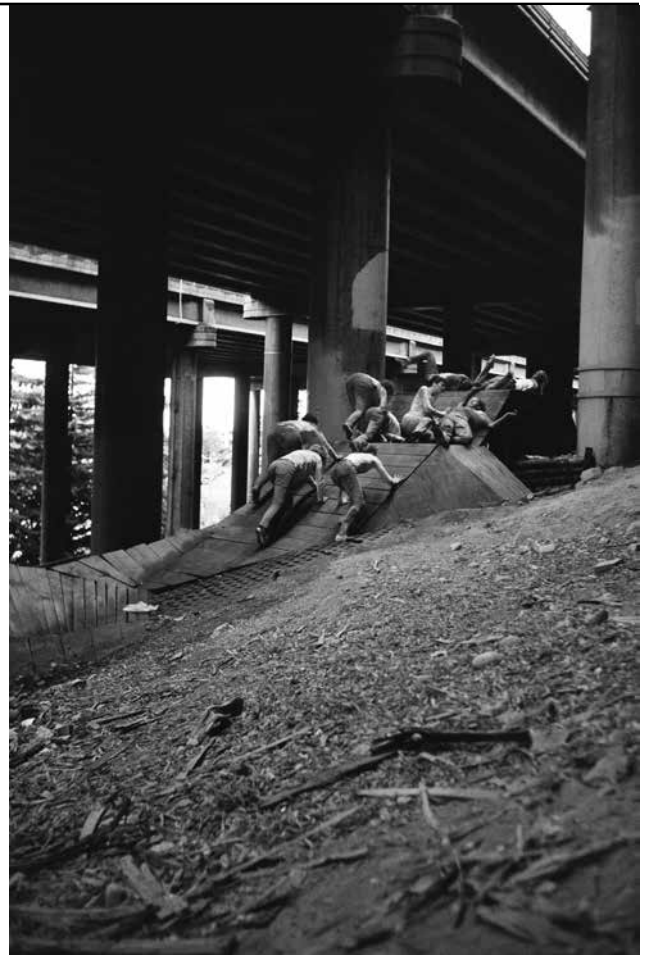
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A public tour and several public meetings and workshops to help plan possible Colonnade improvements

On the front page calendar (and also below) are public events to help plan and design possible improvements and expansion of the I-5 Colonnade Open Space (its official name, although it is often known informally as Colonnade). Colonnade is located under and next to Interstate 5 south of Newton Street, almost entirely on land owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation, and leased to the City of Seattle. It originated with the 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan, and is now ranked by the well regarded CityLab web site as among the world's nine "cool parks under freeway overpasses."

With its tenth anniversary in 2015, it's time to consider possible improvements within Colonnade's existing boundaries, possible expansion onto additional WSDOT land nearby, and better pedestrian and bicycle connections with the surrounding area. The planning/design process includes a site tour on April 19; public meetings on April 23, May 20, and June 11; a skate features workshop on



April 30; and a bicycle features workshop on May 7. The meetings and workshops are all 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Agora Conference Center, 1551 Eastlake Avenue.

For the planning and design project, the Eastlake Community Council is receiving funds from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Matching Fund; and donated time, goods and services from many volunteers, non-profit groups, and businesses such as Alexandria Real Estate Equities. Overseen by a broad-based steering committee, the project also has the cooperation of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Department of Planning and Development, Seattle Department of Financial and Administrative Services, and Washington State Department of Transportation.

For background about the Colonnade planning and design study including the request for qualifications for a consultant (March 18 deadline), see the project web page, <http://eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade>. ECC welcomes suggestions, comments or questions. Especially, if we do not already have your e-mail address or other contact information, please let us know how to reach you so we can fully update and include you. Contacts are info@eastlakeseattle.org, or by U.S. mail at ECC, 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle 98102 or 206-322-5463.

Photos: At left possible expansion of Colonnade park under I-5 and above a public dance performance in the park.



MOST POPULAR PLACE IN TOWN

Thanks to **Mammoth** (2501 Eastlake Avenue) for hosting the Eastlake Community Council's spring celebration Thurs., May 14, 5:30-7 p.m. (see separate article). At the popular events, a restaurant offers reduced prices for beverages, and dining continues off the regular menu. ECC welcomes inquiries from other restaurants to host its next fall and spring celebrations.

ProFormance Rehab (proformancerehab.com, 206-322-2842) has relocated to 2815 Eastlake Ave E Suite 170. This physical therapy clinic now has more room, and parking costs only \$1 an hour. Open Mon-Fri, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ... **"Lunge"** exercises are among the best for working the body in multiple planes of motion (like activities of daily living and athletics); by involving multiple joints they strengthen the muscles of the lower body while improving stabilization and balance. They are safe and effective for most people, plus require little or no equipment. On Friday, April 3 at 3:30 p.m., staff of **Elite Fitness Training** and **Swedish Hospital** will team to lunge across the I-90 Bridge, as a way to raise awareness about April being Organ Donation Month. The 15 mile trek will require approximately 2,700 consecutive lunges.

Amber West of **5 Lights Acupuncture** (2311 Eastlake Ave E.; 206-601-6290; 5lightsacupuncture.com and on Facebook) announces "The Art of Being Fair," a free event about expanding consciousness through art and wellness. "Together, local artists and wellness practitioners will share how you can live a creative and self-expressive life without being a claimed artist. From the choices of what we wear, how we make use of our space, to how we treat our body and relate to our mind, all have an effect on our consciousness, development, and wellbeing." The event will be on Sunday, April 19, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at **eVOLV Fitness**, a martial arts gym located at 1317 Republican St.

Aging & Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County—wants to know how you think we can become a more elder-friendly community. ADS has created a survey, available on Survey Monkey and also in print, that will help shape the plan for 2016–2019. Take the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/X5JY736 or obtain a paper copy from karen.winston@seattle.gov or 206-684-0706.

The **U.S. Postal Service** performance in Eastlake in November and December was perhaps the most chaotic in our history, with some deliveries arriving after 8 p.m. or not at all, and others arriving twice or even three times a day. ECC expressed its concern to the **Seattle Postmaster** and

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the local head of the **National Association of Letter Carriers**. We learned that the problems (which were as hard on the letter carriers as on the neighborhood) stemmed from a “perfect storm” – a reorganization that coincided with a huge increase in holiday shipments (although come to think of it, the weather wasn’t all that bad). The Postal Service is working to avoid similar problems in the future. So that we know what to ask for in any improvements, please write to ECC about your own experiences with our local mail delivery.

The **University District Food Bank** reports that donations from Eastlake residents and businesses helped it qualify for a \$50,000 match from the Kiwanis Club toward construction of the Food Bank’s new building. Thanks to all who contributed or who helped with ECC’s May 6, 2014 Food Bank fundraiser at the Eastlake Zoo. Ground breaking will occur in late March or early April. Over \$2.7 million has been raised towards the \$3.25 million needed. For information and to donate more: www.udistrictfoodbank.org.

In the Public Comment Opportunities section of the ECC web site, info@eastlakeseattle.org, are information and links about two important land use proposals now being considered by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development: rezone for a much larger building at **2203/09 Eastlake Ave.**, which ECC has written a letter opposing; and a large residential and commercial development at the Red Robin site at **3272 Fuhrman Ave. E.** which ECC is still reviewing. Please get involved, and let ECC know your views.

ECC got the good news from state **Sen. Jamie Pedersen** that so far the transportation budget includes \$3.5 million for completing the I-5 noise walls (details in the winter *Eastlake News*). Please thank him and his House colleagues for their continuing efforts: jamie.pedersen@leg.wa.gov; frank.chopp@leg.wa.gov; and brady.walkinshaw@leg.wa.gov.

In any public school, there are people behind the scenes who keep things running well, and whom the Eastlake Community Council deals with frequently and happily. **TOPS-Seward School** over the summer had a double changeover in those vital positions. As Administrative Secretary, **Patty Woodward** has left, and **Janice Runner** has arrived. And as Custodial Engineer, **Saream Dy** has left, and **Vismark Thun** has arrived. Best wishes and thanks to all for your gracious efficiency!

Mention here does not imply endorsement by the ECC, writer (Chris Leman), or editor. To submit news items, for questions or to volunteer: info@eastlakeseattle.org or c/o ECC, 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle 98102-3278, or (206) 322-5463.

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Early Years of the Lake Union Steam Plant

by Judy Smith

The Lake Union Steam Plant, which turned 100 years old last year, is not only a beautiful, unique structure. Like all great architecture, it embodies the spirit of its time. Built in three phases, at the start of the electrical age, it was critical to keeping the lights on in Seattle.

The building's "overall impression is one of both strength and transparency," writes architect, preservationist, and Eastlake resident Susan Boyle in the nomination form that earned the Lake Union Steam Plant and its sister building, the Hydro House, historic preservation status. [Ed.'s note: Boyle will be speaking on Eastlake architecture; see page 24 for details.]

Strength and transparency were exactly what was needed for City Light (Seattle's new public power utility) as it battled with private power companies for market share.

Seattle entered the public power business in 1905 with the building of the Cedar River Falls hydroelectric project

to counteract the high rates charged by private electric companies.

As Paul W. Hirt writes in *The Wired Northwest; the History of Electric Power 1870s – 1970s* "Puget Sound Power & Light had only one real competitor, the municipally owned Seattle City Light, and their rivalry over rates and over control of valuable hydropower sites enlivened local politics for many decades."

One of those who helped enliven the local politics was J.D. Ross. Ross had worked on the Cedar River Falls project when it was part of the water department. In 1910, in recognition of the importance of municipal power, the Seattle City Council created an offshoot to the water department, the lighting department. Ross was hired a year later as the second superintendent of the new department. At the time of his hire, the Cedar River dam was being constructed to tap all the energy capacity of the falls site, 40,000 kilowatts, but there

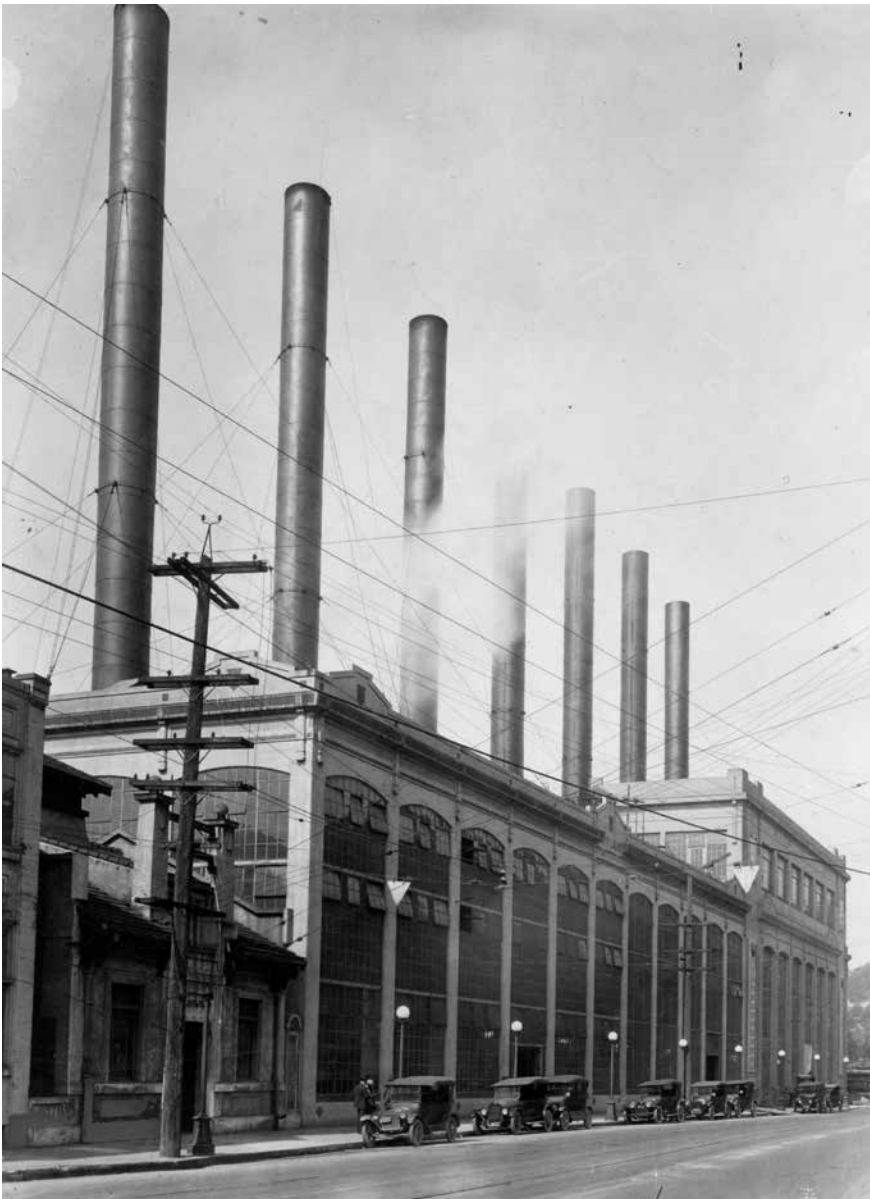
was a big problem, a crack in its reservoir wall. Ross was tasked with quickly getting on line other power sources – the Hydro House and the Lake Union Steam Plant – while a fix was sought.

A visionary, today known as the Father of City Light, Ross planned a vast network of power sources for region, although not everything planned would come to fruition and nothing would come without its share of problems.

But the Lake Union Steam Plant seemed blessed from the start. The plant's location was ideal. The city's wish list included a site that would permit cheap transportation of a variety of potential fuel sources "coal, oil or sawmill refuse;" connect easily to the rest of the city's electric infrastructure making the transmission of electricity more economical, and have access to a cold water source for condensing purposes. "... all of these conditions were met by the site on the east shore of Lake Union at the foot of Nelson Place and between Eastlake and Fairview avenues," wrote Ross in a 1915 trade magazine touting the opening of the new steam plant.

The Lake Union site was on two major transportation corridors. Fuel could be delivered

continued on next page



Left: Photo of the Steam Plant fully built out circa 1921. Photo credit: University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, SEA1598

Right: The Steam Plant, unit 1, a modern industrial structure. Photo courtesy of Paul Dorpat.

via the Northern Pacific Railway spur line or barges transiting the lake. The spot was pretty much the exact center of the city at the time. And the lake supplied an ample amount of cold water even in the summer thanks to the runoff of the city's reservoirs.

Built in 1914, the first section of the Steam Plant came on line just as the first electrical appliances were hitting the home market. That section seems humble now compared with what the building would become. It was just the width of six of those famous three-story-tall window bays with two smoke stacks. Four boilers and generating equipment took up most of the space inside. But the design was remarkable.

In that same 1915 trade magazine article Ross lauded the architect and the design: "The building which was designed by Daniel R. Huntington, city architect, is particularly pleasing to the eye and at the same time is calculated to best serve the plant by providing ample natural lighting to all parts. In fact the most striking feature of the building is the open, daylight appearance inside which is secured by carrying the windows from column to column and almost from floor to cornice."

He goes on: "A review of the drawings and design of innumerable plants distributed throughout the country will fail to show a building better adapted to the plant requirements than that designed by Mr. Huntington. While every requirement necessary for pleasing appearance and from an



architectural standpoint has been met, the utility of the building as a correct and proper housing for the power plant has been carefully maintained and in no way have the requirements of the plant been made subservient to the architectural features."

In the Steam Plant's historical preservation nomination form, Boyle describes the building as advanced "for a design by a municipal architect in a provincial northwest city.... In its tectonic expression of concrete and glass the 1914 portion of the Steam Plant compares with European industrial building designs such as Gropius A.E.G. Turbine Factory, Berlin, 1907 or Gropius and Meyer's Fagas Boot Last Factory 1911."

Ross went on to describe in great detail the inside of the plant; how the boilers and turbines were divided into separate locations; the 19-foot basement, which had space

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Lake Union Steam Plant

continued from previous page

to accommodate coal or woodchips; the way all the floors could handle weight of up to 600 pounds per square foot; the pipes that went to Lake Union to draw in cold water and release hot water; the cranes that maneuvered over the turbines, and everything bathed in natural light. Ross notes the building earned the title “glass house” but to avoid an internal greenhouse effect, “The glass is inserted in special metal trim with counterbalanced ventilating windows arranged for operation from the floor.”

Despite the ventilation, it still had to have been a hot and noisy place for workers, local historian Jules James points out. The Hydro House that served as the Steam Plant’s lunchroom was a welcome reprieve.

The plant generated 7,500 kilowatts of power, significantly more than the Hydro House’s 1,500 and Seattle’s first hydroelectric plant at Cedar Falls, which produced 2,400 kilowatts in 1905.

Electricity was an increasingly critical need, as Hirt notes. “From 1915 to 1919 the number of City Light customers increased more than 50 percent from approximately 40,000 to over 65,000. City Light also provided electricity to many factories, including four local shipyards, two of which built and launched 100 ships during the war years. To meet all this new load demand, City Light authorized a second steam-powered plant on its Lake Union Steam Station in 1916...”

Over the years Ross had been scouting out other hydroelectric sites on the region’s great waterways, with his heart set on the Skagit River. But he and the city were thwarted time and time again from acquiring potential sites by the water grabs of Stone and Webster, the private utility holding conglomerate. Finally Ross took the matter to the other Washington, and in 1918, the same year the second unit of the steam plant came on line, the feds turned over rights to the Skagit to the city. It was an astonishing success that City Light would write gleefully about in its annual report, noting that Stone and Webster, “put themselves in the predicament of the boy in Aesop’s fable who put his hand in the jar of nuts and grabbed them all but could not get his hand out without dropping everything.”

Ross would be credited with getting three dams built on the Skagit, dams that became known as the Ross dams and that supplied most of Seattle’s power up until the 1960s – Gorge Dam (1924), Diablo Dam (1936), and Ruby or Ross Dam (1952). According to City Light, they continue to provide about 15 percent of Seattle’s energy today.

Symbolically the second unit of the steam plant begins to proclaim the city’s growing confidence in being a public energy provider. It nearly doubled the size of the first, with five more bays of those famous windows, four more boilers, and two more smoke stacks, bringing the steam plant up to a 17,500-kilowatt capacity. Outside the words “City Light” are cast in concrete over the new middle bay windows. “Except

for this formal identifying gesture,” writes Boyle, “drawings suggest that in other ways the Second Unit is simply an expansion based on the original design. Internally the plant was open as a single functioning building.”

When the second unit came on line in 1918, writes Hirt, “load demand had already reached the full capacity of the new plant, so the utility had to immediately start construction of a third Steam unit at Lake Union.”

By the time the third unit was built the steam plant would become something more than the modern utilitarian structure it started out to be. The third unit added eight more bays of windows but two of those were bricked in, “this change makes the building appear heavier and less transparent,” writes Boyle. A second story was added as well as three more smoke stacks. Inside saw the addition of six more boilers and another turbo generator, bringing the total kilowatt capacity up to 30,000 or 37,500 on overload. In the two places where windows might have been, there are now decorative fruit and flower terracotta garlands (a feature Huntington liked to use in some of his other famous buildings) and at the top in two spots “City Light Plant No. 3” is etched in concrete with the year 1920 in roman numerals, yielding a striking effect if you’re on foot and looking up at it from Eastlake Avenue.

“Given the history of City Light and its political efforts to establish itself and gain support for public power between 1914 and 1921,” writes Boyle, “it seems clear that the Lake Union Steam Plant was designed to serve as civic symbol for the agency.”

But any status as a civic symbol or monument would not be fully recognized until many decades later when the building was threatened with demolition. Instead the steam plant would continue to serve but not as originally intended, for auxiliary power. As soon as the third unit was up and running, Ross understood that even auxiliary power would be too expensive for the oil-fueled plant. In a 1921 article, he said it was to be used only as “a standby for low water periods.”

The expensive oil would turn out to be more costly than anyone imagined.

Although relegated to a standby role, the steam plant played a critical part in Seattle’s power structure up to the 1980s when the discovery of PCBs in the oil would finally shut it down for good.

In 1927 it was dubbed the Watch Dog of City Light by a *Seattle Times* writer who went by the initials C.G. in a column called “Seattle Day by Day.” Here C.G. gives a firsthand view of life inside the steam plant:

The Watch Dog of City Light

As dusk settles over the city each evening thousands of electric light switches click, thousands of homes are flooded with brilliant illumination and the thousands of persons who have snapped the switches on go about their respective tasks with never a thought of what lies behind this common-place convenience—electric light.

But there are some residents of Seattle to whom the coming

of darkness is a big event, a circumstance that must be provided for and prepared for in advance. To the employees of the City Light Department nightfall is a time of increasing activity. They know by experience just how much “juice” the city will require at each hour of the twenty-four and they are ready to supply it.

One hears much every now and then about the gigantic Skagit power project and the troubles thereof. The question frequently arises: What would happen to Seattle’s lights should the Skagit fail entirely? The answer is: The Skagit has failed time and again, but the city never has been entirely in darkness. Excluding the electricity furnished by private companies, Seattle has three other great sources that may be called upon when the Skagit breaks down.

Foremost among these is the municipally-owned hydroelectric plant at Cedar Falls, which has stood the test of years. Then the inter-tie with Tacoma that gives access to the great Cushman plant. The third situated within the city itself, draws perhaps the least notice of any, yet in times of emergency it may be called upon to supply a big part of the city’s needs. This is the Lake Union steam plant.

The impression seems to prevail that the Lake Union power house is a small affair in Seattle’s great electrical system. It is—comparatively. Nevertheless, should the Skagit, Cedar Falls and Tacoma, through some unforeseen circumstance, be cut off simultaneously, enough electricity could be generated at Lake Union to supply more than half of the city’s demands, again excluding customers served by private plants. Seattle’s peak load during the winter months is something more than 67,000 kilowatts. The Lake Union steam plant is capable of furnishing 36,000 kilowatts, more than enough to take care of all the downtown district and a part of the residential sections.

Pass the glass-fronted building on the lake with respect, for the wires running out of there carry 26,000 volts. Two voltages are used on the generators in the plant—2,500 and 6,600—and the current then is “stepped up” in gigantic transformers to required line voltage and synchronized with the other power systems.

One does not get an adequate understanding of the mammoth size of this plant until standing in the basement among the battery of fourteen huge oil-fed boilers. Overhead a large dial, numbered from 1 to 40, indicates the output in kilowatts and serves incidentally as a barometer on the other city projects for, when all is running smoothly, Lake Union has little to do. In times of trouble, however, the pointer on the dial swings around rapidly as the steam plant comes to the rescue.

“We are supposed to have thirty minutes’ notice on each 10,000 kilowatts,” the plant superintendent explained, “but we usually give it to ‘em in half that time.”

Standing by, always ready, the Lake Union steam plant truly may be called “The Watchdog of the City Light.”

—C. G.

The Seattle Daily Times April 12, 1927

This article is the second in a series of articles about the Lake Union Steam Plant. The first article on the Hydro House can be found in the Eastlake Community Council’s newsletter archives Winter 2014 issue at <http://www.eastlakeseattle.org/> It’s also a blog entry at lakeunionwatershed.com.

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Illustrated talk on Eastlake’s architectural heritage is Wed., April 22



Susan Boyle

The Eastlake Community Council welcomes architect, historian, and former ECC member Susan Boyle back for another of her acclaimed talks on Eastlake’s architectural history -- Wed., April 22, 7 p.m. at TOPS-Seward School, 2500 Franklin Ave. E.

Boyle has lived in Seattle since arriving to attend the UW in 1967, and formerly was an Eastlake resident and ECC member. A preservation architect and principal of BOLA Architecture + Planning, she served as a member and chair of the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board, and is largely responsible for the City’s landmark protection of the Lake Union Steam Plant (ZymoGenetics) and its adjacent Hydro House, having prepared the landmark nomination

of these buildings in the early 1990s. She has developed historic reports and nominations for over 200 individual buildings, properties, and historic districts.

Boyle co-founded the Northwest architecture and design journal, Arcade, and has been a board member of the Seattle Architecture Foundation and of Docomomo WEA, a Northwest Modernism advocacy group. She is presently working on a landmark nomination of one of Eastlake’s iconic Modern era buildings.

Architect Susan Boyle will bring to her talk on April 22 knowledge of local history and evocative insights. Don’t miss this extraordinary opportunity to see Eastlake in a new way.

Become an ECC Member and/or Make a Donation

The Eastlake Community Council is volunteer, so dues and donations go a long way, and your involvement is welcome and needed.

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