



BALLARD-INTERBAY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Responses to Questions

October 12, 2020

Question: Why doesn't this study provide a decision about which bridge alternative should proceed?

SDOT Response:

The Ballard Interbay Regional Transportation System (BIRT) study was not intended to select a preferred alternative per the legislative directive. Instead, BIRT advances our understanding of the alternatives, evaluates potential tradeoffs between them, and develops projects to keep people and goods moving, regardless of future decisions on a preferred alternative. The report identifies key improvements by mode and by corridor to complement bridge replacement packages or to advance with separate funding.

It is important to note that COVID-19 and the emergency closure of the West Seattle High Bridge impacted the City's ability to complete two important complementary efforts: The Mayor's Maritime & Industrial Strategy, and the Ballard Bridge Planning Study. The environmental process for both the Ballard and Magnolia bridges also needs to be advanced prior to selecting a preferred alternative. This includes formal consultation with agencies and tribes, and formal documentation of an environmental record of decision.

Question: Why were these four scenarios selected for study?

SDOT Response:

The BIRT study evaluated four transportation and land use scenarios for the year 2042. All four scenarios considered regional growth through 2042 and the mobility benefits of long-term investments such as Sound Transit's Ballard Link Extension and implementation of SDOT's modal plans. The alternatives varied in their assumptions for the replacement alternatives selected for the Magnolia and Ballard bridges, as well as land uses permitted in the City's industrial zones.

Scenarios 1 and 2 are consistent with Comprehensive Plan land use projections, and test differences in the Magnolia and Ballard Bridge configurations. Scenarios 3 and 4 envision higher zoning or land use intensity in portions of the City's industrial zones, including redevelopment of the Armory site, keeping a consistent configuration for both bridges, but changing the housing, employment, and land use assumptions examined by the Department of Commerce and the Mayor's Maritime & Industrial Strategy.

Magnolia and Ballard bridge alternatives are born out of the recent bridge studies completed in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

Question: How has the BIRT study taken into account the previous work completed with the 2007 Type, Size, & Location study and the 2015 Magnolia Bridge Environmental Assessment?

SDOT Response:

The BIRT study conducted a thorough plan and document review of all studies completed in the study area between 2010 and 2020, including the [2015 Magnolia Bridge Replacement Environmental Assessment \(EA\)](#) conducted by the City of Seattle in accordance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Since a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was not issued and NEPA documents typically are valid for up to 3 years, the document is expired and calls for a re-evaluation.

The EA referenced the [2007 Magnolia Bridge Type, Size & Location Study](#). However, the seismic standards, bridge design standards, and costs have changed since 2007 and would require an update of the report. A complete list of the plans included in the review are described in Appendix B: Plan Review and Appendix D: Multimodal Needs Assessment.