



Design Advisory Group Meeting #16
Magnolia Community Church, February 2, 2005, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Summary Minutes

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Project Updates
- III. Public Involvement
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Adjourn

Attendees

Design Advisory Group

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

Project Team

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

Meeting Handouts

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Project Fact Sheet, Winter/Spring 2005
- ✓ DAG #15 Summary Minutes

I. Welcome

Brad Hoff, EnviroIssues

Brad welcomed the group and reviewed the DAG information packet. It included the agenda, the winter/spring 2005 fact sheet describing project costs and schedule, and summary minutes from the last DAG meeting. He then previewed the meeting's agenda with the group.

The minutes from the last DAG meeting, held in October 2004, were distributed to both committee members and the public. Brad asked the group to take a few minutes to review. With no questions or comments raised, the meeting minutes were approved.

II. Project Updates

Kirk Jones, City of Seattle

Kirk noted that Alternative C is now up to the same engineering detail as the other alternatives, and that half of the discipline reports have been approved by WSDOT and Federal Highway Administration. He also said that the team has been developing full cost estimates on each of the three alternatives. They developed these estimates by using a schedule and cost risk evaluation process called SCoRE. This process consisted of a four-day meeting where transportation experts and the project team looked at elements that could potentially cause problems in construction and result in increased costs. The team identified about twenty different items that could potentially increase costs, and developed a realistic timeline to purchase right of way and relocate local businesses. This process generated a cost range for each alternative based on the probability of completing the project at a specific cost. Kirk noted that at a 90 percent probability level, all three alternatives are estimated to cost over \$200 million, with \$240 million being the highest. This represents a big jump in cost from earlier estimates, which were in 2004 dollars. Kirk said the team is reviewing the identified risks to see if there are any management decisions that could be made now to reduce costs.

Kirk noted that the team felt a responsibility to reconsider the decision made in 1998 to not retrofit the bridge. He said the team is now investigating bridge rehabilitation (rehab) as a possible option. Kirk explained the difference between a retrofit and rehab is that rehab brings the project up to current design standards such as vehicle weight. The bridge deck would require complete replacement. With either a retrofit or rehab, the foundation and column bracing would need significant work. The consultant team is researching rehab costs.

Discussion:

Jones: Looking at doing a rehab will cause a delay in the schedule. The DEIS was going to be out mid-summer, but now it looks like it will probably be November. After we get some more information on the rehab process, we will present it to Grace Crunican, the Seattle Department of Transportation

(SDOT) Director. Our goal is to have a decision by the first part of April. We think we have a responsibility to look at the rehab option if it is substantially less expensive. A major downside to a rehab option is that we estimate it would require as long as a 24-month bridge shut down.

Spiker: What was the low range on the cost estimates?

Jones: \$165 million at a 10 percent probability.

Spiker: Since it is a City road, does it have to be brought up to federal standards?

Jones: Yes, it is a City road, but we may be using federal dollars so it has to be up to federal standards. This includes design elements such as wide enough lanes and adding bridge railings.

Burke: Are these cost estimates based on 2004 dollars?

Jones: The cost estimates are based on the year of expenditure. This assumes we get funding to keep moving along. The cost estimates are based on the project schedule. The process of relocating major businesses pushed the time frame out 11-12 months. We are currently looking at ways to shorten that process. Soil conditions were another factor that affected the costs. We did three borings for each alignment. There is quite a bit of distance between borings, so there could be a lot of change in the subsoil we don't know about. We had to drill about 100 feet down before we got to hard, solid ground. With this kind of soil, liquefaction can occur in an earthquake. We have to improve the soil in about a 40 feet radius around the foundation.

Member of the Public: Is it the sticker shock that brought the rehab option back? Are there other options that might come back?

Jones: Yes, we are looking at the rehab to see if it's cost effective, but no other options will be brought back.

Member of the Public: Does rehab versus new construction affect funding sources?

Jones: We are looking for a mix of funding opportunities. Federal dollars are allocated to different pots for new construction and rehab projects. There is a high demand for both.

Member of the Public: Assuming you know which businesses will be relocated, can you tell us?

Jones: City Ice and Anthony's Seafood will be relocated. In a couple of months we should be in a position to determine whether or not it is reasonable to carry the rehab option into the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Member of the Public: What was the original cost estimate to rehab the bridge?

Jones: Originally we only looked at retrofitting the bridge. A retrofit includes only the foundation and bracing, which would cost about \$30 million. At that time we thought replacing the entire structure would be around \$60 million. That work was done in 1998, and at that time we thought the best decision was to take the \$30 million it would cost to retrofit the bridge and put it into a new bridge.

Spiker: How far does the existing bridge's foundation go beneath the surface?

Jones: The longest wooden pile we found was 60 feet. Most of them were 50 feet. The friction between the piles and the soil is what's supporting the bridge. If we get the right kind of earthquake that liquefies the ground the bridge is going to sink. The existing columns are so close together that we would have to do soil improvements along the entire length of the bridge to make the foundation work. That is pretty expensive.

M. Smith: Let's say hypothetically that the rehab comes in at \$140 million. Is that a big savings?

Jones: Once you apply risk factors and project out to the year of expenditure the \$140 million would be close to the cost estimates we are looking at for the existing build alternatives. We would compare base cost to base cost. If it turns out to be about the same price, we would probably build a new structure because of the length of time the bridge would have to be shut down for a rehab. A rehab would also require higher maintenance costs and have a shorter lifespan.

Spiker: If the new bridge is the same width as the old bridge, how will the new bridge meet current standards? Are we going to be in the same situation as SR 520, where the new bridge is significantly wider than the current bridge?

Jones: No, the new bridge will be only a few feet wider. We will have two lanes going east and one lane headed west.

P. Smith: Wider widths are typically designed for higher speed roads, like SR 520, but we are designing for a city street.

At this point, Brad Hoff asked Dan Burke to provide an update on the Port of Seattle's recent activities in North Bay.

Burke: The Port had an Open House in November, and we are currently working with the NBBJ [the Port's Master Plan consultant] framework plan to update our Master Plan and alternatives, which is closely tied to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Our strategic plan feeds the City's work. I would suggest that we do a presentation about this at the next DAG meeting.

The Port currently has six alternatives for North Bay:

- Alternative 1 and 2 are high density and equal 4 million square feet of development. One of these alternatives will include residential development and one will not. This decision has not been made yet. The impacts are fairly similar between the two. Residential development will impact traffic patterns a bit.
- Alternatives 3 and 4 are medium density, and equal 3.2 million square feet of development at North Bay. We are looking at both of these alternatives with and without a residential component.
- Alternative 5 is a built-out industrial property that would include about 1 million square feet of industrial development.
- Alternative 6 is a no action alternative that mimics what development is currently like today.

An internal review of these alternatives begins in three weeks. The Draft EIS is planned for release in April, and the final EIS will be released in June. During April we will be working with the Port Commission to see what alternatives will be chosen. A lot of people are interested in the residential component.

On January 20, we submitted amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan. This is the same amendment we submitted a year ago and withdrew. If adopted, it would allow residential development and higher buildings. The City has a hearing in March on all comprehensive plans. A decision will be made in October or November of this year.

The Port went to the Port Commission at the end of January to buy the Tsubota property on 15th Avenue W, north of the Magnolia Bridge (3.4 acres). The Port looked at it as an opportunity to provide good access for future development, or potentially even use it as a transit hub. This property is not included in the EIS or Comprehensive Plan amendment. This was really more of a strategic acquisition. There are currently no plans for development on this parcel.

Lorentzen: Has this deal been completed?

Burke: It is in process.

Member of the Public: Are there any substantive changes to the Comprehensive Plan?

Burke: No. The one issue that did come up is that the Armory switched gears. Instead of swapping their parcel for another parcel that the Port would find for them, they are now looking at all their properties statewide in a full planning portfolio. The Armory piece is not in the Comprehensive Plan. The Port CEO may try to restart this discussion again, but currently the Port is not moving ahead with acquiring that property.

Member of the Public: So, the Port is saying that the Tsubota property is not part of North Bay?

Burke: Correct.

Member of the Public: Is now a good time for citizens to write to the City of Seattle and say, “give them what they want”?

Burke: Yes, we welcome the support. There will also be a public meeting in March, and the public can provide comments then.

III. Public Involvement

Kirk Jones, City of Seattle

We are going to the Magnolia Community Club meeting on February 10 to talk about costs and project updates, and to make sure we have the right alternatives as we move into the Draft EIS. I would encourage folks to come out for this. We have talked a lot about the alternatives before, so most of the community is familiar with them. We really want to use this time to describe the exercises we are going through in the next few months.

Hoff: The project team is more than happy to give presentations to community groups. We are planning to be at the Magnolia Farmer’s Market again to hand out information and talk with folks. Last year we had a booth approximately once a month.

Spiker: The three alternatives have very different shutdown periods. Can you review what those are?

Jones: The longest shutdown period is for Alternative A, which is 17 months. Alternative C is 11 months, and Alternative D is nine months. When we went through the estimating process, we had construction companies who have worked on a lot of bridges provide these estimates. One company told us that for that for six to eight million dollars they could build a temporary structure to connect to the existing bridge. If Alternative A ends up being the preferred, we will get into those issues of temporary structures. It might be well worth the money to reduce the shutdown period to a couple of weeks, compared to 18 months.

IV. Public Comment

Member of the Public: I would like to express my complete confusion about the entire process of the bridge replacement. You can tell me if this is inappropriate. I don't understand why the lines on the paper were the first thing you went with to make a decision? From my end, we have gone to a whole lot of meetings and looked at these alternatives again and again. Now the process is going to be even longer. Why didn't you start at the other end of this first and look at soil and geological stuff before you chose alternatives. I'd love an answer.

Jones: We used a standard process for looking at impacts and transportation needs. These basic "lines on paper" help us to see what will help us best meet our goals. We think we are covering all the issues. We had basic geologic information in the beginning. Once we had three alternatives, we spent additional money. To do a soil investigation for a lot of alternatives is too expensive and would be a waste. We systematically narrowed the alternatives from broad concepts. We have a pretty good definition of these three alternatives. Once we have a preferred alternative we move into a type, size and location study. We will ask ourselves questions like, "how long is the span". We will spend time on details of the engineering and architectural analysis to give us an attractive and cost effective bridge. That way, when we go to ask a contractor for a bid, they will not have to guess about what is needed and we will get a better price.

Hoff: We spent the money we had strategically.

Jones: The community's input is key. We need to ensure we are meeting the community's needs.

Hoff: As a reminder, ultimately the community does not make the decision, the City Council will decide where the bridge is built.

Jones: We make a recommendation based on what we hear and what alternative we think will best meet the goals and criteria for the project. We are keeping City Council abreast of what is going on so they are aware when it comes time to make a decision.

Hoff: Any time things have changed with this project, the Council Transportation Committee was briefed. For example, when Alternative B was taken off, and Alternative C was subsequently added.

M. Smith: When was the first DAG meeting?

Jones: September 2002.

Calhoun: Are we going to be here until 2009?

Jones: We appreciate this group's time and effort, especially through the EIS process, and we'll look forward to your assistance when we move into the type, size and location analysis. After that, approximately 12-15 months from now, there will probably not be a need to continue the DAG.

Member of the Public: As we reconsider a rehab option, is there a continuum of possibilities with what you can do?

Jones: We would need to put it into the EIS and do amendments to the existing discipline reports before we can finish the Draft EIS. This would cause another delay.

Member of the Public: Can you do a less than optimum rehab?

Jones: In my opinion, the answer is no. One of the key things is the soil around the foundation. That has to be dealt with. As soon as we do that, we are talking \$50 to 60 million dollars. That is a lot of money to spend and still have a bridge with high maintenance costs and a short lifespan.

Traven: We've talked a lot about access from Queen Anne and the spine route through the Port property. Is this road still part of the Port's thinking?

Burke: The spine road is included in the Port's Alternatives 1 through 5. At this point we don't know what the Neighborhood Advisory Committee would say or agree to. This coordinates with what the bridge is doing. I keep thinking that if the Port got out in front with this process, we could have a second bridge that could absorb some of the excess traffic while the bridge was down. We just do not know about timing at this point.

M. Smith: Is the initial \$10 million still being used?

Jones: We've spent over \$3.5 million to date. We expect to get up through 60% design. We will likely need another \$2.5 million to call for bids going into construction. We will definitely be looking for a funding package as we move into the preferred alternative.

Smith: Are you piggybacking with any other projects?

Jones: No. This bridge is the sixth in priority of 100 bridges within the region. The only bridges ahead of it are the Alaskan Way Viaduct, the Fremont Bridge, the Spokane Street Viaduct, the viaduct around Union Station, and Airport Way in the industrial area. We are optimistic about funding. It's not going to be easy, but once we have a preferred alternative chosen we can really be aggressive about going after our options.

Member of the Public: When asking for funding, is there one alternative that is more likely to get funding?

Jones: Most of the funding sources look at what you did in your EIS process. The EIS is set up to look at the best solution to solve the problem.

Conclusion: With no further comment, the meeting was adjourned.