



## Summer 2003 Update

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**Public and Agency Scoping Results.** As part of developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is required to open a public comment period and hold public and agency scoping meetings to help identify relevant issues to study. Both meetings were held on May 22, 2003. During public and agency scoping, two new alternatives were suggested that will be further refined and evaluated to determine if they merit being included in the EIS. Both are described in more detail below.

**Dravus Street Improvements.** One new suggestion modifies Alternative H. It recommends that instead of spending money building a new bridge structure along Wheeler Street and Armory Way, the funds be used to improve the existing Dravus Street overpass to handle additional traffic. The design team is completing traffic modeling to determine how this alternative would impact traffic levels on Dravus and the southern portion of Alternative H. Based on results of the traffic modeling, SDOT will decide what kinds of improvements would be needed along Dravus to handle additional traffic.

**Surface Alternative through Port Property.** The Port of Seattle also asked the design team to analyze a modified version of Alternative C (one of nine original alignments that was eliminated in early 2003). The Port requested that SDOT include in the EIS a viable surface (non-bridge) alternative that crosses Port property. After meeting with Port staff on June 19<sup>th</sup> to clarify their request, the design team determined that slopes and engineering requirements would limit the amount of available surface road between Magnolia bluff and the railroad tracks. SDOT reported these findings to Port staff for review and comments, which are due by July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Next Steps.** After the two above concepts have been clearly defined, each will be evaluated against the same screening criteria used to evaluate the original Alternatives A through I. Based upon that evaluation, SDOT will decide whether to include either in the EIS. SDOT will make this evaluation available for public review and comment as soon as it is complete. While this added project work has caused some delay, it is necessary because

SDOT has a responsibility to investigate and evaluate all reasonable alternatives against the project criteria.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the design team made a presentation to the Signatory Agency Committee (SAC), which is a State and Federal interagency committee that includes representatives from, for example, the Washington Department of Transportation, U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and others. The SAC reviews and approves a project's EIS at several steps in the process. The purpose of the committee is to ensure coordination between member agencies when a project needs construction permits from several of the SAC participants. SAC concluded that the Magnolia Bridge Project did not need to go through this process. Only Alternate A would require a permit from the Corps of Engineers (and only if it were selected as the preferred alternative). The other alternatives would not need a permit from any of the member agencies. Avoiding the SAC process will save time by eliminating several SAC review/approval activities from the project schedule.

The Consultant Team and the City have finalized the scope of work for the EIS and are now in the process of negotiating the fee for this supplement to their contract. These negotiations are expected to be concluded in the next few weeks.

**For More Information:** If you have any questions please call Kirk Jones at 615-0862, or Teresa Platt at 684-3507. You can also visit the project website at [www.seattle.gov/td/magreplace.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/td/magreplace.asp) for periodic updates.