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Summary notes from:

**A Joint Meeting of the
Detroit River International Crossing
Community Consultation Group
and
*Local Advisory Council***

Meeting Date/Location:

September 28th, 2005/Detroit River Boat Cruise

Facilitator: Glenn Pothier, President, GLPi

Meeting Purpose

This was the first joint meeting of the U.S.-based Local Advisory Council (LAC) and their Canadian counterparts, the Community Consultation Group (CCG). The key objective for this event — which was organized in response to requests from CCG/LAC members — was to allow for informal, unstructured dialogue between and among those from these groups. Essentially, it was an opportunity for CCG and LAC members to collectively explore and get a better sense of the issues, challenges and opportunities related to a new or expanded crossing on both sides of the River. As a bi-national project, it is vital that different perspectives be shared and understood.

In addition, the event was designed to:

- Make manifest and more tangible the various potential crossing alternatives and their implications for plazas and connecting routes — to provide a real ‘from the river’ view of what many have only seen as lines on maps, in aerial or other photographs, and in video or various simulations.
- Provide an opportunity for information exchange between Border Transportation Partnership project team representatives and CCG/LAC members — including comments and questions about issues of members’ choosing.
- Serve somewhat as an engaging social event that would allow for enjoyment as well as work — a just reward for the diligence and contributions of both CCG and LAC members to date.

Meeting Description

Introduction and Event Overview

- Glenn Pothier, the independent meeting facilitator, called the group to order, welcomed all participants, thanked them for their attendance and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.
- Beginning with elected officials, event participants introduced themselves.
- Glenn reiterated the importance of participants taking the opportunity to share perspectives with one another — in particular, information exchange between CCG and LAC members. Participants were encouraged to initiate dialogue and discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses associated with the potential crossing locations and/or plazas and routes associated with them.
- Participants were provided with a 29-page coloured handout showing the potential crossing alignments and associated plaza locations (this served as a reference guide during the River tour).

Boat Tour and Related Commentary

- Participants were invited to move freely within the boat and between decks during the tour.
- Len Kozachuk (Deputy Project Manager, URS Canada) pointed-out and provided insightful commentary about potential crossing/plaza sites along the Canadian side of the River (and other things of interest) — essentially covering the first portion of the tour from the dock on the U.S. side near the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel to sites along the Central and Southern portions of the River.
- Bruce Campbell and Mark Butler from the Corradino Team shared responsibilities for pointing-out and providing commentary about potential crossing/plaza sites along the American side of the River (and other things of interest) — essentially covering the next portion of the tour from the Southern and Central portions of the River back to the dock.
- Given delays in securing timely bridge passage during the Southern portion of the trip and encroaching darkness, a decision was made to forego sailing to Belle Isle to review the crossing/plaza alternatives in that area.
- During the trip, some participant questions were directed to and answered by those providing tour commentary.
- Project team members circulated throughout the boat and were accessible during the length of the trip to hear comments, answer questions and so forth — on both a one-on-one and small group basis. Many event participants availed themselves of this opportunity to exchange information.
- A number of event participants said they appreciated the opportunity to share bi-national perspectives and to liaise with members of their counterpart group. Moreover, they noted the value of viewing the potential crossing/plaza sites ‘up close and personal.’

Closing Remarks

- As the boat came in to dock, Glenn Pothier thanked:
 - Those who provided tour commentary for having done so.
 - Joe Corradino and his team for taking the lead role in organizing the boat tour and for providing food for the event.

- The group as a whole for their attendance and participation.
- Glenn encouraged members of both the CCG and LAC to note some of their key observations from the tour and the ensuing discussion, and to share those with colleagues at the next CCG or LAC meeting. Glenn also noted that project team members would be available dockside for further discussion.
- Reflecting on what was heard while circulating throughout the group and listening to various discussions, Glenn noted three ‘high-level’ observations (that are more confirmation than revelation):
 - The first is the inherent complexity in choosing a new Detroit River crossing — there are many factors to consider and yet an urgency to move forward.
 - Second is the importance of the effort being a joint, cooperative, bi-national approach.
 - Third is the importance of ongoing dialogue, information-sharing and a willingness to contribute constructively to the process.
- The joint CCG-LAC meeting/boat tour event ran from approximately 3:30 to 7:15 P.M.).