



Summary Minutes

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. What's Happened Since Our Last Meeting? Alternative C Reaction
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Adjourn

Attendees

Design Advisory Group

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

Project Team

- ✓ Lesley Bain, Weinstein A|U
- ✓ Sarah Brandt, EnviroIssues
Richard Butler, Shapiro
Hadley Greene, EnviroIssues
- ✓ Brad Hoff, EnviroIssues
Katharine Hough, HNTB
Steve Johnson, Johnson Architects
- ✓ Kirk Jones, City of Seattle
- ✓ Anthony Katsaros, Shapiro
- ✓ Teresa Platt, City of Seattle
Don Samdahl, Mirai Associates
- ✓ Lamar Scott, KPFF
- ✓ Peter Smith, HNTB
- ✓ Marybeth Turner, City of Seattle

Meeting Handouts

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ DAG #13 Summary Minutes

I. Welcome

Brad Hoff, EnviroIssues

Brad welcomed the group and explained that the objective for the meeting was to get feedback on the new Alternative C options.

Brad asked if there were any corrections to the DAG 13 meeting minutes. Dan Burke clarified his remarks on page three, explaining that the Port's Master Plan will include housing in planning scenarios only if the Commission decides that this is an appropriate land use in area. With this correction, the meeting minutes were approved.

II. What's Happened Since Our Last Meeting?

Kirk Jones, SDOT Project Manager

Kirk explained that during the last Design Advisory Group meeting, the project team promised to share new Alternative C variations being considered for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Statement. Kirk asked for feedback to help decide which variation to carry forward, a decision that will be made in the next week to ten days. Kirk reminded the group that Alternative C includes a bridge over the railroad, a portion of surface road through the Port's property, and a bridge that climbs the bluff up the Magnolia hillside. KPFF has started to compare various Alternative C options to the project's original design criteria and identified six possibilities, which Kirk invited Lamar Scott to review for the group.

After reiterating some of Alternative C's characteristics Lamar explained the need for a certain amount of road length to reach the ground from elevated structures, and showed on his graphics where truck traffic routes would be needed to serve businesses on the Port's property. Lamar also pointed out where a surface spine road through the Port property might go, and the location of surface and structure portions of each alternative.

Lamar cautioned that access must be allowed to piers and fisheries operations in North Bay, and freight trucks will need room to maneuver. The project team has also looked at alternatives that cross the tank farm and other buildings.

All of the options include curves, which have specific design criteria pertaining to speed and sight distances. At some point, barriers limit what pedestrians and other cars can see as they round curves, and ultimately control how tight a turn can be. When roads curve, engineers can use "super-elevation" (tilting a road to the inside of a curve) to allow for a tighter curve, but roads usually must straighten out to allow for flat intersections (which limits super-elevation and curve rates). All of the Alternative C variations are limited, and none of them fully meet design criteria, though some are better than others.

Option 1 would cross the railroad to a signalized intersection, wrapping around to the south and climbing the bluff. Stopping sight distance associated with Option 1 would require speeds of 25 miles per hour (mph), which is problematic because cars will be descending a hill with a 6.5% gradient (cars will coast much faster than the speed limit).

Option 2 would be the same as Option 1, though the angles of approach to the intersection would be different. This will allow flattening of the curves, which will help with design. Unfortunately, anything done to the east of the surface intersection will limit mobility to buildings.

Option 3 would change the angle near the railroad, and bring the alignment closer to the existing bridge. Again, the western curve would have a 25 mph sight curve limitation.

Option 4 is drastically different than the others, and is the closest to the original Alternative C evaluated at the beginning of the project. The alignment requires a 90-degree turn at the intersection, which allows more surface road. The downside to the option is that traffic must stop or slow significantly to make a turn up the bluff. Also, this option doesn't allow one of the motions identified as important – from the Marina to the bluff. Motorists wanting to make that connection would need to take a different route through the Port property.

Option 5 would include a loop south of the existing bridge, and would come the closest to meeting all of the curve design criteria, though the intersections have some issues to be resolved.

Option 6 an option first put forward by the Port of Seattle, extends further north than the other options, and would meet grade and surface requirements. There would still be a tight curve to the north (which would again fall at the bottom of a hill and create speed problems), and the route may also interfere with rail spurs where it hugs the tracks near industrial buildings. This option would require a track realignment to maintain access to the back of some industrial buildings (there would not be enough room for trucks to back into buildings, but accommodating the buildings would crowd the tracks). Moving the buildings would also be tough. Compromise would be needed to make this option work.

Dan Burke added that this variation stretches to the north an alternative the Design Advisory Group saw earlier. Like Alternative D, this option would provide openness to the waterfront and add value to the land. The option also potentially divides the Port's property into many parcels, which presents some issues.

Kirk explained that some of these options might preclude development in certain areas because, where structures descend, barriers or "walls" to movement are created. While not the highest-priority consideration at this point, this issue comes up periodically. Lamar added that there would need to be at least 300 feet on both sides of a surface intersection to get the bridge high enough to allow travel under or around the barrier.

Kirk also explained that Marnie Heffron, the Port's transportation engineer, believes that carrying forward an option like Alternative C would, along with Alternatives A and D, encompass a comprehensive range of possibilities in the EIS. In this way, if the team finds that it needs to adjust the final alternative selected, the team will have already evaluated a range of options and will less likely need to spend additional time and money completing a supplemental EIS. Technically, the surface intersections could handle the volume of PM traffic. Kirk explained that the team needs to select one of the Alternative

C variations and would appreciate the Design Advisory Group's feedback. At this point, none of the options are really good, and none of them really jump out as better than the others, but SDOT believes an option should be included that captures this kind of configuration.

Discussion:

Burke Alternatives A and D don't have any design limitations like Alternative C?

Scott Though there are concerns, A and D don't have any issues that can't be worked with. There is enough flexibility with the raised "T" intersection, which can be moved east or west and connected to a road that snakes to the surface.

Burke Option 4 has a lot of surface road – could you allow properties access to the surface road along this stretch?

Scott Yes, you could.

Calhoun How much more time would it take to drive all the way around using one of these options?

Smith We've calculated that it would take roughly a minute longer due to the additional distance and time to wait at the signal.

Burke Would there be traffic signals on all three alternatives?

Jones Yes, A and D would also have signals.

Burke So it comes down to distance when you calculate travel times because all options would have signals.

Calhoun So why can't we just replace the bridge where it is?

Jones That's essentially what Alternative A would be, though we'd build it slightly south of the existing bridge so we don't have to shut down the entire bridge for an extended period.

Burke It's hard to get a picture of how the replacement for the bridge would look, but we need to remember that it's a very long-term bridge, and there could be such a different look to the property in the future. Depending on what the Port's master planning determines, the property could be very different in the future. It's hard to look at it as simply a bridge replacement. Even if property use remained the same there would be greater overall density.

Smith I get the sense that Alternatives A and D are more viable than any Alternative C options. Is that true?

- Jones** That's my gut reaction, but we've been asked to include an Alternative C option to compare to the others. Someone will ask later why this kind of option isn't included in the EIS. That said, which of the Alternative C options would you all like to see us move ahead with?
- Hoff** In other words, are there any that are great, or any that won't work for you and the groups you represent?
- Smith** None of the Alternatives C options look as practical as A or D. Money was given to us, so we have to study three. Magnolia Village and the south end of Magnolia will like Alternatives A and D.
- Lorentzen** Since the fourth access option is off the table, now the next most important aspect for Queen Anne is selecting the option that will close the bridge for the least amount of time. Alternatives A and D rise to the top. If closure time is the same for all options, then whatever Magnolians prefer is what I would go for. Loss of the fourth access option makes it less interesting from a Queen Anne point of view.
- Jones** I'm not hearing anything about specific Alternative C options, just generally that you don't care much for Alternative C. We as a design team would then move ahead with evaluation criteria, and pick the best one to move forward on. Of the Alternative C options, do you have any comments.
- Lorentzen** I'm concerned about the one that takes out the railroad tracks (Option 6). That could lead to a long, drawn out process because BNSF won't like the request to realign and will add time to the process.
- Jones** The route could be squeezed in and allow access to the buildings, but there will be impacts to the business and their operations.
- Lorentzen** It appears that the back-in angles would require reconfiguring loading docks.
- Jones** Yes, we'd need to figure out how to mitigate that impact.
- Smith** Store clients respond to the idea of the bridge going the whole length of the greenbelt. If it remains close to the ground, it won't be a big deal, but as it rises, noise is a concern. The option that has the shortest amount of length that hugs the hillside will have the most public support.
- Jones** The visual impact report will show visual impacts along the bluff. Are there other comments?

- Kim Suelzle** Is there any discussion ongoing with BNSF? It looks like the extra storage tracks for railcars could be impacted.
- Jones** No, talks have not started with BNSF specifically about Option 6, but we have talked about crossing the tracks and pillar placement. The Option 6 would need a complete re-work of spur tracks.
- Smith** Will the tank farm be left alone? Crossing the farm could hold up the project for a year in court over contaminated sediments, or someone who wanted all of the dirt cleaned.
- Jones** If we do cross the tank farm and build pillars, we'd need to clean up any dirt that we remove.
- Fletcher** I'm trying to figure out where the monorail would cross the path of the proposed bridge. It doesn't look like the Alternative C options would affect us much. The part we'd be concerned about is the elevation of the bridge.
- Sandy Smith** From what I saw, is Alternative C a lot more expensive than Alternatives A or D?
- Jones** Alternative C would have less overall structure, which might be cheaper. But, right-of-way (ROW) costs might make the option more expensive – we don't know. We'd need to identify new ROW needs and actual costs. Initially, costs in the Environmental Impact Statement will be based upon value per square foot.
- Sandy Smith** It looks like Option 4 or 5 provides better access to the marina and land surface access. Option 6 seems to go way up and not get to the marina very easily.
- Jones** The Option 6 and Option 4 would need a new intersection in the curved area, or a surface intersection up north to tie into a route to the marina. Or, a motorist could continue north to Thorndyke. So Option 4, to function well as a surface route, would need a new intersection up north.
- Sandy Smith** So the curves and speed limits would be at 25 mph for some options?
- Jones** The design speed is 40 mph, though some designs need to go slower.
- Sandy Smith** Magnolians don't go that slow, and often get to the bluff going much faster than the posted 30-35 mph speed limit.
- Jones** We're dealing with basic traffic engineering problems, but also creating other problems with these alignments that will change speed limits.

- Scott** The intersection at the bottom of the hill with a curve that you can't see around very well is not desirable.
- Burke** Option 6 would be able to come down to grade really quickly, and could actually allow access to the marina quickly.
- Scott** Yes, the transition from structure to surface is in the wrong point on the graphic, but not as close as the Port's traffic engineer specified during our meeting.
- Jones** The transition would be in the abutment area.
- Burke** This is where the issue about acquiring railroad property becomes relevant. Option 6 would allow a grid road system in its property.
- Sandy Smith** People are concerned about how high the bridge will go on the greenbelt. Could it go higher than the houses?
- Jones** The bridge will be dropping down below the houses at the same rate as the existing bridge, though it would cross in front of the houses rather than descend away from the bluff.
- Scott** The route just wraps closer to the hill.
- Calhoun** Will the future Port roads be built at the same time as the bridge?
- Smith** No, we don't know how or when the road systems will be built, and what the ultimate sequence will be. If the Port planning process gets behind ours, we would just build and make sure that we create a connection to the marina. If the Port starts first, we'd tie into the grid they create.
- Burke** The Port's master plan would include the whole picture, including how construction would be phased.
- Jones** When the city adopts a preferred alternative, we'll allow the Port to determine what it will do in that context.
- Sandy Smith** The bridge will still need to be closed – and even if it's a long time away, the business corridor, Magnolia Village, and traffic will be affected. It will be extremely difficult for those whose livelihoods depend on customers crossing the bridge. The Village has to be a priority for deciding how long the bridge will be closed. Also, people who live on the bluff will need a connection from the bluff to 15th Avenue to get to work. I bet traffic volumes are also getting higher. No matter how far into the future, bridge closure will severely affect the Village and southwestern bluff area. The alternative that results in the least amount of bridge closure is most desirable.

Jones There are temporary structures that might work to help. Once we select a preferred alternative, we can work more on those details. It's a matter of how long it takes to build the section of bridge that connects to the bluff and 15th Ave.

Lorentzen As an example, the approaches to the Fremont Bridge were originally going to take 12-18 months, but now they've got it down to working during six to eight weekends.

Jones Yes, we can possibly do some great things to help mitigate this impact.

Hoff We are giving you a worst-case scenario, so we can all prepare for that. Hopefully the length of the closure can be minimized.

Conclusion: With no further comment, Brad opened the floor to additional public comment and provided a summary of next steps.

III. Public Comment

Hoff We're starting into the summertime, and the team will work on developing Alternative C options. The next planned DAG meeting will likely be in September. We're looking at another wave of public involvement, including visits to the Magnolia Summer Fest and farmers markets. We will also have new information to present to the general public in an open house in late September or early October.

Jones We'll also complete discipline reports on the Alternative C option that's chosen. We are planning to put together a newsletter to send out in August that will talk about the three alternatives that are being studied. We'll also announce new developments on the website as soon as we make a decision about Alternative C.

Sandy Smith Will you have comment forms at events?

Jones Yes. With that, have a good summer. We'll be busy putting together a lot of information.

Conclusion: The next DAG meeting will likely be in September 2004. The meeting was adjourned without further discussion.