

Magnolia Bridge Replacement Project Speakers Bureau

Group/Organization: Galer area residents
Date: December 10, 2003
Location: 2700 W. Galer – Joan Sobba Residence
Team Members: Kirk Jones, Teresa Platt, Carol Wittig, Don Samdahl
Brad Hoff

Overview

Joan Sobba requested neighborhood briefing at the November 20, 2003 public meeting. Besides questions about the bridge, the neighborhood's main concern is traffic, specifically the high speeds of cars as they leave the bridge. The group strongly supports Alternative H because they believe it will disperse traffic more evenly, provide another access point to Magnolia, and that it may be the most cost-effective.

Eleven neighbors attended the briefing. Kirk Jones gave an overview of the three alternatives and reviewed the project schedule before introducing SDOT's Carol Wittig. Carol represents the Arterial Traffic Operations section of the department. She told the citizens about SDOT's plans to reduce the width of Magnolia Boulevard by adding striping to indicate a bike lane. She said this should help reduce speeds.

Attendees suggested several ways to reduce the overall speed of traffic coming off the bridge:

- Design the new bridge so it isn't like a highway
- Place an intersection on the existing bridge
- Change the 35 mph sign on the bridge to 30 mph
- Post speed limit signs more frequently on Magnolia Boulevard
- Install flop over signs for the crosswalk at Galer and Thorndyke?
- Increase enforcement of the speed limit
- Monitor speeds with camera; issue more tickets
- Place "Your Speed Is" trailer sign after the crest of the hill coming off the bridge

Many of these requests (along with others addressing the route between the bridge and Magnolia Village) were included in a binder Sandy Erickson compiled and gave to Carol.

Action Items

- Send criteria (warrants) for getting stop signs installed
- Send policy for posting more speed limit signs
- Send contact information for person collecting speeding ticket data for SPD
- Send speeding information based on tickets written on bridge
- Research answer to why the posted speed limit on the bridge increases to 35 mph

- Research whether vehicles will be allowed into the new park area on top of the bluff

Notes

Questions raised by neighbors:

Is the bridge considered a highway?

We'll be going after federal funding, so the design will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration and will be required to meet the standards for a minor arterial.

What happens if we have another earthquake?

The bridge is currently safe to drive on, but another big quake could put it on the ground because it doesn't meet today's earthquake standards.

Why isn't the bridge up to current earthquake standards?

We decided it wasn't cost effective to retrofit the bridge to bring it up to current standards. It would've meant spending a lot of money and still having a 70 year-old structure. It's more cost effective to build a new bridge. The City determined Dravus to be the main access point to Magnolia, so that bridge was brought up to today's seismic standards.

Does Dravus carry more cars than the Magnolia Bridge?

Yes it carries more total traffic. Dravus carries large flows in both directions. The Magnolia Bridge may have a higher one-way volume during the peak hour however.

Would Alternative H displace the P-Patch? Have you been working with them to resolve the issue? I don't want a narrow special interest group knocking this off the table.

We've had several discussions with the P-Patch folks. They're not crazy about a structure being closer to their gardens, but our current design doesn't have much of an impact on them.

How does Alternative H compare with other alternatives from a cost perspective?

When all is said and done it maybe cheaper because detour costs during construction will be dramatically lower. We can build the north end, while keeping the existing bridge open.

Why build a bridge at all? We've moved lots of dirt for other projects, why not build up the side of the hill?

It would be very expensive to do that because you'd need a retaining structure on both sides of the fill. You'd also be getting into the green area and potential park property, which we need to avoid.

What part of North Bay is Port property and what is privately owned?

Basically the area to the west side of the railroad tracks is owned by the Port, although they've made an agreement with the National Guard to acquire the Armory if the Port

can find another suitable site for the Guard. The Port has started their master planning process and we're working closely with them.

Are you planning anything on 28th Avenue?

We haven't gotten much public feedback in the last nine months about problems along 28th. We will be "channelizing" Galer and Magnolia Boulevard by painting in bike lanes. The narrowing of the driving lanes on the boulevard should help reduce speeds.

Many people miss their turn trying to get to Thorndyke from Galer. We've got them in our yards, on our sidewalks, and garbage trucks have overturned.

The intersection is very wide. We might be able to look at ways to narrow it through channelization. SDOT pursuing grant funds to try to install a roundabout somewhere in the city. This could be a possible location.

Like the one over by Discovery Park?

Currently there are no roundabouts in Seattle. We have traffic circles which calm neighborhood traffic. A roundabout is a different intersection layout. Bainbridge Island installed one to replace a four-way stop sign and has had great success.

Could you send a brief write up on the criteria to get a stop sign, as well as what we need to do to increase postings of speed limit signs?

We can get that for you.

If we don't meet a strict criterion, how do we challenge it?

We're always careful about putting up a stop sign because often accidents can increase if our criteria aren't met. We don't want to put up stop signs all over the place, so we adopt standards and try to stick to them. If you wanted to challenge, your best bet would be to first approach the Director of SDOT, then the Mayor and the City Council.

Can you send us the contact information for the person who collects speeding data for SPD on the Magnolia Bridge? If you had the data that would be nice as well.

We'll have to get back to you on that.

Why does the speed limit increase to 35 mph on the bridge, and can we get that changed?

That's a great question. We'll research it and get back to you.

Is Magnolia Place going to be closed to northbound traffic for good? Why were they allowed to close the street and shift their traffic our way?

Yes it will remain closed to northbound traffic. Magnolia Place is a neighborhood street not an arterial like Thorndyke. Now that it has been closed the City needs to look at the best way to manage the traffic on the arterials. As we discussed earlier, one idea may be a roundabout.

Will vehicles be allowed into the new park area at the top of the bluff?

We will find out tomorrow and get back to you. Note: Cars will not be allowed in this park area.

Briefing Materials

- Display boards (alternatives, schedule, 3-bridge traffic)
- Aerial photo
- Handouts (alternatives, 2030 traffic, comment form, newsletters)
- Sign-in sheet