Bellevue Botanical Garden

Ravine Garden Project

The Ravine Garden-Project Overview

In 2009, the City of Bellevue Parks Department and the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society selected the Ravine Garden for further design development and construction. The proposed garden will take visitors along a pedestrian trail through a second growth forest and a small steep-sided ravine in the southeast corner of the Bellevue Botanical Garden; the garden's site is located within the larger "Cascadia Experience" (see project #4 on Master Plan Projects attachment). The project entails construction of two pedestrian bridges, a 75' long by 6' wide rigid lattice truss bridge and a 150' long x 5' wide suspension bridge, both made predominantly of steel construction. The bridges will span the ravine in two locations approximately 200ft apart and will allow visitors close proximity and intimate views of the plants, wildlife, and forest canopy in and around the ravine. The project will also include adding 600 feet of pedestrian trail to the Garden's current trail system inventory. The new trail segments will form a connection between the bridges and existing trail segments to complete a "Ravine Trail Loop" which will begin and end at the Lost Meadow Trail.

New trail segments will maintain a minimum 6.0 ft standard park width and be overlaid with pervious mulch surfacing. The exception will be a 200 lnft segment which will provide a shared ped/maintenance access to the suspension bridge from the lost meadow loop trail leading to the suspension bridges west entrance. The trail in this area will be 10.0 ft wide and receive an ADA compliant crushed rock surfacing to allow easier access for disabled and elder visitors wishing to experience the suspension bridge and one vehicular access point to the suspension bridge wide enough to accommodate a maintenance or emergency vehicle if the need arises.

The project will include planting over 20,000 sqft area of native vegetation to increase the habitat and aesthetic value of the project area. The plan proposes the removal of some invasive species and augmentation of the current understory vegetation and forest with more native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants to increase the ravine's biological diversity, and the avoidance of introducing non-native plants into this nature area. All existing sword ferns impacted by trail and bridge construction will be transplanted on site. Signage will be installed to clearly convey to ravine garden visitors they need to remain on marked trails and interpretive elements will be incorporated into the project which will compliment the Botanical Gardens existing interpretive program. Approximately 49 significant trees exist within the project area and will be protected during construction. Predominate species include Big Leaf Maple, Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Western Hemlock. All significant trees within the project area will be retained with the exception of one 12" diameter Cedar near the west suspension bridge approach and one 12" diameter Maple near the east rigid bridge approach. These trees are planned for removal to accommodate bridge abutment footings. Any other significant trees designated for removal because of poor health or assessed as hazardous by a

certified arborist will be ‘snagged’; woody debris will be added to the stream bed and other appropriate areas.

Goals of the design include the desire to increase the ecological function of the project site and to make visitors familiar with, and appreciative of, the plant communities of the region while allowing interpretation of hydrologic processes of site. Around this, visitors will experience the dramatic feeling of enclosure that containment within this small-scale landform offers while interpretive programs will demonstrate and suggest how such delicate landform features might be preserved, conserved and augmented in other locations. The basic design philosophy underlying the garden is to work with its natural features and processes and interpret these to visitors as part of an educational program.

Questions can be directed to:

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