

## Talking about the Inner Arbor plan at Wine in the Woods in the Woods



**The Inner Arbor Trust tent at Wine in the Woods 2014. [Click for high-resolution version.](#)**

Yesterday I had the pleasure of talking about the [Inner Arbor plan](#) to visitors to the [Inner Arbor Trust](#) tent at [Wine in the Woods](#). (Full disclosure: I paid my own way into Wine in the Woods, but I did drink three bottles of the free water the Inner Arbor staff were handing out to all comers, to help combat my hay fever cough.) It was a fun afternoon, and prompted a few thoughts:

*People like the plan.* First, and most important, without exception all of the several dozen people I talked to loved the overall plan, thought the proposed features looked great, and asked me how soon they'd see them realized. Other people staffing the tent had the same experience; apparently only one person stopped by who had negative things to say. Despite the impression you might get reading *Columbia Flier* letters to the editor,

there appears to be a very large (albeit mostly silent) base of support for the Inner Arbor plan. The issue right now is that most people haven't been following events closely, and don't have a good feel for the progress that's been made in putting together a solid plan for enhancing Symphony Woods.

*Talking to strangers about the plan is a good way to better understand it.* In my job I've worked a lot of trade shows promoting my company's products. Since my company is but one of many with a presence at a show, it's important to be able to crisply sum up to people why it's worth their stopping to talk to me instead of walking on by. It was the same here. In talking to people I was forced to boil down the [thousands of words](#) I've written about the Inner Arbor plan into a few short sentences. My best attempt: The Inner Arbor plan is all about making Symphony Woods a place you'd enjoy visiting even when it's not Wine in the Woods. Then I'd talk about the path system and explain the various proposed park structures. It helped a lot that the tent was stuffed to the gills with poster-sized renderings of everything. However I found that people got confused sometimes about the renderings until I put them in context and explained more about what they were showing.

*Talking about the Caterpillar.* People generally thought the [Caterpillar](#) was cool and liked the way it looked (again, contrary to the letter writers, who seem to have a special hate for the Caterpillar). However I personally found it harder than with the other park features to crisply sum up what the Caterpillar was. I think that's because the Caterpillar isn't an amenity that stands alone, but instead is tied up with the overall strategy of more tightly integrating Merriweather Post Pavilion with Symphony Woods. So in explaining the Caterpillar I had to explain the strategy, which took more time. The best short explanation I came up with is that the Caterpillar is what's going to replace the unattractive fence currently enclosing Merriweather.



**The Purple Stage at Wine in the Woods, at the future location of the Chrysalis amphitheater. [Click for high-resolution version.](#)**

*The Chrysalis is going to have a great location. Wine in the Woods has two temporary stages for musical acts, the Green Stage and the Purple Stage. As it happens the Purple Stage is in the exact location where the [Chrysalis amphitheater](#) is planned to be built. As you can see from the accompanying picture, the Purple Stage was a popular place for people to hang out and listen to music. (In fact, it was apparently so popular that vendors at that end of the park were doing a booming business.) The Chrysalis will likely prove to be just as popular if not more so, and it will be much better looking than a temporary stage. It's also worth noting that the hill on which people sit amongst the trees does a good job of isolating the stage visually and aurally from Merriweather Post Pavilion. It confirmed for me the wisdom of the Inner Arbor plan siting the Chrysalis further away from Merriweather (and further down the hill) than the amphitheater proposed in the Cy Paumier plan.*

All in all it was a fun experience volunteering, and the time went by pretty quickly (to be honest, much more quickly than at the trade shows I do at work). The Inner Arbor Trust tent will be open again today, near the northwest entrance near the volunteer tent, so if

you're going to be attending Wine in the Woods please take a couple of minutes to stop by, say hello to the folks there, get a free bottle of water, and find out more about what's being planned for Symphony Woods.

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