



## Design Advisory Group Meeting #21

Magnolia Community Center  
April 5, 2006, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

### Summary Minutes

#### Agenda

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- I. Welcome
- II. Project Updates
- III. Type, Size and Location Study
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Adjourn

#### Attendees

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##### Design Advisory Group

- ✓ Dan Bartlett
- ✓ Dan Burke
- ✓ Fran Calhoun
- ✓ John Coney
- Grant Griffin
- ✓ Lise Kenworthy
- Doug Lorentzen
- ✓ Jose Montaña
- ✓ Mike Smith
- David Spiker
- ✓ Janis Traven
- ✓ Dan Wakefield
- Robert Foxworthy (alternate)

##### Project Team

- Lesley Bain, Weinstein A|U
- ✓ Sarah Brandt, EnviroIssues
- Gerald Dorn, HNTB
- Molly Edmonds
- ✓ Cela Fortier, City of Seattle
- ✓ Gregg Hiramawa, SDOT
- ✓ Mike Horan, KBA
- Katharine Hough, HNTB
- ✓ Steve Johnson, Johnson Architects
- ✓ Kirk Jones, City of Seattle
- Don Samdahl, Mirai Associates
- ✓ Lamar Scott, KPFF
- ✓ Peter Smith, HNTB
- ✓ Chelsea Tennyson, EnviroIssues
- ✓ Marybeth Turner, City of Seattle
- ✓ K. Wendell, KBA
- Terry Witherspoon, AMEC

Note: In addition, there were approximately 18 members of the public in attendance

#### Meeting Handouts

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- ✓ *Agenda*
- ✓ *DAG #20 Summary Minutes*
- ✓ *Comparative Impacts of Alternatives Matrix*



## I. Welcome

***Sarah Brandt, EnviroIssues***

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Sarah welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the agenda, which included the following:

- Selection of Alternative A
- Type, Size, and Location Study
- Next steps
- Public comment

Sarah welcomed the new faces in the room and introduced a new member of the DAG representing the Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Dan Wakefield. Dan noted that he is anxious to learn more about the project and glad to be involved. Next, Sarah walked the group through agenda. She noted that the team usually restricts discussion to the DAG members and holds public comment to the end, but due to the interest in Alternative A, there would be time to take questions from the public after that agenda item.

Sarah asked if there were any corrections to the DAG Meeting #20 minutes. The DAG did not ask for any clarifications or edits.

## II. Project Updates

***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

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Kirk Jones began by expressing his apologies to the DAG members for releasing information to the press earlier than he should have regarding the placement of Alternative A. He described the project team's process since the last DAG meeting in December, where the DAG identified Alternative A as the best option to carry forward. Kirk also noted that the general public also favored Alternative A and D, as indicated in community input received during previous open houses, organization briefings, Magnolia's Farmer's Markets and Summer Festivals. By the end of December, Alternative A and D emerged as the top two candidates. The Seattle Design Commission was the only group favoring Alternative C, the surface route.

The project team took both Alternatives A and D to Grace Crunican, SDOT Director, and described the pros and cons associated with each. Grace then passed them on to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Following the meeting with Grace, the mayor directed the team to move ahead with Alternative A, located in the corridor slightly south of the existing bridge. In summary, Alternative A has been selected to move forward into the design process. All other Alternatives – C, D, and the Rehabilitation Alternative – are off the table.

The team is now moving into the Type, Size and Location Study (TS&L) to better define bridge characteristics and make sure that the best final alignment is chosen. Previous work has helped to identify potential impacts of Alternative A, and the TS&L Study will help to evaluate what can be done to mitigate those impacts. For instance, there will be impacts to park properties on the western end because the alignment is moving to the south. There will

also be right-of-way (ROW) costs. In thinking about how to mitigate these issues, the team will be looking at potentially shifting the alignment to see if a better option exists.

If, for example, the alignment shifts slightly to the north, the project would not require as much new right of way on Port property, would reduce shoreline impacts by taking the foundation out of the water, and lessen the impact on park land. The big drawback is that shifting the alignment slightly to the north would potentially require a longer detour time during construction. Kirk explained that, based on community support for Alternative A (the alternative with the longest closure time except for the Rehabilitation Alternative), the team perceived that the community was willing to accept a longer detour time duration if other benefits were gained. Based on this perception and in an effort to conduct a thorough analysis of options available to mitigate impacts, the team decided to start exploring the benefits and impacts of shifting the alignment.

Kirk explained that this is typical of any design process for major projects: once you select a general alternative, you start looking at fine-tuning and minimizing impacts. Are there things that can mitigate impacts? In this case, the impact is additional closure time. In an effort to mitigate the closure period, the project team is exploring the idea of creating a road across Port property as a detour, and met with Port staff last Thursday to discuss this possibility. The road would most likely require traffic to use the Galer flyover, travel next to the railroad tracks, and finally cut over to 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue W. and end at the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue W. and Thorndyke Avenue.

The project team is hopeful based on their discussions with the Port. The Port's master plan for North Bay already shows a similar road along the eastern portion of the property. Kirk noted that there might be a mutual benefit to create this road early. There would also need to be a temporary road tying into 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue W. once the existing bridge is closed. The project team will continue talks with Port staff to try to get a formal commitment from the Port. If the City ends up being behind the Port's efforts (i.e., Magnolia Bridge does not start construction until after the Port begins efforts to develop North Bay), the team will have to look at other options such as the Port's proposed north end connection to W. Armory Way and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. Kirk stated that it may be any combination of all of these ideas, but that he just wanted to inform the group of the ideas and concepts being discussed.

## Discussion

**Burke:** What if something happened to the bridge tomorrow? The Port has been talking about how we could be ready to potentially create another access point to Thorndyke in case of an emergency.

**Jones:** By planning ahead and working with the Port, we could have a better defined roadway. The team is shooting to have a decision on the alignment by early June. In the meantime we are open for public comment. We will be at the Magnolia Community Club meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> and will have more information then. We will have some of the information on impacts and right-of-way by then. We are open to visiting any other groups the DAG members represent as well. We felt we had a responsibility to make the best possible decision and be responsible with taxpayers' money. Are there any questions?

- Kenworthy:** I'd like to revisit the question of what the function of the DAG is. I hear you that this is one exploration, but I'm bothered that this comes to us last instead of first. Would you review with us how you see the role of this group?
- Jones:** This is my fault. We planned on bringing it to the DAG first. That was the goal, and I blew it. The purpose is that as the design team moves ahead in the design process, we get the DAG's advice along the way. The DAG has been very helpful in the past. I feel badly that what I did undermined the process [news of the decision to explore the modified alignment was reported in newspapers before the DAG was informed]. I assure you it won't happen again.
- Coney:** As an advocate of a fourth access, I'm heartened to see the Port and City working together. I still encourage the Port to build Armory Way as a fourth access point. We do need some additional road capacity. It's hopeful. I want to ask if we are using the best engineering techniques to shorten the closure time? We haven't seen how construction will be phased yet. I would like to suggest that now is the time to come up with a more compact closure time.
- Jones:** We will talk to the design team to see how quickly we will move forward on this.
- Burke:** What is the closure time we are looking at? It seems shorter in actuality than what the papers are reporting.
- Jones:** As the alternatives impact matrix we handed out in November to the DAG and to the public indicates, the closure time for Alternative A will be 14 – 20 months. If the alignment were shifted north into the existing corridor, closure time would be the same as for the Rehabilitation Alternative, 21 – 27 months.
- Bartlett:** What about access to the marina area?
- Jones:** There would be a road along the westerly portion of Port property connecting the marina to 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue W. What we are exploring right now as a possible detour route is a road along the easterly portion of Port property, but there would not be a connection between the two. We have traffic volumes projected for around the marina. At this point there isn't a connection being considered except at 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue W at the north end of Port property. We could talk to the Port about the possibility of another connection.
- Traven:** I would like to echo what Lise said about coming to the DAG first with new information. If we are seriously thinking about putting it in the same footprint, why wasn't that the first thing you looked at?

- Jones:** We heard that you wanted to keep the existing bridge in place for as long as possible. Quite frankly, I was surprised to see the acceptance of a longer closure time [by supporting as a DAG and community Alternative A over Alternative D, which would have a shorter closure time]. Obviously, now we realize that a few more months do matter.
- Kenworthy:** Where would the proposed temporary road along the eastside be? What is the width at the narrowest point where the trucks/trains are coming in? How wide of a road do you think you can build without disrupting their operations?
- Jones:** We are looking at using some property that the railroad isn't currently using. The road would be two lanes only. Preliminarily, we think there is enough room for circulation for both the businesses and the public. It would not interfere with regular business operations; it's the garbage pickup area, etc., that would be involved.
- Kenworthy:** So, the concept requires getting additional land from BNSF?
- Jones:** Yes, but that was when we were looking at having two separate roads – one for public use, one for business. We're also considering just one road for both kinds of users.
- Kenworthy:** That would probably raise security issues.
- M. Smith:** There has been a lot of concern about the closure period. From this point on, we are going to be talking about mitigation. All we are going to do from now on is discuss how to do this as quickly as possible and come up with an approach we can all live with. We need to do whatever it takes to get an access road and keep the marina open. It's going to take a lot of study.
- Jones:** We are going to need our regular monthly DAG meetings.
- M. Smith:** After three years of meetings, we are all at the beginning of the mitigation discussions. Maybe you could tell us more about the right-of-way savings.
- Jones:** \$32 million is the total cost of the right-of-way we need. We would be saving 75% of ROW costs if the alignment were moved to the existing alignment.
- M. Smith:** Can we, as a DAG, help influence that?
- Jones:** Yes.
- Wakefield:** I'm curious about access on the eastside. Do you anticipate that road being kept open during construction?

**Jones:** It would not be closed. It would be a detour route when the ramps from the bridge are not available for access to or from the marina.

**Coney:** Did I hear the current plan for a mitigation plan is a two-lane road? What is causing it to be two lanes instead of four?

**Jones:** One lane in each direction works. That's what you have now with the existing Magnolia Bridge. This should help pull a lot of traffic off the Dravus Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. corridor.

**Harrington:** *Glen Harrington, Magnolia Chamber President*  
When fiction gets in the public domain it gets repeated. Let me lay a few things straight. The Magnolia Chamber and business community never endorsed Alternative A with a down time of 14-20 months. We were probably lulled into believing that it might be 9-10 months, and that we could have endorsed. Although there was some support of Alternative A from the business community, that support never imagined we would destroy the existing bridge before constructing Alternative A. This is a very serious concern for the business community. For us, it is an extension of a year or more of down time, not 6 months. There are many prominent businesses that could not survive downtown [in Magnolia Village]. This two-lane route through the Port property may work for some, but it will not work for customers in the core. People don't like to go out of their way to patronize businesses. If you make it difficult for people to find you, I can tell you they are going to go somewhere else. If that happens, there are going to be lots of businesses shutting down. You will see a lot more vacancies like you see on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue W. This is not going to be good for anyone. Magnolia is a very livable, likeable area and the businesses contribute to that. If you think your residences won't be impacted, you are sadly mistaken. We need to rethink Alternative A. Is it really worth the potential savings? Let me tell you that if property values decline and the tax base declines and congestion increases making emergency access very difficult, there are going to be people hurt and lives lost. God forbid we have a bigger emergency. Think long and hard about endorsing this substitute to Alternative A. Are you really saving what you are thinking you are saving?

**Judith Gibbs:** In our household for the kind of savings we are talking about, we feel we could live with a longer downtime if we had one more lane eastbound at the north end [at Emerson]. Access is important. We sorely need that. I'm wondering if some of the savings could go into that additional eastbound lane. Would savings be sufficient to pay for that? It's a pain in the neck to get out from the north end of Magnolia at certain times. If you take out the bridge, it's really going to make things challenging. We've suggested a way to mitigate. Have you looked into adding the lane at Emerson?

**Jones:** I've given it to our traffic and structures people and have not yet heard back. We are looking at all the things we can do to mitigate. We will also be looking at Dravus to improve movement.

**Judith Gibbs:** When can we expect to hear back? One additional lane would pull out traffic heading to Fremont.

**Jones:** The first Wednesday in May at the next Design Advisory Group. I will report back to you then.

**A. Smith:** *Alex Smith, Business owner in Magnolia Village*  
We live on the hill. The last time the bridge went down it took an hour and a half to get off the hill. A lot of you haven't lived through it. We had a near-death of one of our chamber members. You are killing the Magnolia Business District. The dollars you are saving will be the dollars you lose. Seattle is being extremely shortsighted. If we have another emergency, we are cut off. We have a larger population base than 6 years ago. You've forgotten the Magnolia neighborhood. A two-year closure period was never mentioned. You are doing us all a disservice.

**Vic Barry** *Vic Barry, Magnolia Community Club President*  
One of our board members said that everyone who works for you [the Magnolia Bridge team] should be made to live in Magnolia. At the first DAG meeting you said the most important thing was to limit the closure time. The Magnolia Community Club did endorse Alternative A. But your recent press release is wrong when it says, "Despite the bridge possibly being closed for two years, the public strongly supported Alternative A." That's not true. We endorsed the route because we believed we would negotiate closure time. The Galer flyover is an example. They wanted to close the route over the tracks. The city council mandated through code that Magnolia mitigate this impact by creating more access to Magnolia during that bridge project.

**Jones:** The ordinance the City Council passed directed the Magnolia Bridge design team to identify other routes for the Magnolia community to gain access to the marina area other than having to go to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and doubling back. [Note: Ord. No. 120957, Section 2.]

**Vic Barry:** Any mitigation we have must be codified. Mitigation routes should be tested first. There's a lot involved there. For the integrity of the process, we are still in favor of Alternative A. If it's only a \$2 million savings, though, that isn't worth it.

**Kenworthy:** At the last DAG meeting, the design team was looking at a temporary span. Is this still a possibility?

**Jones:** We are still looking at this. One concept is that we would still use the existing route with a temporary ramp.

- Kenworthy:** Uncertainty is really bad for business. This makes it less likely to fill vacancies. I'd like to move developing the concept of a temporary structure to a fast track. Can we do that?
- Jones:** Yes.
- Public #3:** Every meeting you've had that I've attended, I've talked about people getting to north Magnolia. All of those people could be getting off the bridge via a ramp, without going through to Thorndyke.
- Szmania** *Julie Szmania, Szmania's Resteraunt, Magnolia Village*  
We own Szmania's Restaurant. We've been through having the bridge closed three times. I'm not just speaking for myself. When you close access the traffic dies in Magnolia Village because people aren't driving down anymore. For us to knowingly do this to ourselves is insane. Magnolia is an expensive piece of real estate with no beach access. You can't get to a beach in Magnolia. It's a shame what we've done to ourselves. I just think that Alternative A looks like a disaster, but it makes no common sense to me to go over landfill at the tallest bluff either. There must be 1,000 good reasons why no one in this city can work together to build a fourth access point. It's not an alternative to be closed for two years. We've been here 16 years and lived through the closures, but two years is too long.
- Public #4:** I'm dismayed to see that Alternative A was chosen. This is very archaic and very dangerous. Will anything calm traffic in the design process? There is no way to disperse traffic through this area. I'd like to know when the evidence was gathered for a longer down time.
- Jones:** We will eliminate the U-turn that currently exists on the bridge to access the marina. Again, in regards to the closure time, the project team perceived the public to be okay with a longer closure time with the selection of Alternative A as a preferred alternative and therefore did not think that the possibility of a modified alignment that would mitigate other impacts would be negatively received. The Mayor has only approved Alternative A located south of the existing alignment, and no decision has been made yet to change that location.
- Coney:** Since we have the leaders of Magnolia and Queen Anne in the room, I can't resist talking about transit. It's somewhat unrealistic to live in a big metropolitan area and believe you can drive anywhere at anytime. It becomes cruelly obvious with matters like the bridge. The Seattle City Council can probably get more money from King County Metro. Metro is considering trying to receive an additional 0.1% sales tax. We should get more of that because 71% of boardings occur in Seattle, but we only get 25% of that. I believe SDOT can endorse additional transit service as mitigation. You can get more bodies in buses than in single occupancy vehicles. The Seattle City Council is behind the times in park-and-rides. Magnolia deserves

a park-and-ride. I urge the Magnolia Community Club and Magnolia Chamber to think about the utility of a park-and-ride in our community.

**Harrington:** I certainly support transit initiatives, but asking for a park-and-ride is probably not realistic. There is a shortage of parking in Magnolia anyways. We need to quit repeating fiction that the Community Club and Chamber endorsed a long closure time. We never endorsed any alternative with a 14-20 month closure time. This perpetuates a fiction that is not doing us justice. From the Chamber's point of view, there is no one that ever endorsed this.

**Jones:** I acknowledge that as an organization, the Chamber did not endorse any of the alternatives.

**Public #5:** I think the engineering department should check into replacing the roadway section by section. This would mean less down time.

**Jones:** I understand. The kind of ground conditions that exist and equipment required that may not necessarily work. I'm skeptical, but I will talk to structural engineers.

**Public #4:** Have the bridge closure plans and operations been reviewed by the public? This is the first time I've heard of this. They need to hear about it now before it's cast in concrete. When is this possible?

**Jones:** We'll be at the May 11<sup>th</sup> Magnolia Community Club meeting and will have more information then.

**Brandt:** It would be great to have the list of homeowners you spoke of along Thorndyke to add to our list so that we can provide them with updates and information.

**Jones:** In regard to other updates, I haven't heard anything back from FHWA about being able to make the socioeconomic report available to you. The state made us do borings in the beach area for the historic report to see if people were living there years and years ago. We are incorporating these findings into the document and will submit it to WSDOT for approval. That will finish the environmental documentation needed for the Environmental Assessment (EA). That process will be parallel to the TS & L study. Are there any questions? Dan, is there anything new with the Port?

**Burke:** First of all, there is a Port Commission meeting tomorrow. There are no action items. The purpose is to bring the two new commissioners up to date at our North Bay meeting. The meeting is tomorrow at Pier 69. The North Bay team is still working with the City of Seattle looking at overlays, building heights, etc. On a separate note, I used to live in West Seattle and just wonder if there are things the business community can do to call on the community for support.

- Harrington: We will need to do that no matter what happens.
- Szmania: When you cut off 75% of your business, what can you do? The Chamber has been good at helping us create opportunities.
- Kenworthy: With regard to the Port's involvement, can we get a sketch from the Port of potential roads?
- Jones: Yes.

### III. Type, Size and Location Study

#### ***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

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[Seattle and SDOT have an artist on board part time by the name of Anne Hayden Stevens. Anne is a painter and educator. She has been teaching art and digital media as a lecturer at the University of Washington in the Department of architecture and School of Art since 1998. She has a Masters in Design/Visual Studies from the College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley (1997) and a Bachelors Degree in Fine Art with an emphasis in Drawing and Printmaking from the California College of Arts and Crafts. Anne recently completed a large-scale mural installation at the University of Washington in the College of Education, which you can view at her website, <http://www.annestevens.com>.]

- Traven: Let's not put any art on the bridge like that they used on the Galer flyover.
- Kenworthy: On the same topic, it was the ultimate insult to support an Oregon artist for that art when we could have chosen a local artist. The artist ought to be coming from our city. We have wonderful artists.
- Coney: There is a great deal of tension between freestanding art and integrated art. There is great pressure from elected officials to do integrated art, but no one remembers it.
- P. Smith: At the end of the TS&L Study we will be at the 10% level of design and will be able to define the type of bridge, type of construction, and number of lanes. We are still going to have a separate walkway. Site conditions, which we know a lot more about now, dictate the long spans on the structure. Other elements we will bring to the May DAG meeting are potential ideas on railings, lighting, and general motorist experiences that we can integrate. We don't anticipate any change in configuration in regards to the lanes and ramps. We will work on getting the exact locations of buildings, railroad tracks, and major utilities—things to avoid. At the May 3<sup>rd</sup> DAG meeting we will bring you some ideas and concepts of bridge elements. During May/June those elements will be assembled into three options that we will bring back to the DAG in June. Then we will begin screening these options by presenting them to the public and in July at an open house.

- Public #6:** Has the bridge's primary material been selected?
- Jones:** It will be constructed of either steel or concrete.
- Kenworthy:** I'm sure that will be interesting, but the primary concern is downtime. How will our schedule be affected by this discussion?
- Jones:** By mid-June we hope to make a decision on the exact alignment. This discussion can be parallel to the TS&L study.
- Kenworthy:** If I understand correctly, this is only one option. We still have the option of the bridge being built where our group discussed, correct? When can we hear about ideas to mitigate the down time?
- Jones:** Yes. The Mayor approved Alternative A in the corridor south of the current bridge. The message about reducing downtime is loud and clear. The design team will be looking at mitigation options and will have some more information at the May DAG meeting.
- P. Smith:** The TS&L Study also takes into account construction staging and detours.

#### IV. Public Comment

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***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

Approximately 18 members of the public were in attendance. Kirk welcomed them again and invited them to share any comments they had with the group.

- Public # 7:** Pondering information about the TS&L Study, the summer is a hard time to meet. Are there other ways? Farmer's Markets? Are the DAG meetings going to be every month through summer?
- Jones:** Yes. We'll be at Farmer's Markets, the Magnolia Summer Festival, and DAG meetings will likely be every month.
- Barry:** When will we make a decision between Alternative A and "Z" (the option to shift the new bridge's alignment to where the current bridge stands).
- Jones:** A decision will be made by the first part of June.

#### V. Next Steps

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**Conclusion: With no further comment from the project team, DAG members, or the public, the meeting was adjourned.**

The next DAG meeting will be on May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at the Magnolia Lutheran Church (2414 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue W, Seattle).