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Meeting notes from:

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**The Ninth Meeting of the  
Detroit River International Crossing  
*Community Consultation Group***

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Meeting Date/Location:

April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006/Holiday Inn Select — Windsor, Ontario

Facilitator: Glenn Pothier, President, GLPi

## **Meeting Purpose**

This ninth meeting of the Community Consultation Group (CCG) was focused on providing members with a progress update re: comments regarding routes/access roads and associated project team refinements — and inviting member input with a view to helping further shape the alternatives.

In addition, the meeting was designed to:

- Provide an overview of key themes and issues emerging from the third set of Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs)
- Surface ideas on how the project team can best continue to move forward and effectively engage the community in the ongoing planning process
- Provide information on the different types of tunnels and their technical feasibility
- Update members on the status of both the Canadian and U.S. initiatives
- Provide an overview of next steps in the project, including the meetings schedule
- Allow for public/CCG member comments and questions about issues of their choosing

## **Summary of Meeting Highlights**

### ***Opening Remarks***

- Glenn Pothier, the independent meeting facilitator, called the group to order, welcomed all participants, introduced project team members and elected officials, and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

### ***Review of March 22/06 CCG/LAC Meeting Summary***

- Glenn Pothier noted that the summary of the combined CCG/LAC meeting had been previously distributed to all CCG members. He then asked for feedback regarding any substantive errors or omissions. A spelling mistake was brought to the group's attention: under the 'public comment' section on page three of the summary (re: the first comment/question), the word 'birder' should be changed to read 'border.' No additional errors/omissions or concerns were identified concerning the meeting summary format or substance.

### ***Public Comment***

- Glenn Pothier reminded the group that in the interest of openness, transparency and accountability, any member of the public can attend a CCG meeting as an observer. He then asked if any comments/questions were forthcoming from observers at this time. None were raised.

### ***Public Input from PIOH #3: Key Themes/Issues***

- Len Kozachuk (Deputy Project Manager, URS Canada) provided an overview presentation of PIOH #3-related activities and emerging key themes/issues:
  - Notification regarding the PIOHs and subsequent workshops included 7,000 mail-outs to people's homes within the area of continued analysis and media advertising
  - In total, over 800 people attended the Open Houses
  - Over 200 written comments have been received — the Project Team is working to respond to these as quickly as possible
  - Comments received about the crossing, plaza and access road alternatives suggest key themes/issues concerning: impact on properties (social, physical and economic), impacts on schools, air and noise pollution, the feasibility/potential benefits of tunneling, the impact of construction, the impact on community character and neighborhood dynamics, and potential issues regarding emergency services access/response times
  
- Following the presentation described above, CCG members offered a number of questions/comments:

*Question:* If electrostatic precipitators are not factored into the Project Team's analysis, there will not be a fair assessment of the tunneling option — will electrostatic precipitators be used?

*Answer:* Electrostatic precipitators are considered a mitigation measure. The Project Team will have to determine the need for mitigation before assessing the options available. We are reluctant to commit to a particular technology at this time given that more assessment is needed and there may be more effective technologies available than electrostatic precipitators.

*Question:* If a tunnel is used, how many structures will be needed to collect and scrub traffic exhaust and where would they be placed?

*Answer:* The Project Team has no answer to that yet, but these questions will be looked at in the coming months.

*Question:* If the tunneling option is recommended, will air quality mitigation receive less consideration?

*Answer:* Air quality is a key consideration within the EA process. If mitigation is required to reduce air quality impacts, there will be recommendations to this effect and measures will be built into the design of the facility as required.

*Question:* The Business Association has a concern that was not mentioned in the presentation — is there a better option to address the needs of businesses if the U.S. traffic is not allowed to stop on route to and from Windsor?

*Answer:* We presented only the top seven or so areas of concern as identified through public comments from the recent PIOHs. Other topics were also noted, but not mentioned tonight. There is an objective to keep the international traffic in the corridor during construction and develop construction staging that considers impacts to local businesses. The Project Team will continue to work with business owners and incorporate their input into the analysis and decision-making process.

*Question:* At the Mt. Carmel School meeting (April 18, 2006), concern was expressed that residents have not been adequately contacted — what steps will be taken for future notification?

*Answer:* The Project Team will continue to hand deliver and mail-out notices to inform the community of the project and meetings. The project team is considering comments received from the public to improve the notification process. The Project Team also looks to the CCG to help reach out to the community.

*Comment:* The Project Team should be careful when portraying tunneling as such a widely supported option — it may not enjoy as much support if it ends up that the air exhausted from the tunnel may not be well cleaned and will be a source of pollution in the community.

*Answer:* The Project Team is simply acknowledging that there has been strong public support stated for a tunnel. The comment about potential changes in opinion based on specific tunnel design and air ventilation/cleaning is noted.

*Comment:* The community needs to better understand the relationship between air quality and tunneling.

*Response:* The Project Team will assess the relationship between air quality and various options, including tunneling. This analysis will be presented to the public, including any necessary air quality mitigation measures that are identified.

*Question:* The Project Team is determined to turn Huron Church Road/Highway 3 into a superhighway — is there a possibility that you will change your mind, that there is potentially another location for the route?

*Answer:* As part of this comprehensive EA process, the Project Team carried out an assessment of a broad set of alternatives. This led to identifying the current area of continued analysis and corresponding generation of practical alternatives within it. We are not looking outside of this area. Ultimately, all recommendations need to be approved by various agencies including the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The practical alternatives identified represent the best balance between impacts and transportation needs. We fully recognize that

the practical alternatives are not benign — there will be impacts and the Project Team is working to reduce them.

*Question:* There is a lot of opposition to placing the new highway on Huron Church Road, but there is no sign that the Project Team is listening. People feel that they're being dictated to — why can't you extend the 401 into Amherstburg?

*Answer:* We are listening to the public's comments and questions, but we ask that others listen to us. The Project Team undertook a thorough and systematic analysis of a range of options including crossings in the Amherstburg area — resulting in the identification of the area of continued analysis. We understand that this is not universally supported. The alternatives suggested to date by others have been tested and found to be less preferable — based on the analysis of the full range of assessment criteria — than the recommendations of the Project Team. Having said that, the Project Team continues to listen to concerns and will address these to the degree possible in the design of the practical alternatives.

*Comment:* The federal government will not support tunneling due to the costs involved.

*Response:* No decisions have been made on the practical alternatives. Cost is one of the many factors that will be assessed and considered.

*Question:* The federal government will not spend more money than they have to — this will mean no tunnel. However, if there is a tunnel, will hazardous wastes be restricted from the route as is the case with the existing border crossing?

*Answer:* No decision has been made. The Project Team is providing for the transport of hazardous goods in the design of the plaza and crossing, as these are public roadways.

*Comment:* The Project Team needs to separate cars from trucks and ensure access to local businesses. You don't need a six-lane highway; you only need four lanes for trucks and two service roads for cars.

*Response:* For the DRIC study, the access roads will be assessed as being used by both commercial and passenger traffic. Service roads will be a part of the access road system to separate local and international traffic.

- Following the questions and comments precipitated by Len Kozachuk's presentation, the facilitator raised the issue of ongoing public engagement in the planning process. More specifically, he noted that:
  - The most recent round of PIOHs and subsequent workshops suggest that some people have widely varying levels of knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the DRIC project. Some say they had never heard of the initiative and/or that they

- disagree with the potential plaza, crossing and route locations (some would prefer to revisit all of the original illustrative alternatives in the hope of a different outcome). Others, who have been monitoring or keeping engaged in the process, understand that there is an area of continued analysis, a rationale for it and options within it (and, though it may not have been their preferred approach, they continue to offer constructive comments with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes).
- With this as a backdrop, the Canadian Project Team is moving forward on the basis of finding the best options within the area of continued analysis. Moreover, the American Project Team is working under the same assumptions and is moving ahead with context sensitive design workshops in which they are exploring plaza approaches and details.
- The facilitator then asked the group for their ideas on how the DRIC team can both move forward with the project and effectively engage the community in the ongoing planning process.
  - Though some participants suggested that the DRIC project return to ‘square one’ and re-open the illustrative alternatives debate, there appeared to be significant support for moving ahead with the current process, but making provision for better involving the community. Various participant-generated comments and ideas are described below:
    - Analysis of all illustrative alternatives should be made and presented to the community in a clear and concise form, including all impacts — economic, social, environmental, etc. Let the data answer the questions. There has to be an easier way to show the results to the public. Make it more real for people.
    - Hold a community recap meeting to discuss issues using simple English and plain language. More detailed analysis of impacts should be undertaken for the illustrative alternatives to better support the current set of practical alternatives.
    - Better present the specific reasons that support moving forward with the current set of practical alternatives. Why were some options disregarded and not others? An explanation needs to be provided to the community.
    - One of the problems is that it appears that the evaluation was not ‘apples to apples’ — for example, was tunneling evaluated for all other corridors or only within the area of continued analysis? Tunnels and the separation of commercial and passenger vehicles should have been assessed at the illustrative alternative stage.
    - The Project Team should consider televising CCG meetings and other project events (on cable) so the community can be better informed.
    - A mistake was made by not first deciding where the bridge should be sited on the Canadian side, prior to generating the access road alternatives. The Project Team needs to show that the option being studied is, in fact, the one with the lesser impact.
    - Using the existing air monitoring stations to determine background pollutant concentrations will not accurately reflect the situation along the Huron Church

- Road/Highway 3 corridor. The Project Team needs to show pictures of air pollution dispersion and impacts.
- The purpose of the Project is to take trucks off city streets [Note: the facilitator and Project Team members reminded the group that the project has many objectives]
  - Windsor has an advantage in attracting U.S. traffic. There is a need to isolate trucks and minimize business impact by allowing U.S. auto traffic access to local businesses.
  - DRIC's recommendation will be held in high regard and I feel the Federal Government will approve it, but the quality of life of Windsor residents and the importance of Windsor businesses need to be acknowledged in the study.
  - The study and consultation program needs to move forward. The Project Team should be cautioned against spending too much time recapping the project or backtracking. We need to accept and move on. You should make use of key community individuals/intermediaries to distribute notices. The Project Team needs to supply these individuals with notices for distribution within neighborhoods. MDOT does this in the U.S.
  - The Project Team should contact parent groups/school councils to assist in the notification process.
  - The Oakwood Community has been distributing information on the project and has met with the Project Team. School councils have asked to be included in an advisory group.
  - The Project Team should consider more media coverage — everything from paid ads, to improved coverage in both broadcast (particularly cable) and print mediums.
  - Communities need to be more involved in notification and communication efforts. Community volunteer efforts in the U.S. resulted in large meeting turnouts and high process engagement.

### ***Routes & Access Roads***

- Murray Thompson (Project Manager, URS Canada) provided an overview presentation regarding tunnel construction alternatives:
  - There are two techniques being examined for tunnel construction: 'bored' and 'cut-and-cover'
  - The bored tunneling method is not preferred given existing soil conditions, available technologies and MTO geometrical design guidelines — boring would be very complex due to limited vertical space between the surface and bedrock and the need for highly advanced and larger TBMs (tunnel boring machines)
  - The cut-and-cover method allows the highway to follow geometric design guidelines within the soft soil layer — this technique can also be challenging, but seems more feasible for construction and addressing ground water issues
  - Tunneling will require mechanical ventilation that will be housed in large buildings (likely between 1 to 3 buildings will be required) — ventilation

- specialists will assess the alternatives to determine the exact number of buildings that would be needed
- Short sections of tunnels can be considered to incorporate road and pedestrian crossings on the surface to reduce impacts to community connectivity [a number of images depicting tunnels and associated landscaping/surface crossings were shown]
- Following the presentation described above, CCG members offered a number of questions/comments:

*Question:* How reliable is the geotechnical information on which the bored tunnel assessment is based?

*Answer:* The geotechnical specialists have access to a large database of soil information for Windsor. The bored tunnel assessment was based on this information. The Project Team will carry out more detailed analysis in the next stages.

*Comment:* The size of the tunnel boring machine shouldn't be an issue — the machine can be custom made for this project.

*Response:* TBMs are generally designed on a project-by-project basis. The maximum available to date is approximately 14m diameter. At this size, the tunnel would still be challenging to construct and would not provide necessary lane and shoulder widths in the tunnel.

*Question:* I need assistance visualizing the machine and the size of the tunnel — is there something to compare it to?

*Answer:* We can provide the diameter of the existing Detroit-Windsor tunnel [Post-meeting note: the Detroit-Windsor tunnel inside dimensions are 4m in height and 6.7m in width – note this is a two-lane tunnel]

*Question:* Can the ventilation buildings described in the presentation be made smaller when actually built?

*Answer:* Nothing is finalized at this point. The specialists will have to do their assessments and determine the appropriate sizing. These buildings will require certain minimum heights for the exhaust stacks.

*Question:* The Chinese Government has developed a slurry TBM with a diameter of 14.5 m to accommodate six lanes (three in each tunnel) underneath a river in soil conditions almost identical to those here in Windsor. Can a feasibility analysis be undertaken for such a method here in Windsor so that a more detailed comparison can be made — and will you hire international experts to conduct it?



*Answer:* The Project Team will review the information provided on the slurry TBM. The tunneling specialists on the DRIC Project Team have experience worldwide — we will continue to use them. Again, based on the local needs/conditions and our analysis, the TBM alternative is not considered practical at this stage.

*Question:* Is the tunnel section a maximum of only 6 km — will it not go right to the River?

*Answer:* Tunneling is proposed on the section from Howard Avenue to E.C. Row Expressway, which is approximately 6 km.

*Question:* Are there studies on air quality for the existing Detroit-Windsor tunnel ventilation buildings?

*Answer:* The Project Team is not aware of such studies.

*Question:* Can the large ventilation buildings be sunk into the ground?

*Answer:* The Project Team will look into that, but given the venting requirements, there may be minimum height requirements.

- The facilitator then noted that the next agenda component is focused on getting member views about some selected route and access road-related issues. He also noted that route/access road options were shown to the public at the March 28/30 PIOHs and that the Project Team received public feedback on them. In response to this feedback, the Project Team has developed some potential refinements and improvements they would like to run by CCG members to get their response.
- Murray Thompson then presented possible changes to the proposed practical route alternatives to help facilitate community and neighborhood access/mobility. These refinements are in response to concerns that a new access road creates a barrier through the community. Images from alternatives and photos of large bridge sections over depressed freeway I-696 were displayed. Possible refinements presented included:
  - Pedestrian bridges could be incorporated in alternatives with single or two-way service roads to maintain connectivity between communities.
  - In cases of depressed sections/alternatives, the pedestrian bridges can be made wider.
  - Possible locations for pedestrian bridges include Spring Garden/Huron Estates/Bellewood, Lambton Road, Grand Marais, Todd/Cabana, Reddock/Pullford, and Montgomery.
  - Other functional ideas include realignment of Huron Church Line to connect straight into service roads instead of sweeping south and around to Todd Lane.

- Following the presentation described above, CCG members offered a number of questions/comments:

*Question:* I-696 is not comparable to Huron Church Road/Highway 3 — how wide is the alternative where the access road is located?

*Answer:* 80-100 m wide.

*Question:* What does the potential change to Huron Church Line do?

*Answer:* It will provide for a more direct connection into service roads. The original proposal was developed to accommodate a larger interchange at Todd Lane.

*Question/Comment:* In terms of access to St. Clair College – is it possible, for safety or other reasons, to close the existing access point and provide access via Cousineau? I have concerns on the rerouting of traffic if the frontal access is taken from northbound traffic. Northbound traffic currently uses Glenwood.

*Answer:* Options at St. Clair College are grade separated to keep through traffic apart from local traffic. The Project team is confident that traffic operation at the entrance to the College will be safer than it is now. There is no intention to close this access. The Project Team has a commitment to the ongoing viability of this main access to the college.

*Comment:* Ball diamonds and soccer fields at St. Clair College are not only used by college students, but also by local residents including young children. Taking of property in this area should be avoided.

*Response:* The concerns are noted. Avoiding impacts to recreational fields on the north side of Highway 3 will increase impacts to residents and businesses (Windsor Crossing) on the south side. The team is considering both options at this location.

*Question:* What are the options for noise barriers?

*Answer:* Similar to air quality, noise impact assessments will be undertaken for the alternatives following the MTO's requirements. Barriers will be designed to reduce impacts.

*Question:* If required, would a berm be used as or with another barrier? What types of barriers would be used?

*Answer:* Either berms or sound barrier walls can be used, or both together. One objective is to minimize physical impacts — berms require larger physical

footprints than barrier walls. If surplus property is obtained for construction, there may be an opportunity to integrate berms, landscaping and grading.

*Comment:* In the area towards Howard Avenue — if there is not enough property available for berms — the Project Team will have to provide an aesthetic barrier sound wall.

*Response:* [Comment noted.]

*Comment:* There is a risk of an ‘urban canyon’ effect at St. Clair College with a depressed roadway design — all the pollution will drop-down into a depressed area next to where children play.

*Answer:* [Comment noted.]

*Question:* Remember that there is lower income housing and a higher concentration of people in that area (south side of Highway 3 at Sandwich West Parkway).

*Answer:* [Comment noted.]

*Comment:* Marshy conditions exist to the south of Highway 3 across from St. Clair College and may be problematic for construction.

*Response:* I’ve noted the comment — the Team is confident that roads can be built in such difficult locations.

*Question:* What are the impacts of putting a highway through a developed neighborhood? Are there similar cases to examine? What is the cost analysis?

*Answer:* The Project Team is looking at these impacts and doing the cost analysis as part of this environmental assessment. Every situation is unique.

*Question:* What can this neighborhood expect? Is there another example we can look to?

*Answer:* Again, every situation is unique. There will be impacts and the information is being assembled for presentation to the public.

*Question:* You have good ideas about how to minimize the mess, but it’s still a mess. Can’t we find a better way to get around the community? It doesn’t make sense.

*Answer:* As discussed at the beginning of the meeting, the Team looked at alternative locations and options. We believe that the area of continued analysis best balances transportation mobility needs and community impacts. We understand that some people disagree or take issue with this.

*Question:* Yes or no...if it is deemed that the tunnel option is best in terms of minimizing noise and air pollution, will it be rejected based on cost?

*Answer:* Cost is part of the discussion and will be considered during the evaluation before any recommendation is made.

*Question:* Related to the issue of the cost of a tunnel...a meeting is scheduled for June 1 in this room regarding potential economic damages and future savings. There will be a guest speaker and all are invited.

*Answer:* [Comment noted.]

*Question:* Even if one cost is higher than another, I urge you to go for the more expensive option if it is the better one.

*Answer:* [Comment noted.]

### ***Open Forum/Public Comment***

- Glenn Pothier asked whether CCG members or the Project Team had any further business to add to the meeting agenda. No items were identified.
- Glenn then asked if any comments/questions were forthcoming from observers at this time:

*Question:* Why is Huron Church Road/Highway 3 the best route? Why does it stand out as most preferable?

*Answer:* There is a detailed answer to this question contained in the project documentation — which we've reviewed previously with the CCG and others. The Project Team looked at a number of options and compared them in a systematic way. Huron Church Road/Highway 3 represents the best balance of meeting transportation and mobility needs and minimizing community impacts. There will be impacts with any of the alternatives. We believe we've identified the best alternative — again, the reasons for this are in the detailed supporting documentation. This report is available to the public and I urge people to read it.

*Question:* Can you give me four specific reasons why you did not select the Highway 3 bypass option? I want specifics versus general comments.

*Answer:* The bypass had higher impacts on existing and planned land uses, resulting in an overall higher impact to the community. The bypass had higher costs and was longer than the Highway 3 option. The bypass has similar impacts re: existing resident displacement, natural features and constructability. The disadvantages of the bypass option were considered to outweigh the advantages.

*Comment:* Impacts on future LaSalle homes were given higher weighting than existing homes along the proposed route.

*Response:* In assessing *displacements*, only existing homes were considered. In assessing *disruption*, the Project Team considered existing residences as well as those planned for construction within 5 years, when construction of the new access roads is likely to begin. Both existing and future neighborhoods were considered in the assessment to provide an understanding of community impact.

*Comment:* I don't accept the statement from the Ministry — made at a previous meeting — that 50% of border traffic stops in Windsor as justification for other alternatives being eliminated. We need more discussion on the real reason. Truckers will use the quickest way, which isn't always the shortest.

*Response:* We have discussed this in a previous presentation. We examined the projected travel demand on the end-to-end system, as well as impacts to the Canadian and U.S. sides of the river in determining which alternatives should be carried forward for further analysis.

### ***Update on U.S. Project Status***

- Len Kozachuk provided a brief update on the status of the DRIC project on the American side of the River. More specifically, he noted that:
  - The U.S. Project Team is holding a series of community meetings and workshops
  - These meeting/workshops include community planning issues and the context sensitive measures that could be applied to the alternatives
  - A tour of the bridges in Toledo and Port Huron-Sarnia is planned for June 8th — anyone interested in participating is asked to contact the Project Team at [info@partnershipborderstudy.com](mailto:info@partnershipborderstudy.com) or 519-969-9696.

### ***Next Steps***

- Len Kozachuk provided a brief overview of the project's next steps:
  - First, he noted that the Project Team acknowledges that some members of the community are just beginning to become involved in the project and that there are widely varying levels of knowledge about the initiative
  - The Project Team is developing a consultation plan to address the needs of and better engage the community
  - The Project Team will be seeking input from the public on the look of the bridge, plaza and access routes — it is important for residents (particularly those within the area of continued analysis) to come to these meetings
  - The May/June meeting schedule should be finalized shortly
  - The next CCG meeting will likely be in the 3rd or 4th week of June

- There is a tour tentatively schedule for late May/early June and will focus on access road designs (separate from the U.S. Team bridge site tour)
- The update on the U.S. project status and overview of next steps prompted a few additional participant questions:

*Question:* When is Canada starting their on-site drilling for geological information?

*Answer:* We are to begin in June/July. We are currently in the procurement stage.

*Question:* Would there be pounding involved with building a tunnel?

*Answer:* The tunnel structures and retaining walls will need to be sound. This may require the driving of piles into bedrock. Constructability is being addressed and any such noise and vibration impacts will be included in the analysis.

### ***Closing Remarks***

- Glenn Pothier thanked the group for their attendance and participation.
- The meeting was formally adjourned (having run from approximately 6:35 to 9:30 p.m.).

**Attendance (names listed in order as recorded on the participant sign-in sheet)**

***CCG Members and Public Observers:***

Helen Moore  
Ed Arditti, Ojibway Now!  
Kevin O'Brien, SLOOF  
Dennis Boismier  
Mary Stiers  
Larry Stiers  
Ray Bezaire  
Ed Oleksiuk  
Jean Sinclair Laforet  
James White  
Elizabeth Havelock  
Bob Thibert  
June Thibert  
Cornelia Huschilt  
John Huschilt  
Leona Fracas  
Jim Martin  
Ann Hetherington  
Dave Hetherington  
N. Kouvalis  
Anna Lynn Meloche  
Jaye Lacerte  
Alan McKinnon, CPOW  
Ruth Rotulo  
Carlo Rotulo  
Les Chaif  
Robert J. Benson  
David Baker  
Ingrid Rose  
Don Patterson  
Mike Duchene  
Bill Marshall  
Josie Iannetta  
Al Teshuba  
Alice DiCaro  
Denise Ausman  
Paul Ausman  
Pierre Quenneville  
Wayne Lessard  
Moe Haas  
Paul Morneau  
Liz Morneau  
Mary Ann Cuderman  
Terrence Kennedy  
Pat Morneau

***Partnership:***

Roger Ward, Joel Foster, Kevin DeVos — MTO; Mohammed Alghurabi — MDOT

***Consultant Team:***

Murray Thompson, Len Kozachuk, Colin Wong, Sandra Hantziagelis — URS; Audrey Steele — LGL Limited; Abby Selb, Gwen Brice — SENES Consulting