Ballard Bridge Planning Study
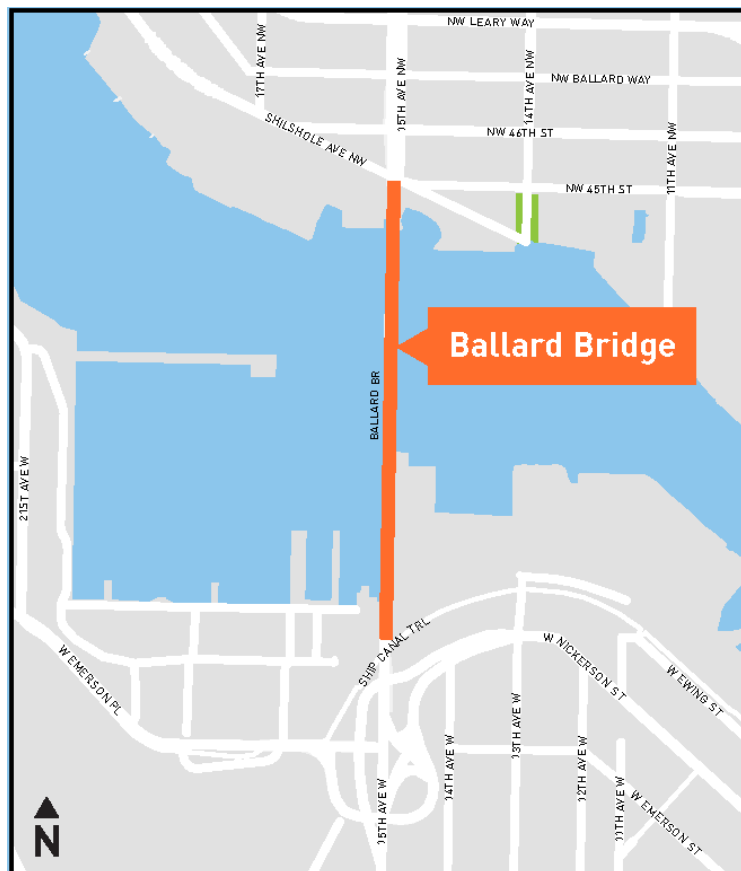
Survey Summary
August 2019

OVERVIEW

The Ballard Bridge, built in 1917, spans the eastern edge of Salmon Bay and connects Ballard to Magnolia, Queen Anne, and Downtown via Interbay. The 2,854-foot bridge carries more than 57,000 vehicles per day across the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Over the last century, while the look and function of the bridge may not have changed much, we've been retrofitting and maintaining the structure to keep it moving and safe, including a recent series of seismic improvements completed in 2014.

We've launched the Ballard Bridge Planning Study to evaluate how to bring the bridge up to current transportation, functional, and structural standards including improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and keeping buses and freight moving. While we perform regular maintenance and frequent inspections on the bridge to ensure it's operational and safe for road and marine traffic, due to the age of the structure, more significant rehabilitation may be needed. Since the bridge is in good condition today, we have an opportunity to plan.

We conducted a community online survey to better understand the uses and values for the Ballard Bridge and to hear thoughts, comments, or concerns about the future of the bridge. The survey was available from June 20 to July 7 and administered through SurveyMonkey. The survey was marketed via SDOT Twitter, SDOT Facebook, a listserv to nearby project audiences,

a banner on the project webpage, an SDOT blog post, and an SDOT press release. The press release was picked up by local print, online, and televised news outlets.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings include:

- **Most respondents (83%)** currently travel the bridge by car. Participants travel by car most on weekends.
- Respondents prefer bridge **improvements for people who bike (60%), people who walk (52%), cars (47%), and buses (42%)**.

SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

We received 2,809 total responses with a 64% completion rate. Below, we've shared each question and how respondents answered as raw data and a percentage. For some of the questions, respondents could choose more than one response (questions noted below). If respondents chose "less than once a month" in question 3, they did not receive questions for these modes of transportation in questions 6-19. Percentages for each question are based on the number of the respondents who answered the question, not the total number of respondents who took the survey. Note that totals may not sum to 100%.

For open-ended responses, we've summarized what we heard by sharing popular and notable themes. The full questionnaire and all responses are available by request.

Question 1: I travel across or under the Ballard Bridge to (select all that apply):
- Commute to/from work or school:
- Do my job, not including commute (freight, deliveries, rideshare, etc.)
- Run errands:
- Participate in recreational activities:
- Other:
    - Visiting friends/family
    - Traveling to appointments
    - Traveling to other parts of the city

Question 2: What mode of travel do you use when traveling across or under the bridge to…

	Car	Freight	Bus	Bike	Walking	Boat
Run errands	1,990 (92%)	3 (0.1%)	571 (27%)	509 (24%)	291 (13%)	17 (0.8%)
Participate in recreational activities	1,657 (79%)	2 (0.1%)	679 (32%)	821 (39%)	593 (28%)	196 (9%)
Commute to/from work	960 (75%)	6 (0.5%)	573 (45%)	363 (28%)	120 (94%)	19 (1%)

Do my job, not including commute	317 (88%)	29 (8%)	52 (14%)	44 (12%)	21 (6%)	23 (6%)
Other	299 (82%)	4 (1%)	92 (25%)	67 (18%)	45 (12%)	19 (5%)

Question 3: How often do you travel the bridge by…

	At least once a day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month
Car	700 (29%)	1,073 (44%)	452 (18%)	221 (9%)
Freight	14 (41%)	12 (35%)	5 (15%)	3 (9%)
Bus	213 (19%)	296 (26%)	368 (33%)	243 (22%)
Bike	87 (9%)	279 (29%)	291 (30%)	315 (32%)
Walking	19 (3%)	126 (18%)	227 (33%)	317 (46%)
Boat	9 (4%)	30 (14%)	53 (24%)	127 (58%)

Question 4: What time do you typically travel the bridge by… (select all that apply)

	Weekday morning peak (6-9AM)	Weekday evening peak (4-7PM)	Weekday non-peak	Weekends
Car	793 (36%)	1,084 (49%)	1,232 (56%)	1,610 (73%)
Freight	15 (52%)	12 (41%)	21 (72%)	3 (10%)
Bus	470 (54%)	554 (64%)	282 (33%)	393 (45%)
Bike	259 (40%)	327 (51%)	237 (37%)	454 (70%)
Walking	60 (16%)	99 (27%)	148 (41%)	307 (84%)
Boat	17 (19%)	33 (36%)	43 (47%)	73 (80%)

Question 5: What types of improvements to the Ballard Bridge would you like us to prioritize? Please select up to 3.
- Make it better for people who bike: 1,636 (60%)
- Make it better for people who walk: 1,417 (52%)
- Make it better for buses: 1,141 (42%)
- Make it better for cars: 1,273 (47%)
- Make it better for freight: 136 (5%)
- Make it better for boats: 174 (6%)
- I'm not sure: 137 (5%)
- Other: 225 (8%)
  - Make alternative better for boat crossings (e.g., build a higher bridge, do not have bridge openings during commute periods)
  - Make bridge improvements for all transportation modes
  - Make better merge lanes on each end of the bridge
  - Coordinate with light rail

Question 6: What are current barriers for people who bike?
Top barriers:
- Pathway is too narrow
- Pathway is shared with people who walk
- Riding conditions on the roadway with vehicles are unsafe
- There is no dedicated bike lane to ride in traffic on bridge
- Barrier between roadway and pathway is too short
- It is difficult to merge at each end of the bridge

Question 7: What improvements would you like to see for people who bike?
Top improvements:
- Protected bike lane
- Wider path for people who bike
- Better connections to bike facilities at either end of the bridge
- Higher barriers between cars and people who bike

Question 8: What are current barriers for people who walk?
Top barriers:
- Pathway is too narrow
- Pathway is shared with people who bike
- Barrier between roadway and pathway is minimal
- Poor walking connections at each end of the bridge

Question 9: What improvements would you like to see for people who walk?
Top improvements:
- Wider path for people who walk
- Better separation from people who bike
- Better barrier between cars and people who walk

Question 10: What are current barriers for buses?
Top barriers:
- Buses get stuck in traffic with cars
- Buses have difficulty merging at each end of the bridge
- Bridge openings cause bus delays
- Roadway lanes are too narrow for buses

Question 11: What improvements would you like to see for buses?
Top improvements:
- Dedicated bus lane or queue jumps
- Wider roadway lanes for buses
- No bridge openings during express bus hours
- Improved connections for people who walk to help with bus transfers

Question 12: What are current barriers for cars?
Top barriers:
- Bridge openings for boats during rush hour, especially over the summer
- Too few lanes for cars, leading to increased congestion
- Narrow lanes without barriers between northbound and southbound lanes
- Difficulty merging on each end of the bridge
- Poor conditions of pavement and grating on bridge

Question 13: What improvements would you like to see for cars?
Top improvements:
- Install a center barrier between northbound and southbound lanes
- Create a higher bridge or do not open the bridge during highly congested periods
- Widen roadway lanes
- Improve merging at each end of the bridge

Question 14: What are current barriers for freight?
Top barriers:
- Roadway lanes are too narrow for trucks
- There are too few lanes for freight, leading to increased congestion
- Opening the bridge for boats leads to vehicle backups during congested periods
- Merging is difficult on each end of the bridge

Question 15: What improvements would you like to see for freight?
Top improvements:
- More lanes in each direction on the bridge
- Wider roadway lanes on the bridge and on- and off-ramps
- Higher bridge or no bridge openings during highly congested periods

Question 16: What are current barriers for boats?
Top barriers:
- There are not bridge openings during commute hours
- Waiting for the bridge to open and close is slow
- Bridge height is too low, which causes delays for people traveling on the bridge

Question 17: What improvements would you like to see for boats?
Top improvements:
- Create a higher bridge to accommodate most, if not all, boat traffic
- Have fewer scheduled openings for the bridge
- Improve communications on wait times

Question 18: What are current barriers for your selected priority [other]?
Top barriers:
- Bridge openings for boats lead to vehicle backups during congested periods
- Cars are prioritized over other transportation modes

Question 19: What improvements would you like to see for your selected priority [other]?
Top improvements:
- Higher bridge
- Wider roadway lanes on the bridge
- Fewer bridge openings for boats
- Notifications for bridge openings
- Enhanced safety on bridge for all modes of transportation
- No bridge openings during highly congested periods

Question 20: What else should we consider about the future of the Ballard Bridge and its community?
- Consider general safety/traffic improvements for all modes of transportation; the current bridge is not safe for everyday use
- Improve current roadway conditions
- Do not reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes for improvements for people who bike and people who walk
- Consider future development/increased congestion in the area
- Create announcements for bridge openings
- Create better connections at both ends of the bridge
- Promote modes of transportation to decrease car congestion
- Focus on improvements for people who bike and walk
- Connect bridge bike and pedestrian facilities to other bike and pedestrian facilities
- Include better lighting on the bridge
- Replace the bridge with a tunnel
- Concern about cost of potential alternatives
- Coordinate with Sound Transit and include light rail in bridge improvements
- Include artwork in the design, including historic art for Ballard's Nordic heritage
- Consider preserving the old bridge for historic purposes
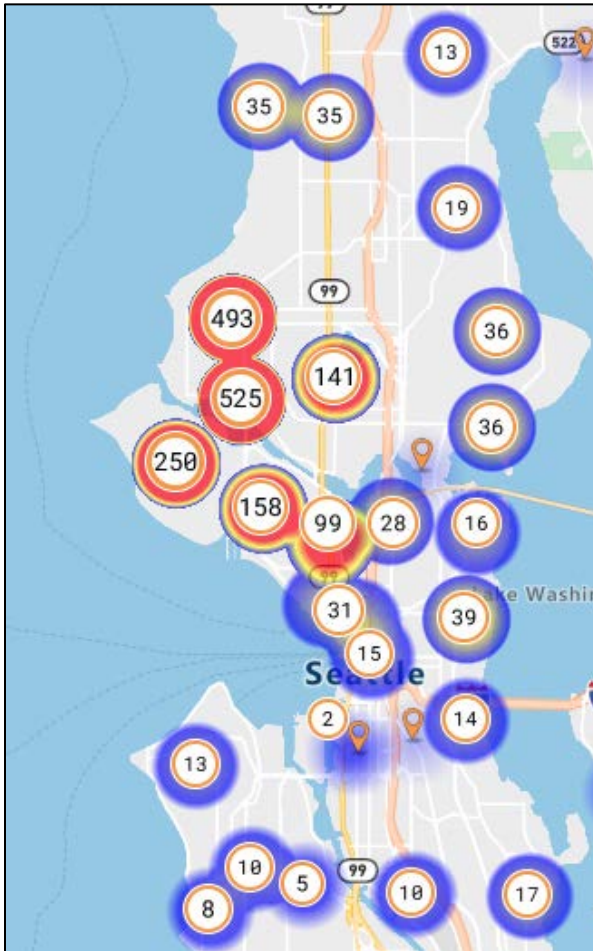
Question 23: How did you learn about this project?
- Neighborhood blog: 469 (19.69%)
- Friend, neighbor, family member: 290 (12.17%)
- Facebook: 476 (19.98%)
- Twitter: 310 (13.01%)
- Nextdoor: 97 (4.07%)
- City of Seattle/SDOT mail: 13 (0.55%)
- City of Seattle/SDOT email: 257 (10.79%)
- City of Seattle/SDOT website: 114 (4.79%)
- My employer: 52 (2.18%)
- An organization I'm involved with: 93 (3.90%)
- Other: 608 (25.52%)
    - Media outlets, including print, online and television
    - Online blogs
    - Reddit

Question 24: What is your home zip code?
Top five zip codes:
- 98107: 525 (24%)
- 98117: 493 (23%)
- 98199: 250 (11%)
- 98119: 158 (7%)
- 98103: 141 (6%)
- Other: 616 (28%)

This map shows number of survey participants by zip code in the Seattle. Areas outside of Seattle are included in the above percentage for "Other."

Question 25: What gender do you most identify with?
- Man: 53%
- Woman: 40%
- Non-binary: 1%
- Other: 1%

Question 26: What's your age?

- Less than 18 years old: less than 1%
- 18-24 years old: 2%
- 25-34 years old: 23%
- 35-44 years old: 25%
- 45-54 years old: 19%
- 55-64 years old: 14%
- 65 years of age or older: 11%
- I'd rather not say: 4%

Question 27: What race/ethnicity best describes you? (select all that apply)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1%
- Asian or Pacific Islander: 5%
- Black or African American: 1%
- Latino or Hispanic: 3%
- White or Caucasian: 80%
- I'd rather not say: 12%
- Other: 3%

Question 28: Do you have a disability? (select all that apply)
- None: 85%
- Cognitive: Less than 1%
- Hearing: 3%
- Mobility: 4%
- Vision: 1%
- I'd rather not to say: 7%
- Other: 2%

Question 29: What is your annual household income?
- $7,500 or less: Less than 1%
- $7,501 to $15,000: Less than 1%
- $15,001 to $25,000: 1%
- $25,001 to $35,000: 2%
- $35,001 to $55,000: 5%
- $55,001 to $75,000: 9%
- $75,001 to $100,000: 11%
- $100,001 to $150,000: 18%
- $150,001 to $200,000: 12%
- More than $200,000: 16%
- I'd rather not say: 24%