Open House Summary
November 29, 2005
Blaine K-8 School, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Overview

The fifth Magnolia Bridge Project Open House was held on November 29, 2005, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Blaine School in Magnolia. Stations were set up in the Blaine School lunchroom to present the three rebuild alternatives and the Rehabilitation Alternative being evaluated. The open house was held to share results from the recently completed environmental studies and to gather public feedback to guide the upcoming selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Approximately 70 people signed in at the meeting. Information on the project schedule, predicted impacts associated with each alternative, and cost and expenditures was provided in a packet with a comment form. Project team members were on hand to answer questions and explain each of the alternatives under consideration. Members of the project team included Kirk Jones and Cela Fortier (Seattle Department of Transportation Project Managers), Pete Smith (HNTB), and Sarah Brandt, Chelsea Tennyson, and Molly Edmonds (EnviroIssues).

At 6:30 p.m., Kirk Jones gave a brief presentation reviewing the alternatives and detailing the findings from the environmental studies. After the presentation, Kirk invited the public to ask questions or offer comments using the microphone set up for that purpose.

Public input was gathered at the meeting in several ways: (1) through discussions with project team members, (2) on large flip charts located near each alternative description, where the public was invited to write comments or questions, (3) on comment forms (meeting attendees were invited to complete the comment form and leave it at the meeting or mail it in at a later date), and (4) through oral comments heard after the presentation.

General Summary

The following are common issues and concerns raised during the open house, either on flipcharts, during the question and comment period after the presentation, or on comment forms. This list is not all-inclusive, but attempts to capture the key points heard repeatedly from the public.

- Alternative A was generally the most popular alternative, while Alternative C was generally the least popular alternative. Table 1 provides a summary of the number

of times members of the public ranked alternatives from most preferred (1) to least preferred (4) on their comment forms.

Table 1. Alternative Rankings Provided on Comment Forms

Alternative	Total 1 Rankings (Best Alternative)	Total 2 Rankings	Total 3 Rankings	Total 4 Rankings (Worst Alternative)
A	17	2	1	1
C	1	0	6	14
D	2	13	5	2
Rehab	3	3	7	8

- Costs and funding—Respondents were concerned about the differences in cost and how the project would obtain funding. Several members of the public pointed out that the costs of the Rehabilitation Alternative would be larger over the life of the bridge than any of the rebuild options.
- Bridge closure and traffic mitigation—The length of time that the bridge will be closed concerned citizens. Longer shutdown times made the Rehabilitation Alternative less attractive to the public, but some commenters said they were willing to put up with a longer shutdown if Alternative A is built. Many had questions about traffic mitigation and alternative routes.
- Selection process—Citizens wanted to know how their comments would be considered in the selection of a preferred alternative in relation to other factors.
- Impacts—Noise impacts and impacts to pedestrians were two commonly cited concerns.
- Traffic calming—Many citizens on the Magnolia bluff are concerned about the high speed of cars entering Magnolia and asked that traffic calming measures be included in the final bridge design.

Public Input

The following section includes verbatim comments captured during the question an answer period after the presentation, submitted via comment forms returned at the open house, and on flipcharts during the meeting.

Oral Comments/Questions

The following questions and comments were offered after Kirk Jones' presentation. Responses to questions are indicated in *italicized font*.

- The Rehabilitation Alternative will cost more because of maintenance costs, but this is not shown in your materials or your presentation.
  That's correct. The consultants are currently developing lifecycle costs that will compare the Rehabilitation Alternative to each of the rebuild alternatives.

- If not steel, what would the new bridge be constructed out of?
  Concrete.

- Is there any other material that would fare better in an earthquake than concrete?
  No, concrete is really the best. The new bridge is being designed to withstand an earthquake of roughly a 500-year occurrence.

- Do any of the alternatives present foundation problems?
  Soil improvements will be necessary for each of the alternatives. Because we would be injecting a cement-like mixture 30-feet around each column and the columns on the current bridge are so closely spaced, the Rehabilitation Alternative would require us to do soil improvements throughout the length of the entire structure.

- Where would funds for the project most likely come from?
  We will be looking for funds from the Port of Seattle, Burlington Northern Railroad, local bonds, and both state and federal grants.

- Is the project more likely to get funds from third-party partners with Alternative C or D?
  No, not necessarily.

- What will the construction detour route be while the bridge is closed?
  Most of the traffic will be routed through Dravus with police directing traffic at this intersection. We are looking at the possibility of a temporary surface road, as well.

- How was the Galer Flyover funded? Why wasn't this money put into this project?
  Amgen and local funds funded the flyover. It was not incorporated into this project, because it serves a different purpose than the bridge. The bridge is designed to get residents to Magnolia, while the flyover is meant for heavy truck traffic headed to the industrial area.

- My preferred alternative is Alternative A. What is the project team's criterion for choosing a preferred?
  Public opinion and the impacts found in the environmental reports will be the two primary criterion used to select the preferred alternative.

- What weight is given to the public's opinion?
  When the project team makes a final recommendation to the director of SDOT and the mayor, we will tell them what we've heard from the community. For instance, we've heard a lot of folks don't like Alternative C, so we most likely will not be recommending C.

- How will Northwest Harvest be impacted?
  Northwest Harvest will not be impacted because their lease ends soon, and they intend to find a new location in the near future.

- What is your confidence level regarding the cost estimates?
  I'm very comfortable with the cost estimates. We used a Schedule, Cost and Risk Evaluation (SCoRE) process to determine how the alternatives compare. Through this process, SDOT identified factors that could impact or improve the project's schedule and cost, and developed related estimates for each alternative. This means we are 90% certain that the cost will be this amount or lower.

- If you had to pick a preferred alternative now, what would it be?
  I think the whole design team is teetering back and forth between Alternative A and D.

- What are possible traffic solutions while the bridge is under construction if Alternative A is chosen?
  That is something we will be looking further into in the next phase. There is the possibility to give the contractor a reward/penalty for each day they finish ahead/behind schedule.

- Have you investigated where solid ground is for all the replacement alternatives?
  Yes, we did borings this summer and we are confident with each of the alternatives that we know where solid ground lies. Once a preferred alternative is chosen we will do additional borings.

- Have you considered traffic accidents in you impacts for each of the alternatives?
  Traffic accidents really are not a potential impact. The curves of the bridge will meet design standards.

- When can residents have a role in discussing future traffic mitigation, bus stops, park access, etc., related to replacing the bridge? We need mitigation to be defined. We would be in support of a pedestrian overpass over Galer.
  Detailed discussions like these will start happening in the next phase of the project.

- There is an important transit exchange on the center of the existing bridge. Any alternative should incorporate transit access.

- What is the key advantage of Alternative D over Alternative A?
  Alternative A is very similar to what we have today. The downside is that it would still be in the shoreline and it intrudes on the park more so than Alternative D does.

  Alternative D is about 0.1-mile longer (12 seconds of additional travel time) than Alternative A. It would have more impacts on local businesses, but it would move

the structure out of the shoreline. It is also more expensive than Alternative A. Bridge closure time for Alternative D would be less than Alternative A.

- A difference of 70-72 decibels is a significant change in terms of noise impacts.

- I think you are overstating the impacts to the park. It might be nice to have a new structure that looks nicer. The plants in the area would certainly grow back.

- What are the impacts for residents between Alternatives A and D?
  Alternative D would take the bridge a bit closer to homes, so there is the potential for more noise and light impacts for surrounding homes.

Comment Form Input

Twenty-five comment forms were collected at the meeting. Twenty-one respondents ranked the alternatives on a scale of 1-4, 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred (see Table 1 on Page 2 for a summary of public rankings).

Of the comment forms received, Alternative A was the most preferred option; seventeen respondents ranked it as their first choice. Two respondents called it their second choice, one respondent called it their third choice, and one respondent called it their fourth choice. Comments supporting Alternative A pointed to cost efficiency and the direct route as the main benefits. Shoreline and environmental impacts were the major issues of concern regarding this alternative. While a long downtime was a concern, two respondents said they were willing to endure a longer shut down to have this bridge alternative.

Alternative D was generally selected as the next preferred alternative. While only two respondents said Alternative D was their first choice, thirteen respondents called it their second choice. Five respondents called it their third choice, and two respondents called it their fourth choice. Alternative D's main benefits were a lack of shoreline impacts, a shortened closure time, and a design that does not separate the land from the water. Concerns included conflict with North Bay designs for the Port of Seattle property and impacts on businesses and neighborhoods.

Three respondents said the Rehabilitation Alternative was their first choice. Three respondents called it their second choice, seven respondents called it their third choice, and eight respondents called it their fourth choice. Many respondents felt that if costs to rehabilitate the bridge were the same as those to build a new facility, then building a new bridge would be best. Those that favored the Rehabilitation Alternative pointed out that it was a direct route.

Alternative C was the most unpopular option. One respondent said Alternative C was their first choice. Six respondents called it their third choice, and fourteen respondents called it their fourth choice. Many cited the delay caused by a circuitous route and signalized intersections as the main concern. A few respondents did point out that

Alternative C would enable future Port development, access to the marina, and access to bike paths.

Verbatim comment forms are provided below. Blank spaces indicate sections that were left blank by respondents.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	More cost effective	None
C	4	It has none	Not cost effective
D	2	As an alternative to A it's the only one	It has none
Rehabilitation	3	None but better than C	It is only a temporary fix. Replacement is the answer.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	• New, stable bridge • Uses existing traffic patterns • Basically no change to neighborhood adjacent to bridge	Cost "Down time" during construction; but I am confident that this short term inconvenience will be well worth the benefits of a new bridge.
C	4		• Disruption to Magnolia neighborhood along bluff • Longer route
D	2	• Stronger bridge • No impact on water life	Disruption of neighborhood along bluff
Rehabilitation	3		

Additional Comments:

- Thanks for having comment boxes on each table!

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Similar to existing bridge in location. Uses the space of the Ports "North Bay" in best and most efficient manner. Most compatible to the ultimate goals of the Ports Plan with "North Bay."	Impact on shoreline that should be able to be mitigated through support placements.
C	3	Less supported structure. Low earthquake stability	Access to Piers 90 and 91, park, and beach areas. Possible conflict with "North Bay" roadways and the potential for congestion on proposed "Armory Way Flyover" etc.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
D	2	Most similar to current bridge without the shoreline (potential) impacts. Shorten the closure time.	Conflict potential with "North Bay" designs. Cut "North Bay" in half causing unforeseen impacts on tenant placement and product flow.
Rehabilitation	4		Seems like a waste of time to build a new bridge from old parts in a lengthy manner that will create a much "bulkier" bridge.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Given safety, cost and efficiency—this option makes the most sense.	General concern: mitigation of traffic on Thorndyke during construction
C	4	Unknown	Too circuitous—looks like torture and potentially hazardous with the extreme curves—accident prone—this doesn't appear to have been analyzed
D	3		Too much displacement of existing businesses.
Rehabilitation	2	Good location	Seems like cost is close to total replacement—Option A—future maintenance would be higher than Option A. Might as well just get a whole new bridge! Construction time is too long.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Same general footprint would allow for some port development. Clean lines—uncluttered.	Longer "down time"
C	4		• Too close to residential area • Too close to green belt • Would increase commute time • Signalized intersection
D	2	Would allow for port development; less time to build	
Rehabilitation	3	Might actually happen	• Safety! • Costs nearly as much to rehab as to rebuild • Long time to accomplish—traffic would be awful!

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Direct route; lower cost than C or D	Does anything need to be done to stabilize East-facing slope of Magnolia neighborhood?
C	4		Don't like the traffic light.
D	2	Includes stabilization of slope	Is stabilization effective?
Rehabilitation	3	Direct route	Long period of re-routing and impact during construction. No stabilization.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Most direct route	
C	3	It will take longer drive time to get from 15th to top of bluff—length of time of trip will also be increased by intersections of surface streets and traffic control signals.	
D	3	See no benefit.	
Rehabilitation	2	A direct route	

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A		Glad to see only A and D remaining in the running.	
C			
D		Glad to see only A and D remaining in the running.	
Rehabilitation			

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A		A variation of Plan B is by far the best method and the most beautiful approach to Magnolia. Also by far the cheapest.	
C			Someone with a great deal of influence (probably political) has been influential in getting this throughout. Why are able to exert this influence
D		All of the excuses for not doing this could certainly be gotten around if it was desired by those in charge. If no bridge were present, the approach would be more beautiful and certainly cheaper.	

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
Rehabilitation			

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A		Preferred	
C			
D			
Rehabilitation			

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A			
C			
D			
Rehabilitation			Future noise levels would exceed standards along the 1st block to the North along Thorndyke. Also! It is already beyond acceptable noise levels now.

Additional comments:

- The 1500 block of Thorndyke is as unique as the one block of Galer. All northbound traffic splits off at the corner and heads up the street. It then spreads out after passing this one block. The noise level now is unacceptable along 1500 Thorndyke, as well as Galer! With dozens of new apartments being constructed it will only get worse.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	$ Cost; least impact	
C	4		
D	4		Noise levels vs. A Light impacts vs. A
Rehabilitation	4		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	All similar to current construction	Downtime. Subject to liquefaction of soil at footings.
C	4		Surface road requires intersections and slower times going to and from Magnolia. Impacts some houses on the slope of bluff. Impacts businesses on route.
D	2	A bridge with less downtime.	
Rehabilitation	3	Similar to current situation	• Downtime being installed • Ongoing maintenance costs higher

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Shortest route. Seems to be easiest. No moving buildings.	
C	3		Longer. Stop sign.
D	1 or 2	Aesthetically—would this "look" better and not separate water/land	
Rehabilitation	4		

Additional comments:

- No use rehashing benefits/issues as they are printed.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	3	Good accommodation for pedestrians and bikes.	
C	1	Good construction staging—no or little impact. It will connect to bike trail better. Good access to marina and port property	Changes traffic patterns. Provides better grades, though, for trucks.
D	2	Provides little more distance to climb up—so the grades will be better than Alternative A. Curves could reduce speed. Perhaps only one westbound lane is needed—eliminating the truck climbing lane.	
Rehabilitation	4	No benefits that justify the effort and cost.	No changes/improvement for pedestrians/bicycle. We need more incentives for people to walk and bike rather than drive.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1		
C	3		
D	2		
Rehabilitation	4		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Less expensive	
C	4		
D	2		
Rehabilitation	4		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1		
C	3		
D	2		
Rehabilitation	4		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Direct connection to Seattle, no surface intersection, visually appealing, structure and vehicles farthest from greenbelt, minimum impact to property along bluff. Less expensive than C or D.	None—Construction overlap time→I'd much rather endure an extra few months inconvenience to avoid the issues of C and D than shorten the inconvenience and live with C or D. Your park impact seems way overstated—it's far better than existing structure.
C	4	None.	I strongly oppose this. Too close to bluff (noise, emissions, light), future congestion at light (time decay—estimate seems comically optimistic), bridge is wonderful link from our isolated neighborhood to downtown—foresight in design—don't destroy it with this nonsensical alternative. Waste of $10 million.
D	3	Slightly better than C due to no surface intersection, but direct route is better.	Too close to bluff—impact on City Ice. Waste of $10 million.
Rehabilitation	2	Cheapest overall (but maintenance costs are drawback)	Ugly by comparison to building new bridge in existing footprint.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1	Less expensive.	
C	4	None	Affects greenbelt and residences near bluff
D	2	Opens up the waterfront—better opportunities for development	Slightly more expensive.
Rehabilitation	3		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	4	There are none.	
C	4	Stupid idea	
D	4	Bad news for everybody	
Rehabilitation	1	The bridge is already standing. Just fix it and fix the viaduct.	

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	2	Travel time. New up-to-date structure.	Cuts off shoreline. Land use to the north. Infringes on Sound. Environmental concerns. Wetlands etc. Shoreline management.
C	4	Land to the north is open. Housing perhaps.	Slow travel time for most. Gain of few at cost of most of Magnolia.
D	1	Doable and livable. A little more travel time. 12 seconds—big deal. Better impact on shoreline. This looks more attractive all the time.	Opens up housing or park usage to the south along the sound. Perhaps a park/housing/mixed use development.
Rehabilitation	3	Least cost. Historic bridge—perhaps—if you're into old bridge architecture.	May not last the ravages of time and weather. Faster "wear out" factor. Will need to rebuild sooner.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	2		This has the potential for some "I got gas" concerning environmental issues and geological/soil surprises
C	4		
D	3		
Rehabilitation	1	There are less unknown factors	

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1		
C	3		1. Signalized intersection on port property induces delay for commute and emergency services. 2. Reduced views of city, Rainier
D	2		
Rehabilitation	4		1. Long-term cost too high. 2. Excessive construction detour time 3. No bicycle lanes 4. Total initial cost estimate is artificially low compared to alternatives A, D, and C since rehab risk factors were lowered with new research.

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
A	1		
C	4		
D	3		

Alternative	Rating	Benefits	Issues/Concerns
Rehabilitation	1	Just fix it up. Leave the bridge where it is.	

Email Feedback
This email was received after the open house:

This is a follow-up to 11/29/05 hearing on the Magnolia Bridge. After the hearing, I offered a suggestion for mitigating inconvenience while the bridge is closed, and you asked me to email you the suggestion.

Background: Magnolia currently has only 3 exits, including the bridge that is about to be replaced, and the most northerly exit, located near Fishermen's Terminal, is problematical. Traffic headed east to Fremont or north to the Ballard Bridge is funneled on to an overpass with only one lane in each direction. At rush hour, eastbound traffic can be backed up to the intersection with Commodore Way. At other hours, traffic can also be backed up when the bridge is up or for other reasons. If an accident or other event occurs on the Ballard Bridge, drivers already on the overpass are stuck there for an indefinite period. Just last weekend the bridge was closed for more than an hour because of an accident. Unfortunately, closures of that nature are rather common.

Suggestion: Add one eastbound lane to the overpass, and connect that lane to Nickerson so that cars can escape to the Fremont area. We don't need another westbound lane; just an additional eastbound one. That one additional eastbound lane would cost a small fraction of what the new bridge will cost. If it can go in before the Magnolia Bridge is replaced, it will reduce enormously the congestion when Magnolia is down to two exits during bridge replacement.

Flipchart Comments

Alignment A

- Good idea—cars will be able to enter Magnolia at greater speeds than what they do now! A second "benefit" will eliminate access to Ursula Judkins Park! *[Please note likely sarcastic tone of this comment.]*
- Best. Greater vehicle speeds are a HUGE negative for pedestrians and bicyclists. We need traffic calming on this facility. Access from Magnolia to the marina and Port property is not provided. Due to the bridge's close proximity to the water it doesn't look like it would even be possible.

Alignment C

- This totally useless idea is good evidence of how bogus this "community input" process is.
- I like this alternative. It touches down to the port property making easy access and connection to the bike path. It connects to the marina. Hey, we don't have to

make a circuitous route back from the marina to Magnolia. It connects nicely with future port development.

Alignment D

- Like to have full and better access to the marina and the port development from Magnolia. Couldn't the ramps be constructed for full access? (Loop ramps)
- FYI the DOT really messed up the entrance to the bridge going north off of 15th. In your plans you should consider a smooth transition from 15th to the bridge as it was done originally. The right lane carries 20-25 cars to 1 in the left lane and the left lane flyover addition. CORRECT IT! Also in your wisdom and efficacy—why did the DOT paint the bike lane coming up to Howe St and then a couple months later cover it all up with the new asphalt. Waste of taxpayers' money. Can't you plan ahead??
- This is very good on the environment. Preserves shoreline, opens up possibilities of a park or mixed use. This is now my number one. If there is a major earthquake this would be further from water and potential flooding and slamming in of floating debris. Complies with shoreline management. 12 seconds of travel time lost is no big deal. Could open up Port-urban development—an urban village.

Rehabilitation Alternative

- Best idea of all!! Please add traffic calming at entry point to Magnolia.
- No—It doesn't help pedestrians and bikes. Why spend money and time without making any improvements? Can we remove one of the westbound lanes? IT ends at 28th anyways so it doesn't provide that much capacity. It would slow traffic down, also.