

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
Joint LAC/LAG Meeting
July 30, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
Dearborn Doubletree Hotel**

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

Attendance: See attached.

Introductions

Meeting Conduct Procedures

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the meeting will be conducted so that the observers could comment both at the beginning and at the end of the meeting. The Local Advisory Council and Local Agency Group members will conduct their business uninterrupted in the core of the meeting.

Agenda Review

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any changes to the meeting agenda. None were suggested.

Public Comments

There were none.

LAC/LAG June 25th Meeting Notes

No changes were noted.

FEIS Overview and Contents

Joe Corradino indicated that a number of steps were being taken to advance the FEIS by identifying the Preferred Alternative. At this time, the crossing (X-10B) and the plaza have been fixed. However, a number of refinements are underway on the interchange connecting the plaza to I-75. He noted that revisions were being made to the crossings of I-75 including pedestrian crossings which were to be the subject of much of the meeting tonight. Joe Corradino stressed that a number of efforts were underway to reduce the potential acquisitions of both businesses and residences. It is hoped that the final Preferred Alternative would affect fewer than 300 dwelling units and about 40 businesses. This compares to the maximum potential impact of over 400 dwelling units and over 50 businesses as presented in the DEIS.

Review of Pedestrian Crossings over I-75

Bruce Campbell began this portion of the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation indicating how the interchange connecting the plaza to I-75 was being refined. He stressed that efforts are being made to protect Berwalt Manor from being acquired. This is essential, as he noted, in order to comply with the law that protects historic properties. He pointed to developments along the west and east sides of the plaza that would create a “Greenway Boulevard” and a “Campbell Boulevard”. He noted that the Campbell Boulevard would provide a new entryway to Fort Wayne. Additionally, wayfinding signs would be placed along I-75 and in the local community to provide better visibility/direction to Fort Wayne.

Lisa Goldstein asked at this point in the presentation if the area between the ramps connecting to I-75 would be isolated or would some treatment occur in that area. Joe Corradino noted that the exact treatment had been discussed at earlier Context Sensitive Solution meetings. A final determination would be made after the Environmental Impact Statement is completed in what is known as the Design Phase of work.

Bruce Campbell introduced the core part of the meeting which was a discussion of various pedestrian crossings with the objective of seeking input from those in attendance. He noted that the existing crossings are at the following general vicinities: Solvay Street, Beard Street, Rademacher Street, Morrell Street and McKinstry Street. He noted that tonight's discussion would focus on how to retain as much pedestrian crossing access of I-75 but with some shifts in the locations of those crossings to accommodate the new interchange's design. As the discussion of these crossing took place, a number of questions were asked, including the following:

Delores Leonard expressed concern about the possible evacuation of Southwestern High School and how students would likely move to the west toward Waterman than to the east, if an incident were to occur on the plaza. Bruce Campbell responded that the pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Waterman would be 14 feet wide. He noted that the Waterman pedestrian crossing is closely aligned with the front entrance of the school. Further discussion of the crossing to the east of the entrance of the school indicated that it should be shifted closer to Waterman. Mrs. Leonard indicated that she believed that the crossing should be wider than 14 feet to accommodate the evacuation of 900 students.

Tom Cervenak state that he believes a vehicular crossing of I-75 should be more of a plaza like that which exists at I-696. He suggested those plazas could be "greened" and made people-friendly. Bruce Campbell indicated that that issue would be studied.

John Bendzick asked if data were available on how many students walk to Southwestern High School. Joe Corradino indicated that he did not have those data. Census data indicate that many of the people in Delray walk as their principal means of transportation. Nonetheless, it was also noted that student bussing to Southwestern High School is extensive.

John Nagy asked if Green Street would continue over I-75. Joe Corradino responded that it will. John Nagy indicated that the Solvay crossing is very little used and wondered why it should be replaced.

Joe Corradino indicated that, if the Delray area is to be redeveloped, crossings of I-75 for pedestrians were important. Nonetheless, he stressed that, if a crossing were a nuisance or a safety/security problem, the local community should so indicate so consideration could be given to eliminating it.

Tom Cervenak indicated that he believed it would be best to have the pedestrian crossings span the service drives. Joe Corradino and Bruce Campbell noted that there is need for an extensive ramping system to gain access to each pedestrian crossing which must meet Americans with Disability Act requirements. Those ramping systems would require additional property acquisition to access the pedestrian bridge, if they span the service drive. With the objective of minimizing property acquisitions, spanning the freeway with the pedestrian ramp system was being discouraged.

Richard Rosen indicated that he believed I-75 should be lowered. Bruce Campbell responded that was not possible because of the extensive amount of very large utilities right below the surface of I-75.

Norbert Motowski indicated that he had been advised by Joe Corradino that there would be no impact to All Saints Church. But, he now learns that reconstruction of Springwells would disrupt the church. Joe Corradino indicated that the response to a question asked months earlier by Mr. Motowski related to the acquisition of the church. He reiterated there would be no acquisition of All Saints Church. However, reconstruction of Springwells would take place in the vicinity of the church. Joe Corradino indicated that there are requirements in the contract specifications to control dust, air pollution and noise. Those are noted in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Delores Leonard asked if the children are expected to use stairs during a potential evacuation of Southwestern High School to gain access to the pedestrian crossings. Bruce Campbell indicated that there will be both stairs and ramps to access crossings of I-75.

In discussing a pedestrian crossing at the Beard School area, a question arose about where sound-buffering walls would be placed. It was noted the walls would likely be on the south side of the service drive opposite the existing properties. It was then asked walls would be placed on the south side of I-75. Joe Corradino indicated that there were no walls planned for the south side of I-75 as the abutting land uses that would remain after the DRIC were completed are largely non-residential. The specific test that must be passed in order to place sound-buffering walls is not met on the south side of I-75.

A question was asked about the potential for noise walls to protect Southwestern High School. Joe Corradino responded that the noise walls that could be placed along I-75 would not mitigate the noise coming from Fort Street. Fort Street abuts Southwestern High School. Therefore, any sound attenuation device along I-75 would not improve the noise situation at the school.

Delores Leonard asked if there were any contracts with the Detroit Public School System with respect to the pedestrian crossings. Joe Corradino said no, not at this time. He noted the LAC/LAG meeting is the first opportunity to discuss the most recent thinking on pedestrian crossings. A meeting with the public school system would follow.

After some discussion of the crossing near the Beard School, it was decided that it should be moved as close as possible to Waterman Street.

John Bendzick asked if those people whose properties could be acquired by the project had been notified. Joe Corradino responded, yes. Tom Cervenak asked if there would be sidewalks on the service drives. Bruce Campbell said, yes. Denise Pike asked if landscaping and buffering could be placed between the service drive and the sidewalk. The response was that further consideration would be given to this request. Delores Leonard asked where, specifically, noise walls would be placed. Joe Corradino indicated that current thinking of the placement of noise walls is included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. That analysis is being updated based upon the latest traffic for what is now identified as the Preferred Alternative.

Tom Cervenak asked how access to and from Clark Street from I-75 South would be handled. Bruce Campbell indicated that the existing ramps would be removed and that traffic would travel on the service drives from Clark Street to gain access to/egress from I-75.

Denise Pike asked where the trucks from O. J. Trucking and Bridgewater Industries would go with the revisions to Clark Street. Bruce Campbell explained how they would access I-75 to the south by using the service drive. Delores Leonard indicated that these trucks using the service drives would generate both air pollution and noise. Joe Corradino indicated that the analysis to date indicates that pollution effects of this additional truck traffic on the service drives do not violate any standards. Additionally, the noise effects on the north side of I-75 will be attenuated, to the extent that standards are met. No noise walls are planned on the south side of I-75. The question was asked about whether the overall air quality analysis discusses sources of pollution like Marathon Oil, Zug Island and the like. Joe Corradino indicated that the DRIC analyzed mobile sources of pollution, i.e., trucks and cars. Nonetheless, the air quality analysis reported on in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement does refer to the impact of point sources like Marathon Oil, which are the predominant causes of pollution in Southwest Detroit.

Review of Discussion with the Community Benefits Coalition

Joe Corradino indicated that two meetings had been held with the Community Benefits Coalition to discuss mitigation. He then invited members of the Coalition to comment. Simone Sagovic announced that there was a recent meeting of the Community Benefits Coalition that approximately 120 people attended. Various committees are being established. She invited those who want additional information to contact the group at 313-843-8056. It was noted in this discussion that the Michigan Department of Transportation had advised Representative Tobocman on the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project that a number of mitigation measures recommended by the community had been incorporated into that project. Joe Corradino indicated that this would affect the DRIC project. Delores Leonard asked if these recommendations are legally binding. Joe Corradino indicated that he has been advised that all mitigation items included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, as well as the Record of Decision, are enforceable and can be acted upon in a court by a single individual.

Other Business

Tom Cervenak spoke of recent meetings held by Representative Tobocman and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority on the type of assistance that MSHDA could provide the community with respect to housing.

Richard Rosen indicated that he had heard that the Ambassador Bridge interests were allowing the bridge to run down on purpose so they can build a new bridge. Andy Ziegler with MDOT indicated that MDOT and FHWA had seen the inspection reports of the Ambassador Bridge and that the bridge is in sound condition.

John Nagy then indicated that, while he no longer lives in Delray, he still owns property there and wants to see more housing. He noted that he was opposed to the DRIC when it first began. But he later realized that this was an opportunity to help the area. If redevelopment can occur, a better quality of life will come to those who have chosen to remain in Delray.

Public Comments

John Bendzick indicated that the DRIC process is on the right track. He noted that the project should not be distracted by developments of the Ambassador Bridge.

Next LAC/LAG Meeting

The next meeting of the Local Advisory Council and Local Agency Group would be held on August 27th at the Dearborn Doubletree Hotel.

With that, the meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.