Open House Summary
October 26, 2004
Blaine K-8 School, 5:30 to 8:30 pm

Overview

The fourth Magnolia Bridge Project Open House was held on October 26, 2004, from 5:30 to 8:30 PM at the Blaine K-8 School in Magnolia. Stations were set up in the Blaine School lunchroom to present the three alternatives and a no build alternative being evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The important development to convey to the public was dropping Alternative H from further study (due to traffic issues) and adding Alternative C to those being brought forward through the EIS. Information was also available on the project schedule, predicted impacts associated with each alternative, and the project goals. Project team members were on hand to answer questions, explain each of the alternatives under consideration, and describe the EIS process. Representatives from the Port of Seattle's North Bay Project were also present to answer questions about property development plans north of the bridge.

Members of the project team in attendance included Kirk Jones (Seattle Department of Transportation Project Manager), Pete Smith and Katharine Hough (HNTB), Lesley Bain (Weinstein A|U), Don Samdahl (Mirai), Anthony Katsaros (Shapiro), Lamar Scott and Ben Spencer (KPFF), Steve Johnson (Johnson Architects), and Brad Hoff, Chelsea Galano, Sarah Brandt, and Kathleen Dowd-Gailey (EnviroIssues). Approximately 75 people signed in at the meeting.

At 7:00 pm, Kirk Jones gave a brief presentation on the alternatives being evaluated in the Draft EIS. He also reviewed the project history, schedule, and key issues. 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 personally write any comments or questions about the project, (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. Approximately 17 comment forms were collected at the meeting and approximately 20 people gave oral comments. A Spanish interpreter was also present, along with project materials translated in Spanish and Vietnamese.

General Summary

The following common questions and concerns were raised during the open house, either in discussions with project team members, 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.

- Signalized intersections on the bridges are generally not favored, as they slow down vehicular travel and don't seem to be necessary.
- Alternative C raises many concerns, from concentrating noise and air quality impacts on those over the bluff to slowing down emergency response vehicles. Many community members see Alternative C as a route designed to accommodate the Port's redevelopment.
- Several community members voiced concern about the Port's plans for redevelopment, and one encouraged the City and Port to work together on creating a comprehensive plan for the area.
- Pedestrian and bicycle paths should be included in any solution. Alternative C is a concern, as it appears to co-locate the bike/pedestrian path and road in close proximity.
- Access to the marina from the east is a concern, though some residents don't believe that the number of people trying to get from the bluff to the marina warrants a special intersection.
- Concerns were raised about the environmental impacts and seismic safety of Alternatives C and D, which appear to be located near or within the greenbelt on the Magnolia bluff.
- Of those expressing a preference about the options, Alternative A received the most support, while Alternative C was opposed by the most commenters.

General Public Input

The following section includes comments captured verbatim on flipcharts during the meeting, oral comments and questions offered after the presentation, and input submitted via comment forms returned at the open house and by mail.

Flipchart Comments

The following comments were captured on flipcharts placed near the profiles and maps of the alternatives.

Alignment A

- Prefer ramps to intersection
- Same as above

Alignment C

- Noise impacts on bluff?
- What about emissions impact on the bluff and greenbelt?

Alignment D

- What are the potential problems with elevated rails or platforms from the monorail? On all the alternatives?
- Prefer ramps to intersection
- Prefer A, but D with ramp (not intersection) is tolerable
- If the Port wants more access than they have now, they should build their own access north of bridge

Oral Comments/Questions

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

- With Alternatives A and D, have you done any traffic projections between the area to be developed and the bridge? Will those off-ramps pull enough people off of the bridge to make a difference? If traffic won't be seriously changed by the presence of the ramps, do you need a signalized intersection?
  Yes, we've done those studies, and the issue boils down to more than traffic volume. Trucks trying to enter or exit the bridge would need an intersection. If the Port redevelops in the North Bay property, and gets approval for more dense development, they may need to create yet another connection (perhaps at Armory or Wheeler and tying into the North end of the property).

- The Port's needs seem to be the real "elephant in the room." The most plausible alternative from the Port's perspective appears to be Alternative D. What do you mean by "denser development" in the North Bay area? Big box, commercial, or residential development? I worry that public comments will be minute compared to the consideration given to what the Port wants.
  Regardless of what the Port needs, there will only be one intersection on any given bridge alternative. Dan Burke, Port of Seattle, encouraged the crowd to attend a public meeting on November 16th at Bell Harbor International Harbor (4:30 – 7:30 pm), where the Port's framework for North Bay land use and redevelopment will be discussed. Lindsay Brown also announced that the Port would provide a community briefing at Blaine on November 11 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

- It looks like Alternative C would place a pedestrian walkway next to or underneath the vehicular parkway. Can the two work together?
  Yes, the two would either be next to each other, or the roadway would be over the

top of the pedestrian walkway. Working out the details with the Port will be crucial to determine how the two could conceptually work together.

- What benefits does Alternative A's intersection option have over the ramp option? Does it have to do with access to the waterfront and marina?
  The intersection option would allow eastbound traffic from Magnolia to make an earlier turn to get to the marina. In the future, it is expected that the Port would create a north-south road through the North Bay property to 21st Ave N, so people from Magnolia could also connect to the marina by driving north and then through the Port's property.

- It seems that only a small number of eastbound cars from Magnolia want to get to the marina. Such a low number of cars shouldn't warrant an intersection on the bridge. And what about connecting people from the Galer Flyover to the marina and park without using the bridge?
  The Port and businesses currently working near T90/91 need to keep a secure route between the piers and their businesses. This is why we can't allow a surface connection from the Galer Flyover to the park and marina.

- Have you done a traffic study that looks at not including any ramps to the park and marina?
  No. Marina businesses paid for the ramps that are there today, and we need to keep them as part of this project.

- We don't need stoplights on the bridge, so the intersection options aren't good. The ramps work fine today, and would continue to work fine. Alternative C is the worst. I live on Plymouth, so the bridge would be a block from my house. This would create noise and pollution impacts on the residences in my neighborhood. Alternative A is much better. Crosswinds would take pollution in the area and spread it around a bit. Build a beautiful bridge as a piece of art that will be there for a long time. The land will still be great for development. Amgen should not have been built, and shouldn't be dictating the plans for the bridge. The bridge offers a beautiful view of the city.

- Is there a way that Alternative A can be built without lights or intersections? Using curving on- and off-ramps, for example?
  The amount of space we'd need to build big enough ramps would require a lot of property, and break up the Port's property a lot. It would be really tough to work around such large ramps.

- As the Port property develops, would more and more trucks need to use the intersection on the bridge?
  Trucks to existing buildings would continue to use the Galer Flyover, since that's the most convenient route for them. Trucks to new buildings on the Port's property might use the bridge.

- Alternatives C and D seem to be on the table so the Port can do what it wants. Alternative C looks like it will create impacts on the bluff above, like diesel smells and noise. I'm suspicious that C will be the preferred alternative just to accommodate the Port.

- I live by the existing bridge on the corner of the bluff, and experience the noise and the smells. Many more people use the bridge to get to northern parts of Magnolia because it's so much more convenient (zero lights as opposed to seven if they use Dravus). It's unfair that all of the traffic due to the urban density on Thorndyke and neighboring areas comes by my house. Northern neighborhoods should have to experience some of this traffic. Also, I've created a simple website to talk about this project (www.newmagnoliabridge.com) and encourage everyone to look at Canyon Park as an example of how beautiful light industry can be. North Bay could be a beautiful area full of trees, where, for example, we could walk our dogs after hours.

- I live on the highest point of Magnolia. Alternative C is terrible for another reason: emergency access for fire trucks and ambulances, which would be exacerbated by such a long drive. Direct access would be much better, as there are a lot of older people who live in Magnolia. (You've heard the joke, of course, that lots of old people live in Ballard, and their parents live in Magnolia.) Would Alternatives D or C, which look like they're against the bluff, be vulnerable to seismic events and therefore dangerous? Alternative A is best.
  No, they aren't against the bluff because that's parkland, where we aren't allowed to build.

- Is there an intersection included in Alternative C? That's a curvy area up top.
  Yes, there would be a signalized intersection that would be safe at that point.

- Have you considered ramps in both directions on Alternatives A and D?
  Yes. By the time the ramps would descend at 6.5% from the west, they would be nearly to the railroad. It wouldn't make sense to include them.

- Seattle has great natural areas, and because of that a high quality of life. Our best features include greenbelts, urban wildlife, etc. One of our best features is our greenbelts, which should be protected. I'm concerned that Alternative C runs right through a natural feature that should be protected. Also, increasing the density in North Bay could really change these dynamics. What are you doing to consider the greenbelt and other quality of life issues?
  Alternative C is at the toe of the bluff, not in the greenbelt. Our discipline reports will look at the issues that you're raising.

- Shorelines are protected under city law. Are there regulations in place to protect greenbelts, so Alternative C wouldn't be the preferred alternative?
  We are considering those issues, though at this point they're not fatal flaws.

- I encourage you to weigh heavily the impacts in the greenbelt, and that you project into the future and work hard to protect features that contribute to our quality of life. Not just project traffic numbers, but vegetation and wildlife.

- What do you gain using Alternative C over D?
  You get off of a structure for a longer stretch, which gives you more flexibility when developing in terms of access.

- Is there a preferred alternative in the EIS? I hugely encourage choosing Alternative A. Also, I don't understand the security issue you mention regarding the terminals.
  We don't have a preferred alternative, but if one looks like it's rising above the others as we complete the document, we might pick a preferred alternative. The security issue is related to the seafood processing and cold storage businesses that accept cargo from international ships. Due to customs and immigration regulations, we must keep that area secure.

- Alternative C is not "new" is it? It's one of the original nine that you rejected?
  That's correct. We've modified the original Alternative C.

- Are Alternative C or the intersection options only being proposed in response to the Port's desire to develop North Bay? What would happen if Costco or Home Depot wanted to build in North Bay?
  No, those alternatives and options aren't just to serve the Port. We're attempting to maintain flexibility. If those kinds of businesses wanted to locate in North Bay, they (or the Port) would have to go through other processes to assess traffic and neighborhood impacts.

- If there were a snowstorm, Alternative C looks like it would be impossible to deal with. Where would traffic go?

- How much will it cost?
  In today's dollars all of the alternatives are in excess of $100 million. We are in the process of identifying all of the risk and opportunity situations that can affect the cost, applying a probability factor to each situation, and applying an inflation factor out to the expected time of expenditure for each of the project's major elements. It will be several weeks before this process is complete and the appropriate City officials are briefed. At that time the public will be informed of the expected costs, which will be a range of costs for each alternative.

- Who's paying for the bridge?
  We all know it basically comes down to the taxpayers. We don't know what our sources will be, but we'll go after all kinds. We consider the Port, City, federal government, railroad, and the state to all be potential funding sources.

Comment Form Input

Seventeen comment forms were submitted during the open house. The three questions asked on the comment form were:

- What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?
- Is there anything you would like more information about as the EIS process moves forward?
- Additional Comments

Seventeen people responded to at least one of the questions on the Magnolia Bridge Comment Form and many responded to at least 2 of the 3 questions.

Many respondents are interested in more information about noise, light and air pollution that might be associated with the alternatives. Two people hope to see more consideration of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Of the comments received from this meeting, Alternative A received the most support: 10 people view Alternative A as a viable alternative. Traffic flow, the directness of the route, and accessibility were mentioned as reasons for supporting this alternative.

Six comments were received about Alternative D. Most people believe that Alternative D will provide access to North Bay and will regulate traffic speed and flow. Three people view Alternative D to be similar to Alternative A, and like both intersection options. Two people opposed Alternative D as a Port-focused project, and one noted that it would result in increased noise for Thorndyke residents. One person feels that Alternative D will increase travel time.

Of the ten comments received about Alternative C, only one was favorable and noted that the route allows for flexibility in the future. The other nine people oppose this option due to it being a "circuitous route," increasing travel time, impacting the environment, and/or creating health and safety concerns. A few people feel this design favors the Port more than the residents of Magnolia.

The following verbatim responses were submitted on comment forms, grouped by question and separated by horizontal lines.

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?

Alternative C is a bad idea. Magnolia is primarily a bedroom community, and we are accustomed to fairly swift access to and from the city. The winding route with a traffic light on the surface portion is an undue interference in the commute. I have a feeling that Alternative C is mainly for the benefit of the Port's development of "North Bay" area, and <u>not</u> for the benefit of the 24,000 citizens of Magnolia. We in Magnolia only have two

access routes to the "outside world" and they should not be unduly complicated. Alternative C would also result in loss of views from the road, and would expose more people to noise from the elevated portion that runs along the eastside of Magnolia. The new bridge, if there must be one, should be as direct as possible.

Alternative A Intersection or Alternative D Intersection seem to be the best options for several reasons: 1) Route to Elliott Bay Marina area, 2) Alternative to Dravus provides reasonable direct access off Magnolia.

It would be practical to have 2 lanes going to town and 2 lanes coming home, but it might make a racetrack of the bridge. Keep the bridge as close to as it is now, but keep going with planning and finding money before the next earthquake!!!

The people I've talked to prefer A as long as you don't cause them to take a detour – because the want to get downtown to the job and back home to the dinner as fast as possible – without any extra hills to climb. These people understand that the bridge itself is dangerous, worrisome and a better more safe design would be appreciated – without too much expense.

Alt. A is preferred. It makes the most sense from the traffic flow and from a historical perspective. Alt D and Alt C are pork for the Port. Alt D will increase noise to the Thorndyke residential zone and when developed traffic to Magnolia. Construction time for Alt A may be longer, but it is better to suffer in the short term than the long term.

D – Intersection provides the most logical solution.

- Access to North Bay from E. and W.
- Light from intersection will slow traffic.
- Frees up waterfront for development.
- Aesthetics are acceptable.
- Not as convoluted as Alt. C.
- Least detain time during construction.

Good job! The renderings really help!

"C" seems quite circuitous for traffic and the increase in travel time will probably discourage drivers from using – therefore increased Dravus & Thorndyke travel will increase traffic snarls.

A & D – prefer intersection options; provides E. bound access to new North Bay development, etc. or allows drivers to bypass. Traffic signals at intersection would be a plus in terms of regulating flow and speed.

---

1) Should choose the option with the least environmental impacts – habitat and shoreline area
2) 2nd should choose least expensive

Also – pedestrian and bikes should be given priority

Prefer "A", Dislike "C"

Alternative A with the ramps as we have now is much better than putting a light in the middle of the bridge to accommodate a very small number of cars/day.

Alternative D with ramps like we have now would be ok, but again the light in the middle of bridge.

Alternative "C" is unacceptable because of negative impacts that are certain to occur on the adjacent greenbelt. The Queen Anne Plan and the plans of other Seattle neighborhoods demand that our "urban forest" be protected, nurtured and valued. Urban wildlife will also be unacceptable degraded!

Alternative A without signalized intersection. Just replace what we have now. Nothing else.

#A – why not have an access ramp off the bridge to the south at ground level for access to the water and restaurant (and could go left/north, too and have a ramp off the bridge/going west) to the north that takes cars to ground level.

Forget #C.

Will any of the options allow bikes? Alt C seems to allow the most flexibility for future land use changes.

One of the "negatives" of Alt A, mentioned repeatedly in the SDOT presentation, is the impact on Shoreline. For this reason, Alt C, the worst alternative, looks good. But this

seems like a ginned up negative for the purpose of making C look good. This isn't a beautiful natural shoreline, and elimination of the bridge will not make it so. Comparison should be made to the present condition, and constructing a new, modern, aesthetically pleasing bridge would be a marked improvement to the shoreline, for the least cost, and for the most efficacy for Magnolia residents, and its adequate for the Port, too.

Alternative A is the only alternative that truly serves the residents of Magnolia. Alternative was correctly rejected early in the process for excessive cost and excessive impact. The increased travel time of both C& D is significant health and safety concern especially the surface roading in C if the Port obtains upzones and adds significantly more development traffic.

Since there is no viable alternative that does not include above ground structures I would recommend alt A. if the plain option is used I would recommend strongly that a Jersy barrier be run from where the road goes onto the level section to 15th. The reason for this is that people pull U-turns to either come from or go to the marina area. This would be eliminated if the intersection is added.

Question 2: Is there anything you would like more information about as the EIS process moves forward?

You might want to consider waiting on the industrial development at Northbay and Pier 90-91 because of the business they would take from other such business – especially until our economy picks up – Until then, you might allow the area for children's playfields, and public park and to keep the beautiful views that have made Seattle famous.

Noise and pollution impact of the proposals on the Thorndyke residential neighborhood about and south of bridge.

Port plans and timeline for "streets by others"

Changes in air quality from vehicles and noise impact to residences about proposed routes – especially "C" since appears longest and it is closest to the bluff, crossing the greatest number of cross streets (and greatest number of homes)

The alternatives C and D are options designed to assist the Port with access to their property. However, the bridge is primarily an access ramp for Magnolia and it - the

design should focus on Magnolia, not the Port. They have numerous other options for access.

The impacts on our greenbelt, wildlife and "quality of life" when the projected density of North Bay buildout is actualized – 15, 20, 30, 40 years from now.

Ok, so you can't do it going east – but there must be some way down to the water going east!!!

How will bicycle traffic be affected? Will the interbay trail be compromised or enhanced?

- traffic flow
- steep slopes
- noise
- light pollution on Magnolia and park views
- cost

Question 3: Additional comments?

Do it Right! Not just cost effectively – saving a few dollars or mos. of shutdown in the short term makes little sense for a bridge that will last 50 years.

Does "C" actually meet requirement for providing/maintaining a Southern access to Magnolia Bluff when it snakes to the North? Also the leg of C that borders the bluff seems redundant to Port's proposal along that same green belt.

Alternative A with the ramps as have now is far preferable to C and D.

How are you coordinating with the Port of Seattle? What is the life expectancy of the bridge structure? Think about his along with land use changes over the next 100 years. An option that allows maximum flexibility is best.

Choose Alt. A as the preferred Alternative for the DEIS.