

From: [Gloria Saylor](#)
To: [PCD](#)
Cc: [Val Tollefson](#); [Kol Medina](#); [Doug Schulze](#)
Subject: Bloedel Reserve application for permit
Date: Sunday, July 30, 2017 4:51:47 PM

Dear Planning Department,

Following are my comments on the Bloedel Permit application , and following those are minutes from a meeting with neighbors that was held on 7/29/17. I shared my draft fo those minutes with several neighbors present and they concurred that it was an accurate summary of the meeting point.

I am a long time resident of the Agate Loop neighborhood, and have watched Bloedel Reserve visitor numbers increase during especially the last 8 years of my 24 year residence in this neighborhood. What has not increased is their understanding of their impact on the neighborhood even though they state that this is part of their mission – to be good neighbors.

My concerns regarding the current permit application are as follows:

1) They never indicate that the plans are to increase visitorship and yet it is clear that that is behind many of their plans. For instance, the new parking lot was used as a temporary parking lot for many years and I think everyone was “OK” with that. But now it has become the permanent and primary parking lot, and it has truly changed the neighborhood environment. Neighbors have stopped me to comment on how much it changes their drives or walks to and from home to see a parking lot in what used to be an open field. Although they emphasize that this parking lot will not include additional spaces and imply it is not an expansion, the Fall 2016 newsletter from the Reserve reported that admissions revenue increased from \$262,680 in 2014 to \$352,161 in 2015 and they state: "While 2015 was a record year for attendance, this year we have already topped it." In 2003 the average number of visitors was 22000 (seattlepi:

<http://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/He-s-the-one-that-makes-it-happen-at-Bloedel-1107355.php>)

2) If this new exit was really about pedestrian safety, their design should have been to put the driveway entrance on Dolphin between the current gatehouse and the Wildlife Shelter so buses and incoming traffic could turn right in to the gatehouse area from Dolphin Drive, loop through the old parking lot area and then exit from the current entry/exit drive without crossing Agate Point in a lower visibility area. That way, the bus could pick up and drop off visitors off the main street. In a recent meeting with neighbors, two other ideas to solve the entry/exit problem were offered:

a) to make the current gate wider, or b) to make the proposed exit an entry instead so that cars could make a right hand turn into the parking lot and make a straight exit onto Dolphin Dr .

3) The application states that Bloedel has walking trails but does not convey the number of neighbors and walking groups that use the Loop road as a walking trail. At our neighbor meeting, they stated that the proposed exit and traffic flow would enhance safety inside the Reserve – but it was pointed out that maintenance vehicles and cars should only be going 5-10 MPH within the Reserve so it did not present the kind of safety challenge that exists between traffic and pedestrians outside the Reserve on Dolphin and Agate Point Rd.

4) The exit from Agatewood to the Highway has proven problematic and infrequent visitors to

the neighborhood have little concept of how dangerous the intersection with 305 is. They do not see or ignore the sign posted on the right side of Agatewood stating that there should be only 1 car in the left hand turn lane resulting in increased danger to drivers entering the highway. Bloedel should be responsible at the very least for increased signage and the City should consider changing the speed limit on Agatewood and Dolphin Roads.

Bloedel was opened to the public in 1988. Prentice Bloedel wrote : “We humans are trustees in this world ... our power should be exercised in this context.” The Reserve is located in a residential neighborhood (not a remote one) and offers benefits to us as well as to visitors from **the Island and** other areas. But it needs to incorporate the concerns of the neighbors when it comes to the safety and impact of its presence. I think Prentice would agree.

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Minutes of the 7/29 meeting:

Nine neighbors attended – 5 from Agate Point Rd, 2 from Agatewood, 2 from Agate Pass RD NE. The main topic of conversation was the proposed new exit. They presented the information that they laid out in the documents sent to us, and added background. The Reserve is more in demand than before, and the neighborhood population has grown as has the Island (up 70% since 1986 I believe). Ed Moydell stated that the Board has decided to not focus on growing numbers of visitors as that could spoil the experience of the Reserve but to focus on sustainability through philanthropy, as they believe they have “maxed out” on visitor numbers. He reiterated that the Reserve wanted to be a good neighbor.

Six of the nine neighbors there expressed deep concerns over the proposed exit on Agate Point Rd. Two of those not concerned were from Agatewood RD.

The neighbors offered three alternatives:

- 1) To widen the current gate to allow for easier exit and entrance passage.
- 2) Use the current exit/entrance as an exit only and use the proposed exit as an entrance to allow a right hand turn from Agate Point into the Reserve – thereby gets waiting cars off the road. One Agate Point neighbor was concerned about drivers coming around that bend from Dolphin onto Agate Point at all and preferred the following alternative.
- 3) Open a driveway parallel to the split rail fence on the border between the Wildlife Shelter property and the Reserve so that cars could make a right entry into the Reserve and exit from the current entry/exit. This would eliminate Bloedel visitors from driving onto Agate Point Rd at all.

Most neighbors agreed we would like to see a stoplight at West Port Madison and some that the Reserve exit traffic would exit there at West Port Madison. Ed said the Reserve, Val Tollefson (North Ward Council member) and Sen. Christine Rolfes are all working on this as the County and State are looking at traffic flow on Highway 305.

Ed expressed some reservations about exiting from West Port Madison as it goes by the maintenance/work area and would detract from the Reserve experience for visitors but agreed to consider it. He urged the neighborhood to be involved with this, as the Reserve can't do it alone.