

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Joint U.S. Local Advisory Council/Canadian Community Consultation Group/
U.S. Local Agency Group
November 29, 2006
Southwestern High School

Purpose: To review the progress of the Detroit River International Crossing Study and, particularly, the information on preliminary impact assessments data for both the U.S. and Canada evaluations.

Attendees: See attached

Discussion

Mohammed Alghurabi began the meeting by asking everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. Following introductions, he recognized those key political representatives in attendance, and then he indicated that the meeting was to be conducted so that observers to the meeting could comment at the beginning and the end. The U.S. Local Advisory Council/Canadian Community Consultation Group/U.S. Local Agency Group members would conduct their business in the core of the agenda.

Agenda Review

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any comments or revisions to the agenda. There were none. Then, he indicated that he would break the meeting after the formal presentation so those in attendance could review the graphics and ask questions. He stressed that the materials on display and the presentation were subject to modification based upon input from those in attendance. He also noted the number on the alternatives did not reflect any preference.

Public Comments

C: *The newspaper USA Today ran an article in 1996 pertaining the Conrail merger with CSX and the issues with the intermodal terminal at the Livernois-Junction Yard area. Does the outcome of this border crossing study hinge on the outcome of that “mega-terminal” project? Is this all part of a bigger plan? I am a certified container inspector and I have some interest in this matter.*

R: The project of which you are speaking is known as the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project. That, and the Detroit River International Crossing project, are not dependent upon each other.

C: *The study that you are talking about indicated that there would be upwards of 10,000 trucks per day going into this mega-terminal. Where would that volume come from, considering that our business*

handles 450 trucks a day and we consider that a lot. Where would the intermodal trucks come from if there were no new bridge to funnel them into the mega-terminal?

R: The number of trucks in excess of 10,000 per day was a preliminary figure that has been revised downward to approximately 4,000 to 5,000 trucks per day in the year 2025, not today, if three or four of the intermodal railroads consolidate at the Livernois-Junction Yard. That volume of traffic is not dependent on a new border crossing. Again, the two projects – the Detroit River International Crossing and the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal – are not dependent on each other.

C: *Senator Basham commented that the issue of a new potential border crossing was brought to his attention years ago by the Mayor of Wyandotte when he first entered office. The studies, since then and to date, are based on sound science. In order to meet the criteria of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process, that work has been based on sound science and not politics. I would hope that process would continue. Is that correct?*

R: Mohammed Alghurabi indicated “yes.”

October 26th CCG Meeting Notes

Both the LAC/LAG and CCG members were asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from each group’s last meeting. There were no comments.

Preliminary Impact Data – U.S.

Joe Corradino noted that the information packet provided to each attendee at the meeting included a copy of the presentation that was beginning. Another part of the handout materials included the graphics posted around the meeting room walls that describe the Practical Alternatives. A separate folder distributed to each attendee had information specific to Canada.

Joe Corradino then used a series of slides showing the Area of Continued Analysis between Zug Island and the foot of the Ambassador Bridge in the U.S. Next, using oblique aerial photographs, he described the notable points of interest in the Delray area: Southwestern High School, Arvin-Meritor, the Produce Terminal, Yellow Trucking, the Mistersky power plant, and major businesses along Fort Street. He also spoke of the residential areas. A drawing of one of the alternatives similar to those posted around the walls was then displayed in a slide and the summary matrix was explained. Joe Corradino pointed-out that impacts on the graphic were shown by section along I-75, both north and south, so that anyone could identify those active businesses and occupied residential units that could be potentially relocated.

Joe Corradino next explained that the noise levels shown on the graphic were of existing conditions. While those levels were high along I-75, noise in the future would be mitigated by walls in those sections where improvements were made to the freeway. He indicated that the carbon monoxide concentration shown on the graphics were those projected for 2035. Those CO concentrations are well below the EPA one-hour standard of 35 parts per million. Joe Corradino noted that there would be qualitative analysis of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ hotspots at a later stage in the study.

In summarizing the information, Joe Corradino emphasized that the impacts, from his point of view, emphasized “people” issues in the U.S., as compared to impacts associated with the natural environment. Fort Wayne is of concern as a *National Register* site. But, it is expected that the effects will be positive there through development of a Welcome Center. He noted that other potential impacts to historic resources appear manageable and are similar in magnitude in the United States and Canada. Parklands are present in the United States. Impacts to either of two parks were also viewed as manageable. The Ojibway Prairie area, which is significant, will likely be impacted on the Canadian side. Some impact appears to be unavoidable as the area is part of each alternative.

Joe Corradino then reviewed the range of traffic in the Crossing X-10 and Crossing X-11 corridors, noting that traffic levels are very much a function of the configuration of plazas and ramps. Further refinements of the plaza and ramp configurations would continue such that, when done, it is expected that Crossing X-10 and Crossing X-11 will carry about the same amount of traffic. He also noted that, at this point in the study, U.S. Customs has not commented specifically on the plaza concept so the final traffic volumes are yet to be determined.

Joe Corradino stressed that there are no apparent fatal flaws with respect to the constructability of the crossing system. Utilities are a major consideration on both sides of the river. In Canada, the location of Sterling Fuels affects constructability.

As far as dwelling units are concerned, i.e., the “people” impacts, many of the alternatives are very similar. But, the impacts are higher on the U.S. side than in Canada. U.S. Alternative 13 is an anomaly as there are only 29 occupied dwelling units likely to be acquired. The reason for this is a ramp exiting the plaza avoids the north side of I-75; however, that alternative does not coincide with the planning efforts of the Delray community. To some degree, where the dwelling unit impacts are lower, the business impacts are higher.

Joe Corradino indicated that, in Canada, noise impacts may be difficult to mitigate. But, in the U.S., noise will be mitigated by use of buffers around the plazas and walls along I-75.

Preliminary Impact Data – Canada

Len Kozachuk began the presentation by indicating that no decisions have been made to date and that the analysis is ongoing. The results being presented are preliminary and subject to refinement and do not reflect mitigation. He then described with graphics the various plazas and crossings that are being considered.

He made the following comments on air quality:

- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are predicted to remain well below provincial standards.
- Total concentrations of NOx are predicted to decrease due to improvements in fuels and engine technologies, even though traffic volumes will increase.
- Modeling results are showing localized increases in PM_{2.5} and NOx in the vicinity of the plaza and crossing alternatives.
 - Plaza A and Crossing C alternatives are in the vicinity of residential areas.

On the issue of neighborhood and community issues, the following were cited:

- The highest residential displacements (70) would be associated with the Plaza A alternatives.
- The highest business/industry impacts (13) would be associated with the Crossing C alternatives. In this area, Sterling Marine Fuels is among those directly impacted.
- The highest noise impacts (180 before mitigation) would be associated with the Crossing C alternatives. This is the result of being in close proximity to Sandwich.
- Closure/realignment of Matchette Road would likely be necessary for the Plaza A alternative; the Study Team is reviewing the impacts of this impact on local and emergency access.

With respect to consistency with land use, it was stated that Plazas B, B-1 and C are more consistent with industrial uses along the riverfront.

- Plaza A is not consistent with residential land use as defined in Windsor's Spring Garden Planning Area.

In terms of protection of cultural features, the following were cited:

- Between five and eight homes (pre-1930) would likely be displaced depending on the plaza and crossing alternative. None of these structures have been identified as either nationally or provincially significant.

- All three crossings disrupt the cultural landscape.

On the natural environment, the following were cited:

- No critical fish habitat impacts are expected, including those by possible pier locations in the Detroit River.
- Plaza A would have the greatest impact to tall grass areas and specimen/colonies of provincially rare plant species.
- Plaza A would likely have the greatest impact to the threatened Butler's garter snake habitat.

On regional mobility, the preliminary results are:

- All alternatives are practical in terms of location and layout, subject to additional geotechnical investigations.
- Plazas and crossings meet all four Partnership transportation and mobility needs.
 - Sufficient long-term capacity.
 - Improved system connectivity.
 - Improved border crossing capabilities.
 - Reasonable and secure option.

Dealing with cost and constructability, the following can be cited:

- Geotechnical investigations are needed to confirm bedrock conditions. They are ongoing and to be completed in early 2007.
- Crossing cost is a function of the span length.
 - The shortest bank-to-bank crossing of 0.7 kilometers (0.4 miles) is Crossing C.
 - The shortest crossing plaza-to-plaza of 2.9 kilometers (1.8 miles) is Crossing B to Plaza B-1.
 - The longest crossing bank-to-bank of 1.1 kilometers (0.7 miles) is Crossing A.
 - The longest crossing plaza-to-plaza of 5.4 kilometers (3.7 miles) is Crossing C to Plaza A.
 - Plaza C would displace the Keith transformer station.

Similar information to that discussed above was provided on the access road options, which will be a focus of the public information open houses. The preliminary costs range from the following access road between Highway 401 to Madden Road in Canadian dollars:

- At-grade alternatives: \$620 to \$920 million.
 - Depressed alternatives: \$1.03 billion to \$1.36 billion.
 - Tunnel alternatives: \$3.8 billion.
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It was noted that vast increases in installation and concrete are required to build the tunnel. Additionally, ventilation, electrical, drainage, communication, and other agency management systems also increase the tunnel costs. Finally, on costs, Len Kozachuk noted that costs for operations and maintenance, as well as property acquisition, are considered separately.

Both Len Kozachuk and Joe Corradino summarized the deep drilling programs on each side of the border. The Canadian program began in late October and will be completed in February 2007. The U.S. program will begin in mid-January 2007 and conclude in June 2007.

At this point, Mohammed Alghurabi asked those in attendance to recess for the next 15 minutes to review the displays around the room and return comments on them. When the meeting resumed, the following comments and questions were articulated.

Q: There is a wide variation in the length and, therefore, the cost of crossing the river. When is a determination on the crossing to be made?

R: Likely by the mid to latter part of 2007. The bridge study is being conducted in two phases with the preliminary results of the first phase available in the next 90 days and the more-detailed results later in the year of 2007.

Q: I have noticed that there are a lot of migratory birds in the area. Will the impacts on birds be taken into account?

R: Yes, particularly as it relates to the cable-stay bridge with its many wire strands.

C: In his presentation, Len Kozachuk made an earlier comment that Sterling Marine Fuels is in proximity to Sandwich. That should be corrected. It is in Sandwich.

C: On a recent radio program, there appeared to be false representations of the volatile compounds and air quality data collected at air quality monitors within three blocks of the proposed construction zone. The information that was stated on the radio program was either a misquote or bad editing, because it made URS come across as if the firm did not know what it was doing. It made you look foolish.

R: The media report pertains to a presentation that was made to a local body of government by the air quality specialist on the URS team. She stated what was recorded by the monitors to date. She was not making any conclusions or commenting on an analysis.

Q: Is the cost shown on the displays of the entire road tunnel in Canada?

R: The cost data on the chart includes the road alternatives only.

C: You mentioned that additional analysis will be undertaken for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Local municipalities will be looking at steps to remediate such pollutants based on your work.

R: In the U.S., the qualitative analysis of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} will produce information on key roadway links around and on the plaza. The mitigation will be of best practices; to the extent mitigation is required. The analysis will be consistent with that used in the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project, so by the time it is applied to the Detroit River International Crossing, it will have been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the Federal Highway Administration.

Preliminary CSS Workshop Results

Bruce Campbell presented information on the results of the last CSS community meetings in the U.S. (November 2nd) and in Canada (November 15th). He discussed the themes that had been developed and how the public selected design features and indicated preference choices. With respect to bridges, the “historic” theme seems most strongly associated with a more ornate design and a suspension bridge. The “friendship” theme seems most strongly associated with a simpler design and a cable-stay bridge. A January meeting is planned to refine the ideas that had been worked on to date.

Len Kozachuk indicated that CSS work in Canada reviewed both the road as well as the plaza and crossing. The November 15th workshop focused on the crossing components, which Bruce had summarized. More information on CSS will be available at the public information open houses.

Q: Are these bridges feasible?

R: Each bridge is constructible and therefore feasible.

Q: I have a concern about the art deco style. Is it still included?

R: Nothing has been excluded at this time. Nonetheless, it is clear that some people appreciate the art deco style.

December Public Meetings/Public Information Open Houses

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the public meeting in the U.S. on the preliminary impact data would be on December 5th beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Southwestern High School. A presentation will be given at

6:30 p.m. It was noted that the public information open houses in Canada would be on December 6th, at the Holiday Inn Select on Huron Church Road, and on December 7th at the Ciociaro Club.

Other LAC/CCG/LAG Business

Len Kozachuk indicated that there will be community workshops in January that will follow the PIOHs. He also indicated that new federal environmental documents are on the project Web site. He thanked MDOT for hosting the meeting and complemented it for the job well done.

Public Comments

C: When it comes to the style of the bridge, the real question is the quality. The styles shown here are ugly. The Ambassador Bridge is beautiful.

Q: Have air quality studies been done at the Ambassador Bridge, and can they be used as a model to determine air quality at the new crossing?

R: No air quality model is known to be used at the Ambassador Bridge. In respect to monitoring data, the closest monitor to the Ambassador Bridge is at Southwestern High School.

C: As the project relates to Southwestern High School, the most responsible thing to do is build a new school away from the new border crossing.

Q: It is difficult to find on the graphics the local access roads from the plaza. How are they being handled?

R: Cross-access from one side to the other of I-75 is being maintained in all alternatives except one. This issue is being addressed as the engineering of the concepts goes forward.

Q: In order to improve Fort Wayne as an asset, are access points from the plaza to Fort Wayne being considered?

R: While difficult to see, local access is addressed on the graphics. The objective is to provide access to the street system that can then lead to Fort Wayne.

Q: I asked earlier if there were any link between the intermodal mega-terminal and this new bridge and you said no. Then later, you turned around and said that you are waiting for approval of the DIFT to link to the DRIC.

R: My comment about the relationship of the DIFT to the DRIC is in the air quality analysis process. The methodology for analyzing air quality of the two projects in the same geographical area is closely related.

Therefore, by completing and gaining approval of the air quality analysis of the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal, the methodology can then be applied to DRIC. Again, the projects are not dependent on each other.

C: It is logical to assume that this is all part of the super-NAFTA highway concept, that is, the mega-terminal and the border crossing.

C: We are very encouraged with the relationship with our neighborhood by the Canadians and thank them.

Q: Is it possible to make this a bridge for the exclusive use of trucks, and the other bridge for cars?

R: No, that is not the intent and likely not possible in light of the fact that the crossing will be a federal facility; it will be open to both cars and trucks.

With that, the meeting concluded about 9:00 p.m.
