

**Detroit River International Crossing Study**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Local Advisory Council**  
**April 26, 2006**

**Purpose:** To review the progress of the Detroit River International Crossing Study.

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting with introductions of both the Local Advisory Council and observers.

**Meeting Conduct Procedures**

Mohammed then reviewed the meeting conduct procedures, indicating that, following a review of the agenda and the meeting notes of the March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the public would be invited to comment. Then the LAC would conduct its business, followed by another public comment period.

He then pointed to the March 22<sup>nd</sup> LAC/CCG meeting notes. Recognizing that these notes had been distributed for the first time at this meeting, Mohammed suggested that the LAC members provide input following the meeting if they choose to make revisions to the notes.

**Public Comments**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if any observers would like to make a comment. There were none. Then, Mrs. Leonard indicated that she would like to comment early in the evening's business on the positive feedback that was received about Monday's meeting hosted by the Sierra Club and attended by a number of citizens as well as MDOT's Director Steudle and Mohammed Alghurabi. She then indicated an article published in the *Detroit News* on the meeting was inaccurate in describing it as "hostile." Mrs. Leonard indicated that, to the contrary, it was a very productive meeting. She concluded her remarks by indicating that it was a personal affront that the article was written in such a negative fashion.

**March 29<sup>th</sup> Public Meetings on the Preliminary Alternatives**

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the information handed-out at the meeting included a booklet of notes of the two public meetings held on March 29<sup>th</sup>. He indicated, once again, comments of those notes could be e-mailed or called in to him if revisions were needed. He then asked Joe Corradino to summarize the March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. Joe Corradino explained the meeting attendance on March 29<sup>th</sup> was about 100 in the morning and about 200 in the evening. He also indicated that there were a number of "new faces" in the audience which was positive in terms of the public outreach. He also noted that several thousand mailings were made as well as door-to-door delivery of the meeting notice. Newspaper ads accompanied the meeting notice process. Finally, airing on public access television of a "meeting invitation" video was also part of the pre-meeting notification process. Mohammed Alghurabi asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

### **April 19<sup>th</sup> Public Meetings on Context Sensitive Solutions**

Joe Corradino provided a summary of the April 19<sup>th</sup> meetings, both conducted at the Delray Recreation Center. He noted that attendance was about half of what it was on March 29<sup>th</sup> and attributed that to the fact that it was “spring break week” for many schools in Wayne and Oakland counties.

He noted that the purpose of the April 19<sup>th</sup> meetings was to begin to blend the local master planning work for the Delray area with the design of the transportation infrastructure – bridge, plaza, and interchange. He then reviewed the preference results attained both in the morning and afternoon sessions, plus their combination. He stressed that the preference indication on items such as color, lighting, and height of the bridge tower was not to be considered an endorsement of a new bridge. To the contrary, it provides a starting point for the design team to begin framing key elements of the transportation infrastructure if the choice is made to build a new bridge. Mohammed Alghurabi asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

### **Discussion of the May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Public Meetings on Social/Cultural Issues**

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that on May 9<sup>th</sup> at LA SED on West Vernor, as well as on May 10<sup>th</sup> at Southwestern High School, public meetings would be conducted to gather information on the social/cultural fabric of the community that surrounds and includes the Delray area. He indicated that the meeting would begin with a slide presentation dealing with the history of the community and how the fabric that exists today was created from the industrial era of the 1800s. Following that meeting, and proceeding in a workshop environment, each of 10 groups will be provided a large map of the study area, indicating places of worship, recreation centers, cultural institutions, parks, and the like, to stimulate a discussion about the past, present and reasonably foreseeable future developments in the area that includes parts of Dearborn, Melvindale, River Rouge, as well as large portions of southwest Detroit, including Delray. Following that brainstorming session, five groups at a time will be videotaped in a discussion of those features. Those videotaped sessions will eventually be blended into documentation included in the Environmental Impact Statement dealing with indirect and cumulative effects. Mrs. Leonard asked at what time would the May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> meetings be conducted. Mohammed Alghurabi responded each would begin at 7:00 p.m.

Corky Benson noted she wanted the group to know that protecting the fabric of her community was a key part of the input that MDOT received including that from 1,200 people who attended the June 2005 public meeting at the Crystal Gardens.

### **Update of the Drilling Program**

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the drilling program had been postponed from a start date of March to sometime, likely, in June 2006.

Joe Corradino then explained that the drilling program involves a set of seven holes in each crossing corridor that will be drilled in search of the salt cavities that may exist at approximately 1,200 feet below the ground surface. He indicated records of such drilling were not kept early in the development of brine wells. Therefore, while there is evidence of such salt cavities in both the U.S. and Canada, the exact

location of many of them is not yet known. He indicated that the problem such a cavity creates is that weight of the overlaying rock could eventually cause a sinkhole. He noted such a sinkhole developed in 1954 on the Canadian side of the river opposite the Delray area.

In developing the drilling information, a series of analyses will be conducted which produces, at least in part, results that are not unlike an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan. Specialists must be involved to read these. Therefore, an advisory group from within the governments of Canada and the U.S./MDOT, as well as outside experts selected by those government representatives, will be charged with the responsibility of establishing the protocol by which data will be analyzed and through which recommendations will be made.

Joe Corradino noted that part of the process that has caused the drilling to be delayed is the complicated nature of gaining permits from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and access to properties through the City of Detroit. Nonetheless, that has allowed the process to be much more focused and, as a result, there will be an H<sub>2</sub>S safety plan, protective devices on the drilling equipment, safety officers available in the field, as well as a host of engineers and communications people to respond to the community's comments and questions.

With respect to drilling itself, about eight holes will be drilled without saving the core of the drilled hole, while another six holes will be drilled by saving and analyzing the core. The rotary-drilled holes (non-core) will take up to 15 days to complete; while the core-drilled holes will take up to 30 days to complete. Drilling all 14 holes will not be done in 30 days but will likely take from June through September, four months. While that drilling is underway, the drill rig will be at any one location (hole) on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week basis. Tom Cevenak asked about the size of the holes. Joe Corradino indicated that the holes are about five to six inches in diameter, that they will be capped while analysis is still underway, and then they will be permanently grouted to a depth of 200 feet when they are done.

*Question: In drilling 24 hours a day and seven days a week, is MDOT considering relocating the affected people?*

Response: A mitigation plan along the lines that you suggest – relocation – is being considered by MDOT. Nonetheless, there will be other mitigation put in place including building a plywood noise barrier around ground-placed generators as well as muffling other devices associated with the drilling equipment. A final decision on that mitigation will be made known to the LAC before the drilling begins.

*Question: Are you drilling only in the plaza area?*

Response: No. The drilling will be conducted outside of the plaza areas, along the corridors known as X-10 and X-11 (wall maps were used to illustrate those corridors). Joe Corradino stressed that, in looking at the graphics, it can be noticed that much of the area is vacant. Therefore, it is the preliminary understanding that for the 14 holes, not more than 20 residential units will be affected by noise and other nuisances of the operation.

Mohammed Alghurabi and Joe Corradino then explained the City of Detroit requirements. Joe Corradino noted that Detroit has not only required extensive information in order to permit entry to a city-owned property for drilling, but will monitor the drilling, at least in the early phases, to ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided.

*Comment: It is important to keep trucks on designated routes.*

### **Other**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any other items that the LAC would like to discuss. Barbara McCallahan thanked Mrs. Leonard for explaining the newspaper article about the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sierra Club on the DRIC. Ms. Callahan noted that the article was negative and she was concerned and that the facts would be better understood by her and Senator Stabenow with Mrs. Leonard's explanation.

Barbara McCallahan then asked about the purpose of the June 8<sup>th</sup> proposed bus tour. Joe Corradino indicated that it was to provide first-hand community contact in Toledo as well as in Port Huron in situations where the relationship between the community and the bridge was comparable to the proposed situation in the Delray area. He indicated that there would be an opportunity to speak to community representatives at each tour stop.

Mohammed Alghurabi noted that he had received comments at the last meeting about the start time of the bus tour – 1:30 p.m. He asked Joe Corradino to explain why the tour was to begin at 1:30 p.m. Joe Corradino noted that in starting the meeting at 1:30 p.m. on a weekday, those who work would be able to get a half-day in before leaving on the tour. Mohammed Alghurabi asked if people would prefer to begin the meeting earlier in the day. The only comment was from Tom Cevenak who indicated that the 1:30 p.m. start was preferable. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the planning for the bus tour would continue with a 1:30 p.m. start; however, the departure would be somewhere in the Delray area, not at the MDOT Metro Region's office.

Mrs. Leonard asked if she could be dropped off later in the afternoon on the return from Toledo so that she could deal with “prom night.” It was indicated that the tour would likely return from Toledo to the Delray area to drop off and pick up people before it moved on to Port Huron.

Alison Benjamin asked about an update on the moratorium of the sale of state-owned land. Mohammed Alghurabi responded that the state is working with the owner of a parcel on Copeland Street and various procedures were asked to be put in place along with the transfer. He expected that the transfer would be possible in the near future.

Henri LaFrance noted that there are a number of ongoing activities that surround the DRIC project, including those at the Port of Detroit, the second span of the Ambassador Bridge, and a study of whether the new bridge should be publicly owned. He asked what information was going to be provided to the LAC about those matters. Mohammed Alghurabi asked Olga Savic to comment. As a result of those comments, it was decided that providing information about those matters was not in the purview of the DRIC Study but could be made available through Representative Tobocman's office or other state

legislators with whom the LAC was familiar. Mohammed Alghurabi noted that as information becomes available from MDOT on the governance structure, it would be made available to the LAC.

### **Public Comments**

*Comment: I compliment MDOT for its social/cultural outreach. My question is: what is the reference to 66 decibels of noise?*

Response: Joe Corradino responded by indicating that the noise in the room in this conversation was about 65 to 66 decibels. He noted, by banging on the table, that the noise he just created was a single event that was probably louder than 85 decibels. He indicated that the standard of 66 decibels was chosen as an acceptable level in and around the drilling operations consistent with the MDOT efforts to mitigate noise along highways as well as attempts to mitigate noise around airports from overflights. Joe Corradino stressed that the noise that is being addressed is “average” day/night noise, not a single event like banging on the table.

He also indicated that the mitigation that might come with any of the drilling activities would apply a standard that would circumscribe a specific area around each bore hole. He speculated that those from some distance outside that area would likely claim disturbance from the drilling operations and seek mitigation. However, he indicated that it was his belief that MDOT would stick with the standard as it does in most other mitigation programs.

*Comment: The bus tour is a good idea but the starting point at the MDOT Metro Region office in Southfield is a difficult place for those requiring public transportation to get to.*

Response: As noted earlier, the starting point has been changed from that area to a location yet to be specified in Delray area, in a location like the Delray Recreation Center.

*Comment: An article in the Windsor Star today indicated that a bill was being considered in the Canadian Parliament that would deal with the governance of all international crossings, including those that now exist. There would be specific requirements for inspection and specific penalties associated with the lack of compliance with the standards in the proposed law, including the seizure of the crossing, as well as criminal penalties.*

### **Next Steps**

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the following meetings would be conducted: May 23<sup>rd</sup> at Southwestern High School beginning at 7:00 p.m., subject: master planning; May 31<sup>st</sup>, next Local Advisory Council meeting at Southwestern High School; June 8<sup>th</sup>, bus tour going to Toledo and Port Huron; June 22<sup>nd</sup> beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Southwestern High School, subject: master planning.

With that the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.