

**Detroit River International Crossing Study**  
**Joint Meeting of the U.S. Local Advisory Council (LAC) and**  
**Canadian Community Consultation Group (CCG)**  
**March 22, 2006, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Ciociaro Club of Windsor**

**Purpose:** This joint meeting of the LAC and CCG served as both an update on developing the Preliminary Practical Alternatives and preparing for public meetings during the week of March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

The meeting was opened by moderator Glenn Pothier and Mohammed Alghurabi, each of whom made opening statements welcoming members of both citizens groups including 14 new members of the CCG.

Next, the presenters were introduced followed by LAC and CCG members and observers.

**Meeting Conduct**

The agenda was then reviewed, noting the points at which the LAC/CCG and the public would have opportunities to comment and ask questions.

**Review of Notes**

The notes of the previous CCG and LAC meetings were offered for review. There was one minor change to the CCG notes related to a reference to Sandwich. Mohammed Alghurabi noted one piece of unfinished business from the LAC meeting in February existed; he asked Joe Corradino to elaborate on it, i.e., the distance between plazas and Southwestern High School. Joe Corradino noted that with Plaza Options 3, 4 and 5, the center-to-center distance from plaza to high school was approximately 1,700 feet. The edge-to-edge distance is zero, as the plaza and school are adjacent to each other. For Plaza Option 1, the center-to-center distance was about 3,800 feet with the edge-to-edge distance being approximately 2,000 feet. For Plaza Option 2, again the distances were approximately 1,700 feet center-to-center, and zero feet, edge-to-edge. He noted that, in terms of air quality and noise impacts, that those distances do not “tell the story.” The key issue is the location of vehicle activities (like toll booths with idling vehicles) and their distances from sensitive land uses.

## **First Public Comment Period**

*Question:* A statement was made at the February LAC meeting regarding the lack of a health impact study as part of the Border Crossing project. There will always be gaps in knowledge to cause an excuse for not doing such a study, but thousands of studies had pointed out the effects of air toxics on health. Several example reports were cited. Further, there had been emphasis at the February LAC meeting by the DRIC U.S. Study Team on the EPA-induced mobile source air toxic reductions resulting from increased regulation, but there had not been discussion about fleet turnover. As Detroit is a non-attainment area, what the strategy was for reaching attainment?

*Response:* The U.S. program of DRIC air quality analysis is based on the February 3, 2006, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance followed by the March 10, 2006, U.S. EPA Final Rules on PM<sub>2.5</sub> hotspot analysis. The guidance and rule indicate there will be no quantitative analysis at the project level required at this time. EPA continues to work on a model expected to quantify particulate matter; it is to be finalized in 2007. Meanwhile, the U.S. analysis will use agency rules and travel data including the truck fleet mix from SEMCOG. SEMCOG is responsible for the attainment program that includes point and non-point (mobile) sources of pollution.

## **Canadian Presentation**

Len Kozachuk (Deputy Project Manager, URS Canada) led off the slide presentations by describing the project schedule and providing an overview of the alternatives evaluation process (and emphasizing that both the Canadian and U.S. teams have been following the same process). He then went on to make the following key points:

- The consultation process has been extensive and ongoing – there have been multiple meetings with elected officials, the public and a variety of other stakeholders. The project team will continue to have meetings with various groups in order to gather their input.
- Several workshops and meetings were held to gather input from groups about the plaza/crossing designs. In addition, the project team has met several times with the RCMP and the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) to determine what their needs and criteria are for a new inspection plaza and crossing.
- The project team is looking at a number of criteria and challenges. A key consideration is to provide the necessary navigational clearances over the Detroit River. The project team is also currently studying the brine wells and sink hole issues. In addition, air quality and noise are other issues that are being closely examined.
- In terms of a new crossing, generally, the longer the crossing the more costly it is to construct. The grades on the new crossing are an issue in relation to vehicle performance on steeper grades (particularly for trucks) as well as adverse climatic conditions (e.g., ice, snow, fog). A maximum grade of five percent is assumed for the new crossing.
- In developing new plaza and crossing locations, public input was sought and community objectives were taken into account. Many from the public emphasized the importance of staying out of the Black Oak

area; preserving the many historic features of Sandwich Town and keeping a plaza and crossing south of Prospect Avenue.

- In consideration of all input, three potential plaza and crossing locations have been identified as those to be taken forward for more in-depth analysis. Plaza A is located adjacent to E.C. Row Expressway in one of the few areas of developing residential uses. Plaza B is in the Brighton Beach Area where there is a mix of vacant land and industrial uses. The Project Team has developed plaza alternatives that are north of Broadway Avenue and away from Black Oak/Ojibway natural areas. Plaza C is on a site on the Detroit River shoreline. Much of the land needed for this site is currently owned by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and includes a transformer station.
- Crossing A in the X10 Corridor is a long skewed crossing located in the Brighton Beach area in Windsor and the area west of Fort Wayne in Detroit; Crossing B in the X10 Corridor is located in the area south of Prospect Avenue to the area west of Fort Wayne in Detroit. Crossing C in the X11 Corridor is located in the area of Sterling Fuels/K Scrap Resources in Sandwich to the area east of Fort Wayne.
- The different crossings connect with one or more plaza sites on the Canadian side. Crossing A in the X10 Corridor can connect with Plaza A only, due to the location of the crossing and the clearance requirements at the river's edge. Crossing B in the X10 Corridor is on the south side of Prospect Avenue and connects with Plazas A or B. Crossing C connects to Plaza A, B or C on the Canadian side.
- There are geotechnical issues on the Canadian side related to salt mining activities that could affect the plaza and crossing locations. The project team has a work plan to investigate bedrock conditions in the area in more detail.
- The Area of Continued Analysis (ACA) includes an extension of Highway 401 from its present terminus at Highway 3 to the area of the plazas. The project team is examining tunnel, depressed, and at grade route alternatives. There are a number of challenges – particularly those relating to potential community impacts – associated with each alternative.
- In the next phase of the study, the project team will be conducting additional analysis for each of the plaza and crossing locations, and for the route alternatives.

### **U.S. Presentation**

Mohammed Alghurabi said that there was a handout which showed the slides to be used in the U.S. presentation. The slides mirrored the graphics on display in the room. The objective is to provide the LAC a preview of the presentation that would be given to the public on March 29<sup>th</sup> at two meetings in the United States. The public meetings were being publicized through flyers distributed door-to-door in the Delray neighborhood, Public Access TV, and major local newspapers.

Joe Corradino began the PowerPoint presentation by indicating the purpose of the March 29<sup>th</sup> meetings is to update the general public on the work conducted since November 2005, the time of the last general public meetings. He noted that there had been several workshops with many community members in between November and March, but not with the general public, in particular those living outside the Delray area.

Joe Corradino said that the project's development in the United States was focused on the crossing, plaza and connections to I-75. He used a series of oblique aerial photos to show important points on the U.S. side to lay the groundwork for plaza development. He noted vision statements have been prepared in coordination with the local community for conditions with and without a bridge. Both emphasized improved relations with governmental agencies and support for the community. The vision statement with the bridge called for a return to the host community of some of the economic wealth that is expected to be generated by the new crossing.

Master planning is the current focus of ongoing work. The master planning effort will transition to context sensitive solutions (CSS) which blend development of the community with the transportation infrastructure (plaza, bridge, interchange). That work will start in April. At the same time, an extensive effort will begin to analyze the social-cultural effects in a broader area than Delray, which has about 5,000 persons. That broader area incorporates approximately 150,000 people. Among other activities and analysis will be interviews with 100+ persons/groups to determine what makes the community work and how it might be affected/improved by the project.

Mr. Corradino next explained the plaza analysis zone of approximately 310 acres. That zone was identified in conjunction with the community and will later be reduced to approximately 150 acres. At this point, it is understood that the plaza would be ultimately designed and owned by the federal government. Meanwhile, the consultant team will do site planning of the plaza at a level sufficient to analyze impacts and prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Joe Corradino then explained that Plaza Options 3 and 4, which have a linear layout, are associated with Crossing X-10. The difference is that Option 3 goes more directly to the freeway providing ramps into and out of the plaza in the area of Livernois and Dragoon Avenues, whereas Option 4 splits the ramp access with inbound access from the Springwells area and outbound access in the Livernois/Dragoon area. In either case, the likelihood is that the Livernois/Dragoon interchange with I-75 would be closed.

Joe Corradino showed slides illustrating what a plaza may look like from an oblique aerial view in terms of its magnitude and the amount of buffer associated with it.

Joe Corradino next turned to Crossing X-11, which is proposed to be located east of Fort Wayne, and showed Options 1 and 2. These plazas are more compact, with Option 1 having a circular traffic pattern and Option 2 having a "down-and-back" type layout with inbound traffic moving first to the west and back to the east. Option 1-A would shift the alignment of I-75 south to reduce impacts that could occur north of I-75. A new Option 5 associated with Crossing X-11 has been introduced to the process. It has a linear layout with entry to the plaza from the west at the Springwells area and exit to the freeway to the east at the Livernois/Dragoon area.

Joe Corradino concluded that none of the options was in final form and that the elements of the options could be mixed and matched to come to a final plaza preliminary configuration. Further, the preliminary evaluation of plaza impacts had been done and was distributed as a handout. The data on Options 1 through 5 would be updated and refined as time goes on.

Regarding “next steps” in the United States, Joe Corradino noted that the context sensitive solutions effort would begin in April and would blend engineering/environmental considerations and the master planning effort into design and access elements of the bridge/plaza interchange-- for example, whether ramps to I-75 should go under or over Fort Street, and the kinds of walls and/or buffers that might be used around the plaza. He went on to discuss other upcoming meetings in the overall schedule. He said the current plan is to develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) by December 2006, with a public hearing in January 2007.

With completion of both presentations, questions and comments were entertained, first from the LAC/CCG members, then from the observers.

### **LAC/CCG Comment Period**

*Question:* Can the LAC get the CCG materials?

*Response:* Yes. They are available tonight as handouts.

*Comment:* The Alternative Plaza B in Canada is too close to the river for security purposes.

*Question:* What is the length of Crossing C?

*Response:* 735 meters, which compares to a clear-span length on the Ambassador Bridge of 555 meters.

*Comment:* It might be easier to understand the presentation if the nomenclature for the crossings is the same for both U.S. and Canadian teams. The U.S. uses X-10 and 11, the Canadian team uses Crossing A, B and C. That should be clarified even on the Web or at least a comparison table should be available.

*Question:* Will the Canadian team be using the same criteria weightings as the study progresses to the next phase of evaluation?

*Response:* Yes, the same weighting system will be used for the practical alternatives evaluation phase.

*Comment:* Include the weighting numbers when you present material to the public.

*Response:* We will.

*Comment:* As a longtime resident of Delray, I would like to compliment MDOT and the U.S. team for trying to find reasonable solutions. I began by being opposed to the project but now believe good can come from the process.

It is important to save both Delray and Sandwich. Sandwich has the support of the city of Windsor. The same cannot be said of Delray insofar as the city of Detroit goes. The recent story in the *Windsor Star* painted Delray in a very poor light. The people in Delray deserve better. The newspaper focused on the negatives.

*Comment:* I have attended most of the meetings in both the U.S. and Canada. We feel the same way in Sandwich as those residents in Delray – Sandwich is a community worth saving. We want a solution that will work for both communities. I have attended the MDOT question-and-answer session and I find them much more informative than the Canadian open houses with only display boards, but no presentation and follow-up Q&A. I find the question-and-answer sessions most beneficial. I would like to thank Joe and Len for their excellent presentations this evening.

*Question:* Where would the buffer be on the Canadian side of the plaza – have you taken into account the need for future growth?

*Response:* The border agencies have said that the plaza needs to be a minimum of 80 to 100 acres. We are working with this footprint, which includes provisions for buffer. We spoke with CBSA about future needs and they feel comfortable with the size of the plaza and that it can accommodate growth in traffic.

*Question:* In terms of air quality and vibrations, I know that the air quality analysis is not in the U.S. regulations, but in Canada, the Ambassador Bridge plaza expansion would come within 30 feet of the backs of houses and air quality will be worse. How does this play out in terms of Canadian regulations? Something needs to be done.

*Response:* Air quality is a top-ranked concern with the public. We have tried in Canada to site the plazas away from residential areas. We will look at providing buffers around plaza and undertake an air quality assessment. We will also look at putting up walls around the plaza facility. As part of the environmental assessment, we will consider the “do nothing” alternative. There are some thresholds that are used to conduct vibration analysis and vibration impacts will be considered in the assessment.

*Question:* Why is there a difference in the air quality analysis between Canada and the United States?

*Response:* In the U.S., a recent publication of EPA rules has made it clear that there will not be a quantitative estimate of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (small particulate matter) at this time for this project. There will be a pollutant burden analysis of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, i.e., an estimate of the mass of the pollutant involved, but that burden will not be dispersed into concentrations at spots around the plaza area.

On the Canadian side, we will be conducting a quantitative analysis. We will be calculating emissions from vehicles to create dispersion models. We will be looking at sensitive receptors including homes and schools. The contaminants analyzed will include PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

*Comment:* I believe there is a standard in Ontario on vibrations once the facility is put in place.

*Question:* It was stated earlier that the plaza in the U.S. would be designed and owned by the federal government. How does that square with public/private ownership? Further, a lawsuit in Wayne County, that is now under appeal, has determined in a lower court that the Ambassador Bridge does not have to abide by local zoning laws. What effect might that have?

*Response:* There are a number of models with respect to ownership. We do not yet know which model will be followed. It is true that it is the desire of the Department of Homeland Security to own the plaza they occupy. It is also true that public oversight of the next crossing is a must. Beyond that, we do not know what the ownership and operating structure will be at this time.

*Comment:* I appreciate the introductions at the beginning of the meeting by the LAC/CCG members. The Canadian DRIC team has consulted with members of the public, government, and areas affected. The City of Windsor seems to have a parallel process to the DRIC team. The city needs to start building relationships with the DRIC team. Neither community consensus nor a truly regional approach can be achieved if solutions are dictated without dialogue. On the U.S. side, the LAC appears to be made up of citizens and members that represent the community at large, but it also includes elected officials. [Note: the following are excerpts from an unsolicited e-mail from the person making the above comment in aid of clarifying the point: *I did not mean to suggest that the CCG alter its composition from community at large representation to political representation...I understand the guidelines that were established when we formed the CCG. While the CCG promotes dialogue between the community and the DRIC team, and the municipal consultation group promotes dialogue between various municipal interests and the DRIC team, there is no forum for three-way dialogue among all three of these parties...Whether by design or default, the U.S. LAC has DRIC team members, politicians (or representatives thereof) and members of the community at large all in the same room at the same time, listening to each other...This has not happened on the Canadian side.*]

*Response:* From the American point of view, the LAC is a mixture of elected officials and citizens. Some elected officials have chosen to represent themselves while others send a representative.

*Response:* As a city of Windsor councilperson, I would like to make it clear that we have been heavily involved in the DRIC discussions and meetings from the outset. Ask the Sandwich representatives if we have not been responsive to them. Windsor City Council is trying its best to work with the DRIC team.

*Response:* I, as a councilperson, second the previous comment and also note that the media sometimes tends to play up differences among groups and pit one against another.

*Question:* How do we reconcile the differences in plaza size between countries? Is there no planning for growth in Canada?

*Response:* The plaza sizes are dictated by the agencies that will operate them. The Canadian plaza size of 80-100 acres meets the needs of the Canadian Border Services Agency for 2035 traffic needs and beyond. CBSA is satisfied with that plaza size and has considered future needs. The Project cannot justify taking more land for the plaza than the border agency considers necessary.

*Comment:* As a Canadian citizen sitting on the LAC, I would have to agree that the LAC is more heavily comprised of elected officials. A number of mayors were active on the LAC until their areas were removed from study for the new crossing. I believe the representatives of Essex County, LaSalle and Windsor City Councils should be here.

*Comment:* I don't understand why Alternative C in Canada, which has logistics and brine well problems, has not been dropped.

*Response:* This stage of the Environmental Assessment process requires that we examine a set of practical alternatives. It is important that this process be thorough and rigorous. The individual crossings have both advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of this meeting is to brief the CCG and LAC on the alternatives developed in this phase of the project. We ask that you be patient as our analysis moves forward. The route discussion was not part of tonight's agenda because it is more or less a Canadian issue, and the meeting tonight is aimed at sharing information regarding the crossing and plazas on both sides of the border. We also have limitations in terms of the amount of time we have available. The routes will be shown and discussed at the upcoming Public Information Open Houses.

*Comment:* I would suggest more joint meetings between the LAC and CCG.

*Comment:* DRIC is not a municipal initiative and the DRIC team is not employed by the City of Windsor. The City is having a meeting tomorrow night regarding this project – people should attend to hear the City's response to what has been done so far under the DRIC process.

*Comment:* Last January the project team developed an alternative on the south side of Ojibway. Plaza alternatives A and B cause the same impact as a road would to the natural features of Ojibway and Black Oaks. Plaza alternative C goes right through Sandwich. You could have done better to lessen impacts to the community of Sandwich and to the natural areas – you are jeopardizing the

Black Oaks. What will be the buffer zone for the plazas and for the Black Oak Forest? Why have you respected the north side, but not the south side?

*Response:* We heard from the public at the workshops to place the plaza away from Sandwich and Ojibway. The project team has tried to do that and find a reasonable balance to meet a number of social, environmental and technical objectives. In the upcoming weeks we welcome comments on the alternatives we have developed and how they can be further refined.

*Question:* Suddenly, there is a new Plaza Option 5 that includes a rail line that comes right past our houses in west Delray. Who came up with that? No one talked to Delray in creating this option. I believe this is “sneaky.”

*Response:* Option 5 is the result of additional analysis by the U.S. consultant and contains components of several of the other options. It reverses the pattern of traffic flow of Option 4. We acknowledged in the presentation made earlier that you have not seen this before, but it does represent variations of options that have been presented earlier. Abandoning the rail line that now goes through Delray has been discussed a number of times before. We are presenting how to do this to the LAC before we go to the public meetings. This is the usual process for displaying/discussing new information.

*Comment:* Continue to do a joint presentation – up to now you have been operating as two separate organizations. Make your presentations joint sessions.

*Response:* Comment noted. Each project team will have a set of display boards covering the various plaza and crossing options at the upcoming public meetings. We are sharing this information with the public. The Canadian and U.S. project teams have been and continue to work closely with one another.

### **Recommended Changes to Presentation Materials**

The moderators asked for any comments with respect to the presentation materials.

*Comment:* I recommend that for the community groups there be joint U.S./Canadian presentations.

*Response:* It is our plan on the U.S. side to include the boards you see tonight at the U.S. public meeting and the same is true for the Canadians.

*Comment:* I still suggest a short presentation by the other country be made at each of these meetings.

*Question:* I thought we were going to cover PM<sub>2.5</sub> at this point.

*Response:* That was already covered and provoked by an earlier question. However, to repeat, there will be no quantitative analysis of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the U.S. based on the recently released March 10, 2006, EPA Final Rule.

Mohammed Alghurabi noted for the record that he had received two reports from Mrs. Leonard of the Sierra Club. The first, a National Resource Defense Council report on school buses, and the second, a University of Michigan study of the proximity of schools to freeways.

*Comment:* The Schwartz report did not go through an EA process – the citizens of Windsor need to understand the relationship of the Schwartz Report and this DRIC study. This is also true for the DRTP study. The public is confused about this.

*Question:* I am a bit unclear about the social/cultural analysis and air quality.

*Response:* The slide detailing some of the aspects of these analyses was put up again and the explanation of the process repeated.

### **PM<sub>2.5</sub>**

This topic was covered earlier but the Canadian team added that the work plan had been modified to cover both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations analyses.

There were no further LAC/CCG comments on the team activities or the contents of the materials.

### **Second Public Comment Period**

*Question:* How many local groups are there in Sandwichtown? I would like to establish contact with the group and cultivate further communication with them.

*Comment:* As a representative of Delray, I have been engaged in this process for a year and I would like to encourage others to join in a positive, constructive spirit as we move forward. The community, as well as The Detroit City Council, seem to have gotten on-board with the project. In particular, Ken Cockrell and Joanne Watson are to be commended for standing behind the community. There have been lines on the map we don't necessarily like and we have worked through some options. We don't like taking homes, especially the new railroad link shown tonight. Nevertheless, I would encourage constructive engagement and I support Sandwichtown in these same kinds of efforts.

*Response:* Thank you. MDOT will continue to try to resolve any issues.

### **Meeting Announcement**

The public meetings upcoming for the 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> in Canada and the 29<sup>th</sup> in the United States were announced and other public meetings and workshops were also noted.