



**Open House Summary**  
**November 20, 2003**  
**Blaine K-8 School, 5:30 to 8:30 pm**

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**Overview**

The third Magnolia Bridge Project Open House was held on November 20, 2003 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, plus a no build alternative, being evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Information was also available on the extended project schedule, public involvement initiatives to date, PM peak traffic analysis for 2030, and topics being analyzed in the discipline reports currently being prepared by the project team. 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 and the Seattle Monorail Project were on hand to answer questions about how those projects will coordinate with the bridge replacement project.

Members of the project team in attendance were Kirk Jones (Seattle Department of Transportation Project Manager), Teresa Platt and Marybeth Turner (Seattle Department of Transportation), Pete Smith and Katharine Hough (HNTB), Lesley Bain (Weinstein A|U), Don Samdahl (Mirai), Anthony Katsaros (Shapiro), and Brad Hoff, Hadley Greene, Tom DePonty, and Kathleen Dowd-Gailey (EnviroIssues). Approximately 85 people signed in at the meeting, but it is estimated that over 100 members of the public attended the open house.

Kirk Jones gave a brief presentation on the alternatives being evaluated in the Draft EIS. He reviewed the modified project schedule, and described some preliminary traffic analysis showing traffic distribution for 2030 across all Magnolia bridges. 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 21 comment forms were collected at the meeting and approximately 9 people gave oral comments. An American Sign Language interpreter was available to interpret questions to the project team, as well as to translate the presentation. A Spanish translator was also present, along with sign-in materials in Spanish.

## General Summary

The following issues 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.

- **Minimize localized impacts** on Magnolia residents and the community (e.g., noise, interruptions in traffic flow and patterns, etc). Many commenters expressed preference for maintaining existing traffic patterns into Magnolia. Commenters are concerned about the traffic on narrow, residential streets and would like to see traffic calming measures implemented. Many expressed concern about the impacts of Alternative H on the Thorndyke neighborhood around Halladay Street.
- **Maintain traffic flow.** Some commenters expressed concern about a traffic signal on the bridge slowing traffic and disrupting traffic flow, while others believe the signal will help reduce speeds in the Galer/Thorndyke neighborhood. Conversely, some commenters thought a traffic light on the bridge could slow traffic down to the speed limit.
- **Emphasize connection with transit alternatives.** Maintain or improve local bus service and ensure that the new facility allows for connections with monorail stations along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. Conversely, some commenters encouraged the project team to move forward without slowing down the design process to accommodate the monorail.

## Alignment Preferences

Three build alternatives (A, D and H) and a No Build alternative are being studied in the Draft EIS. The public identified a variety of specific alternative preferences, and commented on perceived flaws in each design.

**As the following matrix shows,** comments were submitted that both supported and opposed each of the alignment options.

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Positive Comments</b>	<b>Negative Comments</b>
A	18	6
D	3	5
H	8	22

**Alignment preferences varied considerably,** from those who support maintaining a bridge in its current location to those who hope that a new alignment will help improve access to Magnolia, Smith Cove Park, and Port properties. As the matrix above indicates, the public generally expressed preference for Alternative A. In general, negative

comments regarding Alternative H outweighed negative observations for the other alternatives.

### **General Public Input**

The following includes comments captured verbatim on flipcharts during the meeting, oral comments and questions 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.

### **General Comments**

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- Improve safety – speed limit enforcement, crosswalks at Galer and Thorndyke.
- Keep bridge where it is. Leave old one open while building new one and make exits east and west to Smith Cove Park.
- An intersection with traffic lights on the bridge leads to bad traffic flow.
- I don't like the idea of an intersection. It slows traffic.
- Keep transit stops. They are used.
- Consider future light rail, streetcar, monorail, and *Sounder* connections.

### **Alignment A**

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- Good alternative. Long-term solution.
- Short-term – no bridge access.
- Speed up construction – provide contractor incentives for early completion.
- Don't make the bridge like a freeway. Don't build a half diamond interchange for the Port property. T-ramp and interchange is much better. Think traffic calming techniques.
- Alternative A – Intersection on bridge would help slow traffic on bridge.
- No traffic signals on bridge please! Have Port traffic and marina traffic merge onto the bridge. Serve the masses. A-Ramps would be best, but why not better ramps to allow traffic from Magnolia, to access marina, Smith Cove Park and Port better?
- Alternative A is the best plan to avoid development of the shoreline south of the bridge, in an area that would block views.
- Alternative A is the best solution with the least impact.
- Alternative A-Ramps allows for the best traffic flow. Introducing intersections seems counterintuitive.
- Alternative A is far better – preserves more of Magnolia.

## Alignment D

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- This alternative significantly impacts the residents on the bluff.
- The “landslide” hill in this alternative has to be adversely affected by overhead bridge construction.

## Alignment H

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- Two bridges = too many = too much money.
- The neighborhood impact would be severe – narrow streets, no garages and parking on both sides of the street, many children. This alternative is dangerous.
- Two bridges will be necessary in the long run. Build the north one first to handle the traffic from the current bridge. Focus on the arterials and the traffic flow. Be smart, but not overly controlled by short-term costs.
- Seems wasteful to build a north bridge that does not tie into the proposed Port north/south route.
- Rather than build the north bridge, funds could be well spent improving capacity on Dravus and Emerson.
- North bridge will have poor traffic integration into existing Magnolia arterials.
- North bridge provides no enhancements of traffic to Village merchants.
- Any solution that includes the Galer Flyover is flawed.
- Alternative H would dramatically affect traffic flow on Howe St., between Condon Way and 32<sup>nd</sup>. People on the west hill use this street to cut over to Thorndyke. It would be awful and dangerous.
- It significantly impacts residents on the bluff and sits directly next to a hillside known for slide activity.
- Alternative H impacts very adversely those Interbay residents on the lower, western slope of Queen Anne. I certainly do not want an overpass, more noise, gas emissions and headlights in my backyard.
- Alternative H makes great sense for the traffic flow on Thorndyke and the main bridge, and it adds flexibility should the main bridge need to be closed.
- (*Written next to the above comment*) The main bridge is being replaced so it won't have to be closed anymore.
- Alternative H is the highest impact of all. There are no problems with access as is.
- It seems a shame to impact another area of the community adversely, as Alternative H does, unless there is some very great, unapparent, need.

## Oral Comments/Questions

Approximately 9 people spoke after the presentation, offering comments and asking questions of the project team.

- I like the view from the existing bridge and would like to see it preserved. Alternative D entails moving the bridge to the north. Why does the Port like this

alternative with the bridge in the middle of everything? Alternative A is best, as it leaves the uplands open. Alternative H is cumbersome.

- When will traffic analysis be available for neighbors to study? *After WSDOT and FHWA have seen the analysis – perhaps in 4-6 weeks.*
- What is the appeal of Alternative H?
- I have concerns about Alternative H because I live on Halladay. Noise, air pollution, and lowered property values are all neighborhood concerns. Why can't the north bridge be moved to the south? To the south is an open space with no houses. I have concerns about the impact on the whole neighborhood, especially with the monorail and other projects.
- If Alternative H is chosen, what can be done to mitigate the impacts?
- What are the impacts on cost with the monorail and the required changes to the Galer Flyover? How would the monorail affect Alternative H at the north end and at the flyover? How are the two projects working together?
- What are the estimated costs of changes to the Galer Flyover?
- When will the funding process begin?
- Is there a reason why the existing Magnolia Bridge connection (east end) cannot be used?
- I am concerned that the multiple stops on the southern part of Alternative H will not make that concept as viable.
- What will happen to the bicycle and pedestrian trails on either side of the Port property?
- Alternative H dumps vehicles into an area where there are no major routes or accommodations.
- Do not forget existing Metro routes and the importance of transit. Some bus riders connect to trails beneath the bridge. The east/west bus routes are a vital connection for pedestrians.

### **Comment Form Input**

More than twenty-one comment forms were submitted during or after 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

The input from these forms is captured verbatim below. Horizontal lines separate individual comments responses. Some citizens only chose to respond to the first question.

*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H is a horrible design. We don't need another bridge at Halladay. This will adversely affect Thorndyke.

Alternative A makes the most sense because it's the most similar to the current configuration. There is nothing wrong with the current configuration – it's only the actual structure that is the problem.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Leave the bridge configuration as it is and to come into Magnolia as it does. If you change it to Thorndyke, they will use all of the cross streets and have more accidents. Enough said.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Favor A.

D is second choice.

Eliminate H because of: traffic impacts on narrow streets in neighborhood leading off Thorndyke, poor visibility on side streets, cars parked on both sides because most homes do not have garages, houses close to street.

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

Info, info, info. Keep meeting with us. Have a meeting in "H" neighborhoods.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H would have heavy traffic (i.e. emissions) right under our windows, especially if a stoplight is placed at Halladay and Thorndyke.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative A-Ramps seems most sensible and less disruptive to homeowners in the area. Both Alternative Ds seem like a lot of extra curving around that is not necessary. Alternative H seems like a waste of money. We do not need more entrances/exits to Magnolia. It would change the peaceful, community feel.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H impacts too many residences and businesses. Our property values would go down due to the noise, light and traffic. Other alternatives do not seem to impact as many residences and businesses. Cost estimates would be helpful.

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

I think your presentation boards need to be clearer – the intersections should be labeled with a traffic light, and label the time that the Magnolia Bridge would be out of service for each alternative.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

All three seem to be workable possibilities. Prefer Alternative H, as it would create a greater dispersion of traffic and less down time.

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

Thank you for an excellent presentation. Thank you for presenting the monorail information as well.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H appears to be the only option that will both handle current and future traffic and maximize future development in Interbay.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Queen Anne, Uptown and Ballard need Alternative H. They need the access to Thorndyke for job access and for emergency periods when the Magnolia Bridge, Emerson Bridge, or Dravus Bridge is blocked.

Seattle needs its industrial areas (BINMIC) to have excellent freight mobility and access. Alternative H does this.

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

*Additional:*

Don't leave us with only two Magnolia access points during construction.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Oppose Alternative H. I see negative impact on Thorndyke and folks going to/from south and west Magnolia. Also, there is a negative impact on the Interbay P-Patch with Alternative H.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I like Alternative A-Ramps the best.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I am concerned about the costs of the various alternatives. I think this would greatly influence my decision. Also, it would be nice to know exactly what the Port of Seattle is planning to do. Their development will tremendously impact the traffic on Elliott. Being that the monorail now appears to have reduced traffic from 6 lanes to 4 lanes, I am in favor of no further development of the Port property so consequently, I would only favor alternatives that would not enhance the Port's properties – so, that would imply that only Alternative A should be considered.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Keep new bridge clear of the new city park.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Flyover access to the south bridge (Alternative H) seems inefficient for accommodating increased traffic volume, both short term and long term. Therefore, anticipate the north bridge would have the most use. The north bridge does not improve access to neighborhoods or village, nor does it connect to Port property. Wouldn't traffic burden increase on residential streets?

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

Would construction be funded separately for 2 bridges even though the 2-bridge option is a package deal?

With a new and improved Magnolia Bridge why is a 2<sup>nd</sup> bridge needed, especially one that does not access Port property and increases peak traffic throughout neighborhoods?

What facilitates best access to village and accommodates commercial vehicles with least impact on neighborhoods – volume, speed, safety, and noise?

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I like Alternative H's north bridge, but not all of the south bridge. I don't like the use of the Galer Flyover.

For Alternative A, I don't like moving the bridge further south over the water. It cramps the park and the new park area. I don't like the intersection idea – putting a light halfway down the bridge will slow the traffic too much.

I like Alternative D-Ramps. It moves the bridge further north and uses the present access for the bridge at Elliott W.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I would prefer Alternative A-Intersection. It allows Magnolia residents access to Smith Cove, reduces the development of two areas (as seen in Alternative H), takes advantage of existing bridge land. Alternative H creates higher costs, impacts more neighborhoods with traffic, and impacts the wetlands on Wheeler.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H is the best alternative for flexibility. Plus, it will improve traffic flow on Thorndyke and take traffic pressure off the Thorndyke Park neighborhood. Alternative H is also better for flexibility in case the new main bridge needs to be closed. It is better for emergency response too.

Alternative H is the preferred choice. It is already highly populated at north Thorndyke and it makes sense to have another access route in that area.

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

Any proposal should contemplate and include concrete measures to regulate and soften traffic noise on Thorndyke, near Thorndyke Park.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H with modified Flyover – access to southbound Elliott plus the monorail lane restrictions creates a huge bottleneck on Elliott. Who is looking at this?

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative H is terrible and unnecessary. It has high impacts. Choose to replace the existing bridge with the least impacts and a plan acceptable to all. No businesses or neighbors should be impacted.

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

How to get communal input on Alternative H.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I don't want this project to make a freeway type of roadway. I do not like the half diamond interchange shown for Alternative A and D. Please consider more alternative modes of transportation in the investigation of each alternative (bicycles, pedestrians, transit, access to monorail). The best solution for everyone is to get cars off the roads. If

that is not possible, please implement traffic calming techniques to make alternate transportation modes safer (i.e. slower car speeds and less aggressive drivers).

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

Traffic and transportation – especially options for pedestrians and bicyclists, and close coordination with Metro and the monorail.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

Alternative A makes the most sense. Does not upset existing traffic flow, to or within Magnolia. Alternate D is okay (see above), but is certainly more circuitous. Alternative H has little to recommend it. Upsets 50-year-old traffic patterns within Magnolia. Also significantly slows commute to all Magnolia neighborhoods, which is a quality of life issue.

Alternative A gives the opportunity for a signature architectural feature on the Seattle waterfront (see Kobe, Japan or St. Petersburg, FL etc...).

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I live in SW Magnolia on the bluff. The two recent times the bridge has been out were a great hardship – adding 20 minutes to my commute time (I take the bus to downtown, so that's about double the time). The traffic congestion on Dravus was extreme. I heard many people at the open house say that these closures were “no big deal.” I think they have very short memories. I favor Alternative H because I think additional access to Magnolia is crucial, and I am extremely concerned about “down time.”

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

I'd like to comment on Alternative H. As I live on 14<sup>th</sup> Ave W and Boston, I am very opposed to the building of another bridge. This second bridge, which seems to be extraneous and not very cost-effective, would create more noise air pollution and traffic directly in my backyard. With a new bridge structure, my property value would be decreased. Why are we even considering Alternative H which effects two residential areas, Queen Anne and Magnolia, when the other two alternatives do not directly effect residential neighborhoods? I have not spoken with anyone who supports this H Alternative. I think keeping the bridge close to it original structure, such as in A or D, is the most rational approach.

*Additional comments:*

Will you be speaking with residents in the QA and Magnolia neighborhoods who will be affected by it, just as you plan to speak with businesses affected by the alternatives? Making contact with residential owners only seems fair.

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*What are your thoughts on the three alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS?*

It seems like Alternative A Intersections is the most logical and least expensive of the alternatives.

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

Alternative A Intersection is the logical and common sense way to go. Any other alternative is not practical. The fact the Alternative H is even being discussed is a waste of time and money. Someone with authority should have nixed that idea from the start.

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