



Summary Minutes – DRAFT

Agenda

- I. Welcome Back
- II. What's Happened Since Our Last Meeting?
- III. Preliminary Traffic Modeling Results
- IV. Public and Closing Comments

Attendees

Design Advisory Group

- ✓ Dan Burke
- ✓ Fran Calhoun
- ✓ Dakota Chamberlain
- ✓ John Coney
- ✓ Erin Fletcher
- ✓ Eric Fahlman
- 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 Archts
- ✓ Kirk Jones, City of Seattle
- ✓ Anthony Katsaros, Shapiro
- Andrew Laski, KPFF
- Teresa Platt, City of Seattle
- ✓ Don Samdahl, Mirai Associates
- ✓ Lamar Scott, KPFF
- ✓ Peter Smith, HNTB
- Marybeth Turner, City of Seattle

Meeting Handouts

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Draft Schedule, September 10, 2003
- ✓ Design Advisory Group Influence on the Project, August 2003
- ✓ Alignment Alternatives Access Option Evaluation
- ✓ Traffic Growth for No Build & Alternative A & D 2000 to 2030 (PM Peak Hour)
- ✓ Traffic Volume Changes for Alternative H 2030 (PM Peak Hour)
- ✓ Level of Change to Traffic Volumes for Alternative H
- ✓ Alignment Alternatives Final Screening



I. Welcome Back

Brad Hoff, EnviroIssues

Brad Hoff welcomed everyone back after a long summer break and introduced new DAG member Erin Fletcher who represents the Seattle Monorail Project. Brad explained that he'd had the chance to call members during the summer to maintain contact and to solicit their ideas for questions they'd like to have covered at future meetings. Among the ideas mentioned were, construction funding, traffic calming and access to the waterfront. Brad asked if there were any other topics of interest for the group. Hearing none, Brad introduced Kirk Jones, SDOT project manager, to describe the project events that had transpired during the summer.

Conclusion: With no questions or comments, Brad introduced Kirk Jones to provide an overview of summer activity.

II. What's Happened Since Our Last Meeting?

Kirk Jones, SDOT Project Manager

Kirk Jones explained that, as a result of scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), approximately 20 individuals and 4 organizations sent letters to the project team. These letters were in addition to public comments received during the official public and agency hearings. After examining the scoping comments, the project team evaluated two additional alternatives. If the alternatives fulfilled the screening criteria they would be included in the EIS along with A, D and H.

One suggested alternative was to make improvements to Dravus Street instead of building the northern portion of Alternative H. The project team analyzed this possibility and determined that, to meet capacity needs, the Dravus crossing of the railroad would need to be replaced with a 5-lane bridge. To the east, Dravus would require additional widening, and the whole bridge over 15th Avenue W would require a major rebuild, including a new major intersection. This complete replacement of the bridge would create significant right-of-way impacts on both sides of the alignment.

Kirk also explained that Alternative H depends on keeping the Galer Flyover as the main southern route. Through traffic modeling, the team learned that not enough drivers would divert north to Dravus, even factoring in major improvements. The results would be an "F" rated level of service at the intersection of the Galer Flyover and Elliott Avenue W. Kirk reminded DAG members that one premise of the replacement project was to provide a level of service that is equal to or better than current conditions. Because the Dravus option could not meet this requirement, it was not carried forward.

The second new alternative was suggested by the Port of Seattle, which asked that a surface-level, non-bridge alternative through the North Bay area be reconsidered. This request resulted in the creation of a route similar to the original Alternative C, including a circuitous surface route through North Bay and a ramp tying in at Galer Street on Magnolia bluff. The problem with this new route was that it required 500 feet of structure from the east to get

over the railroad tracks and down to the ground, and a ramp of at least 2300 feet to reach Magnolia bluff. With these engineering requirements, only 150-200 feet of surface road between the structures remained, and it made more sense to simply build one long structure with a ramp or ramps down to the ground. The option of lengthening the route to allow for a longer surface road became more serpentine and violated some basic engineering criteria, such as curve radii, tip (the slant of the road to accommodate curves), etc. The project team reviewed three alternatives with the Port and explained that none of the three were very viable. The Port agreed with this conclusion and thanked the project team for considering the suggestion.

Kirk then described the work with the Signatory Agency Committee (SAC), a multi-agency group with representatives from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, WSDOT, and other Federal and State permitting agencies. For larger projects, the SAC reviews and approves the project team's work at three key points in the process. These include verification of the "Purpose & Need" statement, review of alternatives, study findings, and mitigation plans.

In July, the project team presented the remaining EIS alternatives to the SAC. The SAC determined that because only Alternative A would be constructed over the shoreline and water, and because no new stormwater drainage outfalls would be required in any of the alternatives, the project would not fall under SAC jurisdiction. This means the project team will work directly with only the relevant agencies, resulting in significant timesavings.

Kirk also explained that in July, the project team held a coordination meeting with WSDOT and FHWA to review the joint State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) EIS outline. WSDOT and FHWA both thought the project team's schedule was too optimistic, and asked that WSDOT and FHWA be given one month each (consecutively) to review progress at key milestones (two significant points in the Draft EIS). This will extend the Draft EIS completion date to late summer 2004. Kirk referred the group to the schedule handout and asked the group to review the new projections. Given this new schedule extension, the project would complete plans in the latter part of 2007, and begin construction in 2008 at the earliest (assuming funding had been obtained). Kirk noted that the average time for an EIS completion is 33 months and the project schedule is in line with this. He also said every attempt will be made to complete the EIS sooner.

Kirk next explained that a nine-person interdisciplinary team (IDT), made up of Seattle city technical staff, has convened three times this summer. The IDT has reviewed the Purpose & Need statement, looked at the different alternatives, and reviewed the established screening criteria to determine which interchanges would be carried forward. [Several interchanges for each alternative were presented at the June DAG meeting.] After considering input from the DAG and city staff, the project team screened all of the intersection configurations, and Kirk presented those that scored the best as related to the criteria. The following alternatives and interchanges will be carried forward into the EIS:

- ♦ No Build Alternative: Continue to maintain the existing structure.

- ♦ Alternative A: Carry forward A6 (including an elevated intersection on the structure and a ramp to the ground extending to the north) and A7 (including a half-diamond intersection with ramps to and from the east). The other A options, which presented significant blockages of traffic flow, have been eliminated.
- ♦ Alternative D: Carry forward D9 (including an elevated intersection on the structure and a ramp to the ground extending to the north or south) and D10 (including a half-diamond intersection with ramps to and from the east). No other D options will be carried forward.
- ♦ Alternative H: Carry forward as the southern portion H1S (uses the Galer Flyover, a surface road aligned with Alternative D, and a structure of at least 2300 feet to get to Magnolia bluff). Carry forward as the northern portion H6N2 (uses the Armory Way corridor and ties into Thorndyke at Halladay, instead of going straight across to Thorndyke at Wheeler). The northern portion of H would not include a southbound right-turn lane on 15th Avenue, and therefore the route would have less impact on the P-Patch.

Kirk explained that the IDT has approved a draft study plan that will be mailed to the DAG and posted on the web. The plan's main objective is to identify the work that needs to be done by the technical team. The first couple of pages are the Purpose & Need statement, and the rest of the plan describes how further study will proceed. The IDT approved the draft study plan and has sent it on to WSDOT for their review and comment.

Finally, Kirk read from an e-mail he recently received asking if a "powerful force" was working to bring Alternative B back onto the table. Kirk emphasized that Alternative B is "gone, dead, kaput" for two very important technical reasons. First, the route violates City shoreline policies and would be difficult – if not impossible – to permit. Second, the route would cross parklands, and federal "4(f)" regulations stipulate that a project cannot touch such lands. By law, when another alternative avoids the 4(f) land and is both feasible and prudent, the other option *MUST BE CHOSEN*. Because A, D, and H are feasible and prudent, they would have had to have been chosen over Alternative B. Avoiding parklands just north of the existing bridge was a key factor in developing modified Alternative C configurations that resulted in very short sections of surface roadway between the east and west structures.

Kirk concluded by stating that the consultants were now working on discipline reports, and that this was a busy time for technical work.

Discussion

Kenworthy Two groups that I represent made a similar request that an option like Alternative C be considered. Can we get the technical information that you prepared for the Port that documents your decision to drop the option? These groups are interested in more than just conclusions. Also, we'd like to see the criteria you developed to evaluate these options. In addition, the Port has three divisions, and while they often speak with one voice, they sometimes don't. Could you please clarify which part of the Port was making recommendations and taking part in evaluations?

- Chamberlain** Present at the meeting were Tom Tyscko, Stephanie Jones, Tom Tierney, Mark Griffin, and myself, to name a few. This represented a cross-section of different groups across the agency.
- Jones** Basically, both structures for Alternative C created a serious barrier within the Port property.
- Hoff** We'll schedule meetings with the BINMIC Action Committee to discuss the technical information and these findings.
- Chamberlain** Also, the spine road is just conceptually represented. We don't actually know yet how land in the area will be used, or where the spine road will go.
- Coney** How do you propose to lessen impacts on the P-patch with Alternative H?
- Jones** We assumed we'd need to widen 15th Avenue W. to allow for right-hand turns onto Wheeler, but realized we didn't need to and tightened up the turn. This means that we won't have to infringe on the P-patch as much.
- Kenworthy** It's interesting that H1S is selected to be carried forward when it goes through City Ice and the tank farm, while H2S avoids these areas. Why did you select this option?
- Jones** The one we eliminated was a more circuitous route that involved more intersections.
- Holmstrom** I just moved by Halladay, and it looks like H5N and H6N intersect at Wheeler. Why did you eliminate those options?
- Scott** H5N would go straight across to Thorndyke using the Wheeler corridor, and H6N was a slight variation of this.
- Jones** H5N was dropped due to the wide crossing and tough permanent impacts it would have on the railroad tracks. Moving the route north was a better design and more efficient. H6N was dropped because it had a longer structure.
- Member of Public** Can you please explain the scoring of the alternatives?
- Jones** We scored them in two ways: ranges of -/0/+ and 1/2/3. The more positive, the better the alternative ranked.
- Coney** H is like D, though it adds a northern connection. The south portion of H and D seem similar. How do their costs compare?

- Jones Going as far as it does on the surface, there is less cost for the southern structure of Alternative H. However, when coupled with the northern bridge, we knew H was going to be more expensive than the other two as a whole.
- Spiker How did you evaluate costs?
- Jones For each alternative we evaluated costs of signalized intersections, mitigation costs (property acquisition), square feet of road and bridge surface, linear feet of retaining walls, and so on. The least cost alternative was F (at the beginning of the process), and all others were compared to this cheapest option.
- Scott We wanted to compare them, not come up with absolute costs.
- Spiker So I would assume that scoring a “3” would mean that the alternative is the lowest cost. By definition, low-cost is better than high-cost, but you don’t mean that any alternative was three times as expensive as the others. Can you share relative costs?
- Jones Considering only hard costs, Alternative A is approximately \$42 million, Alternative D is approximately \$48-50 million, and Alternative H is approximately \$51-52 million. These are from memory and will have to be verified from the information developed last fall. As you’ll see, there’s not a big spread in expense considering hard costs.

[Note from Kirk: Last falls cost estimates for roadways and structures for each alternative was; \$47 million for A, \$53 million for D and \$44 million for H. In my recollection of relative costs at the DAG meeting I’d forgotten about detour costs which were \$12 million dollars for temporary detour structures for A and D, while H had about \$400,000 in detour costs. I must emphasize that these ARE NOT total project costs. These were developed early in the study process for relative comparison purposes only. They do not include factors for inflation, construction management and design, contingencies, mitigation, etc. The total cost for each alternative that will be developed in the EIS will include all these factors and could be more than double the above figures.]

Member of Public Are you doing anything to improve the Flyover? Right now there are tight, tough turns.

Jones Yes, but not enough to improve the level of service that much.

Conclusion: Brad asked, given the lengthier schedule, that those who didn’t want to extend their service on the DAG find a replacement from their group to ensure continued two way communication. Brad will also set up a meeting with BINMIC to discuss the decision to drop a route similar to Alternative C. With no further discussion, Brad introduced Don Samdahl to present findings from the traffic modeling.

III. Preliminary Traffic Modeling Results

Don Samdahl – Mirai Associates

Don explained that the team has been busy fine-tuning the traffic modeling and has completed looking at the design year, 2030. He directed attention to the handouts that summarized their findings. The purpose of the graphics is to show order of magnitude of change in traffic based on afternoon peak hour. The team also looked at morning peak numbers, but the trends were similar in the reverse direction. The EIS will have details on all intersections, and will look at how to design the structures, which will have huge cost ramifications.

Don first described traffic growth for the No Build Alternative and Alternatives A and D. Alternatives A and D maintain the same locations for connections to 15th Avenue W. and W. Galer Street on Magnolia Bluff as the No Build alternative, and therefore have the same traffic forecasts as No Build. The graphics show and compare two-way traffic on the area streets. The first graphic shows year 2000 traffic volumes, expected traffic volumes in 2030 for No Build/Alternatives A and D, and the percentage change. As one looks at 15th Avenue W and Elliott, there appears to be a lot of growth, but on an annual basis that growth translates to about 1% per year. Magnolia is essentially built out, and there is a limit on road capacity in the 15th Avenue/Elliott Avenue corridor, so only so much traffic can get to Magnolia. The collective growth of traffic on the Emerson Street, Dravus Street, and Magnolia bridges is estimated to be about a 30% increase.

Don explained that a large volume increase was anticipated on Thorndyke due to the anticipated growth in housing along the street and the connections to the port property (i.e. North Bay) assumed at 21st Street. This translates into a projected increase from 500 to 1100 cars on Dravus/Thorndyke during the peak PM period.

The handout titled “Traffic Volume Changes for Alternative H 2030 (PM Peak Hour)” shows how traffic would change from the 2030 No Build/Alternative A and D forecasts if the new northern connection at Wheeler/Armory/Halladay were introduced. The increases and decreases in volume start to show shifts in traffic patterns. A yellow box indicates a decrease in traffic volume if Alternative H were built, and a red box indicates a traffic volume increase. With Alternative H, the model indicates that there would be an increase in traffic along the northern portion of Thorndyke, and a decrease in volume along Dravus and the Magnolia Bridge. Alternative H would space out the volumes between the three crossings, and decrease volumes on the south end of Thorndyke. Some of this traffic would shift up to Wheeler Street.

Discussion

Chamberlain What’s the design capacity compared to what we see now?

Samdahl We’re working on that now. It refers to operations, and we had projections that needed to be lessened because of capacity issues. When we come back with the level of congestion, we’ll have included the effects of assumptions

made for Port redevelopment. At this point, we're making a fairly aggressive assumption of growth. The Port's master planning process, which we will coordinate with, will confirm all that.

- Spiker** It appears, based on my interpretation, that H is generating more traffic if I add numbers on the graphics. If this graphic does suggest that H is generating more traffic, why is that?
- Samdahl** The graphic doesn't indicate that H will generate more traffic.
- Kenworthy** John indicated early that he thinks H will bring more people from Queen Anne to Magnolia. Are you assuming that the number of trips between the two communities will stay the same?
- Samdahl** Because we can't directly model the increase in trips we'd expect between Queen Anne and Magnolia, we are assuming that there will be the same number of trips. We also keep the land use assumptions constant between the alternatives.
- Coney** On the graphic showing the No Build, Alternative A, and Alternative D, you show big increases on Thorndyke. I'd like to request clearer graphics to help me understand the points you're trying to make.
- Jones** We'll see significant increases on Thorndyke, and similarly large traffic increases will occur along Thorndyke under Alternative H.
- Kenworthy** I have a request, too. In addition to John's request for a different format, I'd like an explanation about which numbers should be added and why. In addition, I would like to again raise the issue of what time you are modeling the peak PM hour as it pertains to the level of service on 15th Avenue W. To obtain funding, a primary question we'll have to address is whether our project will improve freight mobility. Does your peak hour include freight considerations? WSDOT and state legislators will ask us about this, and we should be ready with a response.
- Samdahl** The peak we're using is 5-6 PM.
- Kenworthy** If we're looking for funding, we need to see which alternatives will help or hinder freight mobility. I ask that you generate that information. We've got to be doing work now to make the case for obtaining funding. I suggest we can while we have this technical team assembled.
- Spiker** I think it would help, since we have four remaining options, and three are essentially the same, that you do a more dynamic model of H and develop a more graphic formula to show a clearer representation of your modeling results. You could show the movement of traffic on various alternatives.

- Coney** I'd like to say something good about these graphics, too. I want to bring people to work in Magnolia and QA in a way that's more effective. Gillman in Magnolia, the new Northbay development, Immunex, and other key points are large job centers, and we are concerned about congestion and delay, and the ability to move people across bridges. Aimed at that, these numbers will support analysis that will lead to a demonstration of the need for the bridge.
- Hoff** We've heard you loud and clear that we've got to convert these graphics into something that's more digestible.
- Kenworthy** I wanted to say that I appreciate your following up on our request, and state that I did get a lot out of the graphics.
- Conclusion:** The project team will work on creating graphics that are easier to understand and more clearly portray how traffic would be affected under each alternative. Brad then opened the floor for public comment.

VI. Public Comment

Brad opened the floor for public comments.

Member of Public I heard that there would be a combined community meeting for the Port and Magnolia?

Burke Yes, we've got that scheduled for two weeks from tonight, down at the armory if the room we're trying to get is available. The purpose of the meeting is to have all agency transportation people there to tell people what's happening from a transportation point of view. We're now beginning to frame that work and want to get the big picture about what's going on. Word will be going out, and the meeting will be from 7-8:30 PM two weeks from tonight.

Member of Public The fact sheets you have on the web are good, but we're hungry for detail. Please put the more detailed versions of the alignments on the website, as we'd like as much detail as possible.

Member of Public Regarding the traffic impact on neighborhoods: when you give more analysis, can you give numbers on how many cars are going through the neighborhood now. When you say "200 cars" what does that mean?"

Smith Yes, we will do that, and that will also feed into our noise analysis.

Hoff So you know when we'll be out in the community, you can look for us at the Magnolia Car Show on September 13, and the Farmers Markets on

September 27 and October 11. I'd also like to thank Dakota for his service and welcome Dan Burke to the table in Dakota's place representing the Port.

Conclusion: With no additional comments or questions, Brad explained that the team would be deciding when the DAG would meet again this fall and would be in touch. The meeting was adjourned.