

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting
Meeting Notes
October 24, 2007
Southwestern High School

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions/Meeting Conduct Procedures/Agenda Review

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting with introductions. He indicated the meeting will be conducted so that the observers could comment both at the beginning and the end of it. The Local Advisory Council and Local Agency Group members will conduct their business uninterrupted in the core of the meeting. He then asked if there were any changes to the meeting agenda. None were suggested.

Public Comments

Q: Bill Muir asked where a statement can be found in the project's documentation that there is a need for ten additional lanes across the border.

R: Joe Corradino indicated that it is in the Planning/Needs and Feasibility Study. He said Bill Muir would be e-mailed that information.

LAC/LAG Meeting Notes

Q: Delores Leonard asked where the notes for the September meeting had been revised.

R: Joe Corradino indicated that a change was made to the top of page two. It indicates extra effort was made to contact apartment renters so they could attend the relocation information meetings held at the end of July. That change was made at Mrs. Leonard's request.

Q: Corki Benson wanted confirmation of the previous indications at these LAC meetings that there could potentially be three new bridges.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi indicated the answer was, "yes," potentially.

Review of Technical Report Outline

Joe Corradino indicated that there were over a dozen technical reports that serve as the foundation to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The DEIS will be a summary of those documents. Both the DEIS and the Technical Reports will be made available to the public approximately one month before the public hearing which is now set for late January. He then reviewed each of the following technical reports:

- **Induced Demand:** This analysis determines whether the change in accessibility associated with building a new border crossing would cause a change in the location of people or jobs in the area. He indicated U.S. court cases indicate that this issue of “induced demand” must be analyzed/documented.
- **Noise:** This report defines the possible locations of noise barriers to mitigate unwanted sound caused by the new border crossings’ traffic. Currently along I-75, where no walls exist, noise is registered at about 75 decibels and, sometimes, higher. Mitigation occurs when noise from new roadway projects approaches 66 dBA. Therefore, noise walls will be proposed along the service drives of I-75. Additionally, it is expected that walls will be part of the plaza’s development eliminating high noise levels at Southwestern High School from the DRIC project.

Q: Mrs. Leonard: Is there a difference in noise between the X-10 and X-11 crossings?

R: Joe Corradino indicated, “no.” The noise from the two bridges not different as it affects sensitive receivers. He did note that with Alternatives #3 and #11, noise on the north side of I-75 would be improved because the freeway moves south, away from its current location. Nonetheless, this is not a bridge issue.

Q: John Nagy: What is the status of mitigating noise from the rail line along Bacon Street or relocating the people who live there?

R: Noise from the rail lines does not require mitigation. However, the issue of isolating a few homes and potentially acquiring them is still under consideration.

- **Air Quality:** It is likely that air quality from automobiles/trucks will be improved in the area, particularly because EPA continues to regulate fuels and engines for on-road diesel vehicles and off-road vehicles (i.e., construction equipment). He stressed that the vehicle types used in the analysis are those provided by SEMCOG which, in turn, develops the fleet mix for the region in cooperation with EPA.

Q: John Nagy asked if data from the MDEQ air monitors were being used.

R: They are discussed in one part of the analysis, but data from special models were also being used.

Q: John Nagy indicated that MDEQ noted that naphthalene was high in the area. Is that matter being analyzed?

R: Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs), which include items like naphthalene, were being examined.

Q: Richard Rosen: Is the old tar plant on Zug Island going to be rebuilt?

R: No information on the subject is known to the MDOT team in attendance. John Nagy stated he believed there were no plans to rebuild it.

- Brine Well Program: The community had been briefed on the drilling program associated with the brine well analysis. He noted the data from that program is being reviewed and a report being prepared. He expected that both corridors in the U.S. would be cleared to accept Crossing X-10 and Crossing X-11.
- Community Inventory: This document provides a basic understanding of the community that would be affected by the proposed border crossing. He noted that the interviews/discussions conducted with the public in dozens of meetings, as well as in two general public sessions on March 9th and 10th, 2006, were included in the report. He concluded by noting the Delray community and the surrounding area is largely made up of minorities with many people below the poverty level. This makes environmental justice an important issue.
- Indirect and Cumulative Impact Analysis: This report determines the project's indirect effects on the study area and the broader regional effects that deal with those actions that are foreseeable in the future caused by government or the private sector.

Q: Robert Benson asked how far away is the impact measured? Are you looking at the local area or the region?

R: The direct and indirect effects are determined for the study area which includes communities like Southwest Detroit/Delray, River Rouge, Dearborn, Allen Park, Ecorse and Melvindale. The cumulative effects look at a much broader area. Transboundary impacts, those in Canada, are also addressed in this document.

Q: Robert Benson asked, "Does the report include traffic that goes downriver?"

R: Yes, particularly as it related to inducing new population and employment growth.

Q: Robert Benson: Does the report speak to an impact on the McClouth property?

R: Not specifically. The report does speak to redevelopment of old industrial, but not specifically at McClouth.

- Initial Site Assessment and Preliminary Site Investigation: This is an analysis of sites that are known to contain hazardous material. The document defines the level of contamination. Steps to be taken are identified if such property were to be acquired for the new border crossing.
- Traffic Analysis: There are two volumes of the traffic report: one on regional travel and, the other, on microsimulation results on study area roads. The latter deals with the streets directly along I-75 and in Delray from Dearborn Street to the Gateway Project. It also covers I-75.
- Threatened and Endangered Species: This report deals with wetlands, threatened and endangered plant and animal life. He noted that one wetland of one one-hundredth of an acre was located on the Revere Copper property site where the X-11 crossing would be located.

Q: Delores Leonard: I understand a number of air quality monitors may be eliminated. Do any affect this area?

R: It would be surprising if air quality monitors that were near Southwestern High School and the Ambassador Bridge were to be removed. He also noted that it would be a surprise if the air quality monitor near the Salina School would be removed as it records the highest particulate matter in the state of Michigan.

Q: Bill Turry: There are a number of active banks, gas stations, fire stations, and the Locheman hardware store in the area. What would happen to them?

R: Many of those institutions would not be acquired by the DRIC project. On the other hand, where relocations occur, every attempt will be made to keep the business in the Delray area, if that's what the business owner wants.

Q: Maria Finn: Will noise monitors be used to review the effectiveness of the walls that might be installed along I-75?

R: Typically, MDOT tests the effectiveness of noise walls once installed.

Microsimulation Review

Mark Velicevic discussed the traffic effects once the new Gateway Project at the Ambassador Bridge was completed. The Gateway Project would allow the traffic from the Ambassador Bridge to move directly to I-75. He used a video to show before and after conditions to illustrate that congestion at Fort and Clark Streets would be eliminated once the Gateway Project was completed.

Q: Unidentified speaker: Where are the new bridges going to be located?

R: Bruce Campbell demonstrated on a slide.

Q: Unidentified speaker: Where is the new bridge in the simulation of the Gateway Project?

R: It is not part of the simulation. This is just an explanation of how the new connection to I-75 of the Ambassador Bridge will work. It depicts traffic in the near-term future before there is a new DRIC crossing.

Q: John Nagy: Are plans still going forward to improve Fort Street? When are they going to work on it?

R: There were still plans to improve Fort Street from Schaefer to the east (up river). It is likely construction will begin in 2011.

Q: John Nagy: Will the Fort Street Bridge be rebuilt?

R: Yes. The plans have not changed, they have just been delayed.

Q: John Nagy: Will sound walls along the edges of I-75 cause a negative effect on the transportation of explosives in that corridor?

R: Noise walls would be only located on the north side of I-75, not on the south side. A tunnel effect, to which John Nagy was alluding, would develop. Nonetheless, similar walls are on both sides of I-75 in Toledo and Dayton, and no restrictions on hazardous materials exist there.

Land Use Review

Joe Corradino indicated that the handout package included graphics depicting how the future land use in Delray could evolve. Graphics include 1) a land use plan consistent with the City's master plan, and without a new crossing; 2) a land use plan also without a new crossing developed by the citizens of the area; and, 3) a land use plan developed by the citizens of the area, with a new crossing. A number of urban design sketches were also shown.

Q: Richard Johnson: Is this the City's design?

R: The Plan without a bridge is the City's. The three other land use concepts have been developed by the DRIC team in collaboration with the public and representatives of the City's Planning Commission, the Planning Department and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation.

Q: Richard Johnson: A woman from MDOT showed us some plans that we were comfortable with. Now, I see these and it makes me uncomfortable.

R: The plans that are being presented by any individual from MDOT are consistent with the plans being shown today.

Q: Robert Benson: Is there a recommendation being provided by the consultants on a specific concept?

R: No. Land use planning is the purview of the City of Detroit, not of MDOT or FHWA. Once the final land use plan is approved by the City of Detroit, then, hopefully, partnerships will develop among various governments and the private sector to implement it.

Q: John Nagy: Whatever happened to the proposed enhancement project for the area behind the Delray Community Center?

R: MDOT has awarded a contract to The Corradino Group. Work has not yet been initiated.

C: Bill Turry: The governor has a budget crisis and there is no money in this state. The mayor just got sued for millions of dollars and the City has no money. They are looking at raising the fees on

hunting and fishing licenses and closing the Department of Natural Resources. I don't know where you are going to get the money for these concepts.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the next public meeting would be on December 12th, at which time the aesthetic treatments of the bridge/plaza/interchange and land use would be reviewed with the public. A culmination of the last year and a half's work will be shown in one place at one time for the community to respond. Mohammed also noted there would be no December meeting of the LAC/LAG. Tentatively, there will be a meeting on January 9th to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. There was no other LAC business.

Public Comment

C: Maria Finn: What you have shown tonight is a beautiful vision of the community and I hope that it comes about in the future. But, we have other issues currently affecting the community. I encourage people to attend the community relations meeting at the new precinct building on Fort Street. These meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month.

Q: Perlinda White: How are students supposed to get to school when I-75 is closed?

R: There will be no change in how students get to school. Fort Street will be open.

Q: Terri Mattison: You said at the last meeting that you will have an air quality report.

R: Yes, it will be available at the end of the month of December.

Q: Terri Mattison: Is MDOT proposing to put up a barrier wall where the tanks are at Marathon Oil? Anything can happen, and the area known as zip code 48217 should be protected from any security risks from those tanks.

R: We are not aware of anything that will be done in that area but will inquire of Homeland Security when we meet with them later this month.