



## Design Advisory Group Meeting #29

Magnolia Community Center  
May 2, 2007, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

### Summary Minutes

#### Agenda

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- I. Welcome
- II. Transit Improvements
- III. Emergency Planning
- IV. Project Updates
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Adjourn

#### Attendees

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##### Design Advisory Group

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

##### Project Team

- ✓ Sarah Brandt, EnviroIssues
- ✓ Bill Bryant, King County Metro
- Matt Dalton, HNTB
- ✓ Gerald Dorn, HNTB
- Brian Elrod, HNTB
- ✓ Barry Hennelly, City of Seattle
- ✓ Kirk Jones, City of Seattle
- ✓ Kit Loo, City of Seattle
- ✓ Peter Smith, HNTB
- ✓ Lauren Stensland, EnviroIssues
- Yuling Teo, City of Seattle
- Marybeth Turner, City of Seattle

#### Meeting Handouts

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- ✓ *Agenda*
- ✓ *Draft DAG #28 Summary Minutes*
- ✓ *Updated photo simulation of Magnolia Bluff bridge segment*

#### I. Welcome

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##### ***Sarah Brandt, EnviroIssues***

Sarah opened the meeting and outlined the agenda. She asked for edits to the meeting minutes from the previous Design Advisory Group (DAG) meeting and reminded the group that she will take edits to the minutes through next week. Kirk welcomed Bill Bryant from King County Metro and Barry Hennelly from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to discuss planned transit improvements that may affect the Magnolia community. Kirk also shared that David Schneider is not able to attend the meeting

today to discuss emergency planning – he is handling another emergency. Dan Burke from Port of Seattle will review the joint planning effort that is underway.

## II. Transit Improvements

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### ***Bill Bryant, King County Metro, & Barry Hennelly, SDOT***

Bill and Barry explained the bus rapid transit (BRT) system planned for Elliot Ave W. and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. Barry shared that BRT is in some ways a response to the absence of the former planned monorail and also a cost-effective strategy for improving transit. Bill explained that BRT will be a significant transit improvement because it is a higher level of bus service. There will be more buses, greater reliability, and improved passenger amenities. The bus stops and vehicles will also be improved.

King County Metro and SDOT developed these BRT improvements together, as part of *Transit Now* and *Bridging the Gap*. Metro will operate the buses, improve the stations and coordinate the marketing for BRT – called *RapidRide* – and SDOT will make the street and traffic signal changes needed to accommodate the new service. There will be five BRT lines in total. The three lines in Seattle are:

- Downtown to Ballard via Elliot Ave W. and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W.
- Downtown to West Seattle
- Downtown to the north King County line via Aurora Ave.

The line closest to Magnolia is the Ballard line that runs along Elliot Avenue W. and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. from the Ballard Bridge south to at least Mercer Place. At present there are two Metro bus routes that serve Magnolia, along with bus service on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. The 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. service runs more frequently and carries more passengers than the Magnolia routes. BRT service will stop at Fisherman’s Terminal, W. Dravus Street, and the Garfield Bridge areas. There will likely be little change to existing bus routes in the area.

Barry explained that SDOT will help work to increase transit speeds and reliability by speeding up boarding, providing dedicated transit lanes where possible, and giving transit services signal priority. Transit signal priority means extending signal cycles or holding signals for buses for very short periods of time that can increase transit speeds and reliability significantly. Other features of BRT include raised bus platforms that allow for flat floor boarding and off-vehicle fare payment – both features are designed to speed boarding.

### **Discussion**

**Bill Bryant:** I would add that we’re envisioning the BRT stops as a “station atmosphere” with ticket vending machines, real-time bus arrival information, and other amenities that make it feel more like a rail station than a bus stop.

**Barry Hennelly:** Over the course of the next year we’ll be doing public involvement, starting design, and making decisions about routes and stops. We’re in the process of

doing all of that and our two agencies are working closely together on both the staff and elected levels. We'll be contacting the community through mailings to seek public input.

**Mike Smith:** Will you be using the current Metro routes (19, 24, and 33) as feeders to the BRT service or running them along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. along with BRT?

**Bryant:** We don't have plans to change those routes and you would be able to transfer directly to BRT. Magnolia is so close to downtown that it might not make sense to transfer, but we would make the transfer to get to Ballard, for example, as easy as possible.

**Doug Lorentzen:** Is W. Mercer Place still being considered for this route? And, if so, would you improve that route by adding sidewalks or other missing amenities?

**Hennelly:** I don't think this project would be a vehicle for a sidewalk or widening project. One of things we've heard is that we need to focus on staying inside our existing right-of-way, so we're focusing any improvements toward the load-bearing of the pavement.

**Dan Burke:** Has anyone done an analysis of how this BRT service compares to what the monorail would have done on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue?

**Hennelly:** No, we have not made a mode-to-mode comparison.

**Burke:** Is there an environmental process associated with this work?

**Hennelly:** No, because we're staying within the existing right-of-way. There is a public involvement process but not an environmental process.

**Bryant:** We do have an environmental planner making a determination about what kind of process would be needed, if any. It's likely that the public outreach we're planning will meet the environmental process requirements.

**Janis Traven:** Will you be making many stops on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue?

**Fran Calhoun:** Yes, will there be fewer stops than there are now?

**Hennelly:** The stops will be half-a-mile to a third-of-a-mile apart.

**Bryant:** The number of stops will also depend on which other buses are near the BRT route and where they stop.

**Burke:** Who will be allowed to use transit lanes? Will it be buses only, or buses and right-turns?

**Bryant:** We're going to examine all options, including limiting use of transit lanes only during peak hours, or in peak directions.

**Calhoun:** What about parking – will there be parking losses?

**Hennelly:** Yes, in some places.

**Calhoun:** What about businesses that need parking?

**Hennelly:** That's why we're having the public involvement process, to see what those concerns are and what we can do about them.

**Dan Wakefield:** Do you have any specific plans for accommodating bicycle commuters, such as racks or storage lockers for bicycles?

**Bryant:** We're moving toward having a 3-bike rack for all of Metro buses. We are considering allowing bikes aboard BRT, but we're also concerned about passenger seating spaces.

**Hennelly:** That's another reason we're having a public involvement process, to see what amenities are most important to passengers. It's possible to design a bus with more standing room, depending on what population you're trying to serve. We still need to determine all those things. I can tell you there will be a hook to hang your bike inside during off-peak hours.

**Lise Kenworthy:** What's the timetable for implementing BRT?

**Bryant:** Of the five BRT lines in all of King County, the Ballard line is the third one and should be built around 2012. The Pacific Highway line is first, in 2010, because a lot of the work to prepare for BRT has already been completed there. The West Seattle line is second, in 2011.

**Peter Smith:** Would any of these be through routes to Ballard?

**Bryant:** It's possible – we need to configure the routes.

**Burke:** How will BRT cross the Ballard Bridge?

**Bryant:** We're hoping to improve the approaches to the bridge, but there is nothing we can do to the bridge itself.

**Hennelly:** We'll give buses some level of priority on the bridge approaches and SDOT has a paving program planned that will pave from the Ballard Bridge to First Avenue along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. and Elliot Ave W., so we're already looking at design tweaks to help facilitate BRT.

**Burke:** Is that a one-year project?

**Hennelly:** That's a one-summer project. Our paving program is very aggressive and was part of *Bridging the Gap*.

M. Smith: What happens when we don't have a bridge – whether during construction or an emergency?

Hennelly: In any kind of emergency you're going to use buses intensely.

Bryant: And for non-emergency situations there will be time for planning how bus service can help during construction.

Traven: What are the costs of BRT compared to the monorail?

Bryant: BRT is much less expensive. The monorail cost was around \$100 million per mile and I would say BRT is less than 5% of that.

Hennelly: I'd argue the cost is even less than that.

Gerald Dorn: How much will BRT increase capacity in the corridor?

Hennelly: The service is more frequent. We'll have 12-minute headways and the buses will run 18 hours per day.

Bryant: There are two ways to measure capacity: the number of seats in the corridor or the number of travelers per corridor. Right now we know that during peak periods there will be twice as many buses as are out there now and overall capacity will be greater.

Kenworthy: Could Bill and Barry hand out their cards in case people have other questions?

### III. Emergency Planning

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#### ***Dan Burke, Port of Seattle***

Kirk introduced Dan Burke from the Port of Seattle. He and Dave Schneidler from SDOT have been coordinating emergency planning for the Magnolia Bridge area.

SDOT and the Port of Seattle have been considering two main scenarios: the planned construction of the new bridge and the unforeseen loss of the existing bridge. SDOT and the Port can and will plan specific actions for bridge construction. Specific plans for an unforeseen loss of the bridge are not possible because in an emergency there may be situations across the whole city that need to be addressed simultaneously. SDOT and the Port have a commitment to work together in the case of an emergency but are not able to make a joint commitment about specific actions or timelines.

David and Dan examined five alternative strategies and the first applies to an unforeseen loss of the bridge. They are assuming the Galer Street flyover would likely survive such an event because it is newer and meets current seismic standards. The general plan is to make a pathway through the fallen Magnolia section and bring traffic through the North Bay area and connect to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. or 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue W.

Given the current level of development in North Bay, that could happen relatively quickly and the Port would give the City access to enter that property and make those connections. If in the future there are more roads already developed in North Bay, the City would have fewer connections to construct. If North Bay development reaches about one million square feet, the Port plans to create another access route across the railroad tracks. If that were in place then access through North Bay would be easier as well.

For new bridge construction the process is more straightforward. The Elliot Ave W. access ramp is removed early in the construction process so the team would work to get travelers through using the Galer Street flyover and a ramp up to the remainder of the old bridge structure. There is also potential that with further Port development the ramp route would not be needed.

Dan asked for comments on the emergency planning.

### Discussion

**M. Smith:** I like the idea of ramps while construction is underway. Even if there were an Armory Bridge in place, it would still be great to have a ramp operating during construction.

**Kenworthy:** Thank you for doing this work. I see that this is simply a discussion of different scenarios.

**Kirk Jones:** Yes, we tried to think through all the possible scenarios.

**Kenworthy:** A more specific version would be helpful. What's the timetable at the Port for creating access along Armory Way?

**Burke:** We looked at that in our strategic planning and it will take a few years. We've said that at about a million square feet of development that facility will be needed.

**Burke:** Dave and I would like to get comments so we can finalize this in some way.

**Kenworthy:** I think the document needs to recognize that this is an industrial area and public safety needs to be a concern if we will be bringing travelers through the Port.

**Burke:** You're supportive of having the general public travel through the Port so long as there is separation from industrial areas?

**Kenworthy:** Yes.

## IV. Project Updates

***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

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Kirk shared updates on various areas of the project. There has been no change in the status of detour planning at this time.

### **Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)**

Soil testing is underway this week near the FAA tower and railroad tracks. WSDOT currently has the Draft EA, the biological assessment and all the discipline reports. WSDOT has not heard from the Navy and will wait on that information. They will probably take until the end of the summer to review the documents.

### **Port of Seattle Coordination**

SDOT may have the license agreement worked through with the Port of Seattle for the soil borings needed on Port property. The SDOT team and the Port of Seattle team are meeting this Friday to discuss project status and planning.

### **Type, Size & Location (T,S&L) Study**

The cost estimate has increased almost 30% from estimates developed in 2004 (\$196 million) and is now up to \$262 million for building the bridge if the process began today (assumes advertising for contractors in 2009 and thirty months of construction). Up until 2003, the trend was 3% inflation with more than ten years of data supporting that figure. SDOT used this inflation rate to estimate project costs in 2004. However, in the last three years inflation has spiked to 17% per year for 2004, 2005 and 2006. Other state projects are seeing inflation of 30-40%, so the cost savings this project has made have helped. SDOT is now forecasting ahead from 2006 dollars at 6.5% inflation, and the only additional cost will be the relatively inexpensive bicycle connection. The cost increase reflects broad construction inflation in this region.

The project will likely be shelved for a few years until SDOT can assemble a full funding package. SDOT has not been able to achieve a better inflation estimate than 6.5% so they will move forward with that and consider relevant risk factors. The only additional consideration is a \$30-40 million right-of-way cost that is included in the cost estimate. Around 90% of that is Port property and City property so there is high likelihood of no real cash transaction for those. The TS&L report will be ready in a couple of weeks.

### **Discussion**

**Kenworthy:** Will you email us when the TS&L report is released?

**Jones:** Yes, we'll contact you and we'll post the report online.

**Kenworthy:** If you can also indicate where the detour routes are located in the document that would be helpful. What is the next step after the TS&L is released?

**Jones:** The Draft EA should be out in September 2007 and then we'll have a hearing before we finalize that document. The FONSI, or Finding of No Significant Impacts, will

need official action by the Seattle City Council and Federal Highway Administration. By the end of the year we should have those and be able to close out the environmental process. Those documents will need updates every five years to stay current.

Right now, we've signed the contract to have HNTB move ahead on the contract documents and develop the entire project to a 30% level and further on the foundations. The strategy is to have a package on the shelf with the foundation design in place so if there were a bridge failure, a contractor could just pick it up and start building while the rest is being designed. That work should also be complete by the end of the year.

**Kenworthy:** That sounds good. In addition, I think Grace Crunican should visit us at the end of the year and let us know the practical steps she's going to take to move this process forward and secure funding.

**Jones:** I'll talk to Grace about that. We really appreciate the hard work this group has put into the project.

**Kenworthy:** What are the steps after we have the foundation portion designed? It would be helpful if Grace could give us a proposed timeline.

**M. Smith:** We'd like to know when and how to take action to help this move forward.

**Jones:** I've heard similar comments from the new president of the Magnolia Community Club. We appreciate the Magnolia community's interested in helping with this project. Our DAG meeting next month will be to discuss the design details for the 30% plans and the urban designer will be present to hear your feedback. We'll plan to meet again in August to show proposed configurations for the aesthetic treatments and then we'll be wrapping up by the end of the year.

**Traven:** I think we should continue to have meetings to keep things on track.

**M. Smith:** Yes, I'm not sure that this group wants to disperse.

**Brandt:** I have those action items for when we meet in June.

## V. Next Steps

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***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

The next DAG meeting will be on June 6<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at the Magnolia Community Center.

## VI. Public Comment

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***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

There were no members of the public in attendance.



## VII. Adjourn

***Kirk Jones, SDOT***

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