

Context Sensitive Solutions

A key component of the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Environmental Assessment is the incorporation of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to transportation planning that considers the entire context within which a transportation improvement project will exist. CSS is an opportunity for the public and key stakeholders to provide input on the look and feel of the new access road, inspection plaza and bridge. The purpose in using CSS in this study is to seek a design for the access road, inspection plaza and river crossing seeks that preserves the scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources of the community, while maintaining safety and mobility.

How the Analysis was Done

As part of the development of CSS ideas and options, the DRIC study team consulted the *Huron Church Road Urban Design Master Plan & Development Guidelines Report* (February 2006) produced for the City of Windsor, which outlines various options to develop high quality urban design elements along the roadway, taking into consideration the existing traffic issues for vehicles, pedestrians and nearby residents. The *Huron Church Road Master Plan* includes a design vision and framework for the coordination of the visual, functional, and operational dimensions of Huron Church Road, including lighting, planting, walkways, signage, public art, furniture, and property development. Elements of the Master Plan have been incorporated into the CSS work that has been completed to date. For example, design elements have been incorporated into the examples of aesthetic treatments to noise walls throughout the corridor.

Members of the public have had the opportunity to provide input to possible concepts and themes for the look and fit of the new access road, plaza and crossing alternatives at six different workshops held over the course of 2006. The major outcomes of each workshop are listed below. Participants:

- Helped define the preferred inspection plaza location
- Provided input into the aesthetic look of the new freeway
- Provided input regarding refining the design of the access road alternatives
- Gave their opinion towards the potential type and look of the new crossing, aesthetic treatment options in and around the plazas, and the landscape treatment options along the access road alternatives
- Were shown examples of potential landscape treatments as they relate to three focus areas of the access roads, and landscape treatments for the plazas
- Indicated which preliminary theme they preferred the most (Carolinian, Rose City, and Motor City initial concepts)
- Used computer workstations and hands on drawings to produce drawings for the physical preferences of a new crossing
- Produced depictions of the potential bridge crossing type, lighting treatment options, crossing theme (friendship and history), and colour preference of the bridge crossing.

Findings to Date

Many of the workshop participants indicated that they were pleased to see examples of what the potential landscape treatments could look like at different locations throughout the corridor. The outcome of the access road alternative Context Sensitive Solutions workshops indicated that the public favoured the

Carolinian landscape treatment over the Rose City and Motor City treatments. The outcome of the bridge crossing Context Sensitive Solutions workshops indicated that the public favoured the suspension bridge style with a historic theme and the cable-stayed bridge with a friendship theme. Preferences were almost split regarding the suspension and cable-stayed bridges as future bridge types.

Remaining Activities

The DRIC study team will continue to consult with the public regarding the Context Sensitive Solutions proposed for the access road, plaza and crossing alternatives. Context Sensitive Solutions workshops are being planned for August 2007. The input and feedback received at all the workshops will be incorporated into the design of the technically and environmentally preferred alternative.