

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting
September 24, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School**

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting and asked for introductions.

Meeting Conduct Procedures

Mohammed Alghurabi explained that public comments would be allowed at the beginning and end of the meeting.

Agenda Review

Mohammed Alghurabi reviewed the agenda for the evening's business and asked if there were any questions or additions. There were none.

Public Comments

Richard Rosen indicated that on his way to the meeting he took some time to drive around the area of Berwalt Manor. He noticed that some of the residents were congregating in front of the building. He hoped that there would be mitigation for those people – the ramps will be so close to the building that the noise levels will be so high that their quality of life will be bad.

Mohammed Alghurabi stated that Bruce Campbell will discuss in further detail the affects on Berwalt Manor. However, as has been reported in the past, MDOT has been in communication with the owners of the building so they are well aware of the latest alternative and what is going on with the study.

LAC/LAG August 27th Meeting Notes

There were no comments to the meeting notes.

Recap of I-75 Pedestrian Crossings

Bruce Campbell reviewed the alternative by pointing out significant items such as:

- The bridge alignment.
- Green Street Boulevard and properties on Post that would be affected.

- Plaza boundaries and layout. The General Services Administration is the landlord for the federal government and they will have the final say on how the plaza is configured.
- The types of buildings inside the plaza.
- Storm water retention.
- The type of fence/wall that will surround the plaza: what kind of decorative pattern could be used which would help when considering the type of views from Fort Wayne.
- Campbell Street will become a narrow boulevard from Jefferson to the rail line.
- Livernois will become a two-way street when it crosses I-75 while Dragoon will be closed at the north side I-75 service drive.
- All pedestrian crossings along I-75 will be 14 foot wide, except the one near Junction, which will be 8 feet wide.
- The pedestrian bridges would come over the freeway and land between the service drive and freeway.
- Input from the city of Detroit is still awaited in regards to traffic control along the service drives at locations at which the pedestrian crossings land.
- Waterman Street as a vehicular crossing will be eliminated. A pedestrian crossing will be in this general location.
- A new railroad connection will be placed at Bacon St. to remove as many trains as possible moving between the area of the Produce Terminal and the area under the Ambassador Bridge.
- The ramps will clear Fort Street with direct connections to I-75.
- The Springwells interchange with I-75 will be straightened to better handle the truck traffic at that intersection
- Berwalt Manor will have an exit onto Campbell St. The plaza exit ramp in front of the building will be at around ground level. Mitigation for the building may include but is not limited to triple-pane glass windows, and a central air conditioning system.

Recap of I-75 Interchanges/Service Drives

Clark to Dragoon

- North (upriver) of Clark, the on/off ramps will remain the same but on the south (downriver) side they will change. Travelers will move an extra two blocks compared to currently to use the latter ramps.

- Springwells will be straightened out. As a result the gas station on the southeast side of the intersection will have to be acquired the gas station on the opposite side of the street will remain.
- The question has been raised regarding Green Street pedestrian crossing over I-75 and what could be done about adding landscaping. The issue is that the addition concrete boxes for planters and such would require that the foundation of the crossing would be wider and deeper because of the weight. This will affect the 54 inch water main at this location.

Delores Leonard asked for clarification on the placement of noise walls. Her understanding is that the walls could not be placed on the north side only on the south side of I-75. Bruce Campbell noted the opposite is the case. There are no land uses on the south side that require/can justify a noise wall.

Richard Rosen stated that he would recommend that windows be replaced in the Berwalt Building to help the people living there. Mohammed Alghurabi stated that we are looking at the replacement of the windows and other forms of mitigation to accommodate the people in the building.

Richard Rosen stated that if mitigation is not approved by the federal government that MDOT should pay for the mitigation.

Commissioner Iona Varga asked for clarification on what would happen to the Springwells/Fort Streets intersection. Bruce Campbell responded that enough space will be provided to allow it easy to make right turns from Fort to Springwells. In addition the traffic signals will be synchronized to better coordinate travel along Fort Street.

Margaret Garry asked when the conversation pertaining to the aesthetic treatments will take place? Mohammed Alghurabi stated that the conversation has been ongoing since 2006 and will continue into the design phase.

A question was asked pertaining to the future of All Saints Church? Mohammed Alghurabi noted that direct conversation has taken place with the pastor of All Saints Church. The DRIC project will not impact their church directly. There is some concern about construction at Springwells.

There is also a concern about signs being placed now that say “Do Not Block” for the drive into the church parking lot.

Delores Leonard stated that the signs were not there and truck back-ups affect the All Saints Church. Mohammed Alghurabi stated that he will follow-up regarding the signs at All Saints Church.

Tom Cervenak asked if U-turns will be allowed on Green Street and if there was a possibility of doing something to increase the width of the sidewalks and making some aesthetic improvements. Bruce Campbell said there will be no U-turns on Green. The width of sidewalks will be re-examined. Mohammed Alghurabi stated that they will have to work with the City of Detroit on that because Green is a city street.

Margaret Gerry asked if it were possible to have a maintenance agreement of landscaping at the Plaza and with the City of Detroit? Mohammed Alghurabi said that will be looked into.

It was asked if the ramps were wide enough to accommodate traffic in the event of a breakdown? And, if the entrances to the plaza could accommodate the extra traffic? Bruce Campbell responded that the ramps are wide enough to keep traffic moving while repairs or assistance is being given to a disabled vehicle. The ramps are 30 foot wide.

Recap of Discussions with Community Benefits Coalition (CBC)

Tom Cervenak read the following statement from the CBC.

“The Community benefits Coalition has been glad to have the opportunity to be in dialog with MDOT about the mitigations and benefits the community is seeking in exchange for hosting the project, and we feel some progress is being made.

This week MDOT participated in a meeting with us about truck traffic routing and issues in the 48217 zip code area that raised important concerns.

We have begun meetings with City departments and are currently organizing, with Representative Steve Tobocman, a meeting of potential partners for various

aspects of neighborhood revitalization. We are looking forward to what may develop from that.

Much of what we are trying to achieve will take time and building many relationships, as well as receiving funding. We are concerned about the benefits being enforceable in the future, beyond when MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration will have moved on to other projects.

We have talked about a legally-enforceable Community Benefits Agreement, which has been done in other communities. We understand that MDOT believes that the Final Environmental Impact Statement -- through the guiding NEPA law -- will provide the necessary enforceable mechanism to protect the community's interests.

We are fortunate to have some free legal assistance and we are looking at all of our options to be sure the community's interests are served. The economic benefits to the region with this project will be long-lasting and we look forward to a viable neighborhood for just as long.

We felt it is important to report on the issues that we have concerns with and that will need to be addressed further for the community. The issues are:

- 1. Locating a north-south truck service road that would protect the remaining neighborhood. We suggest one should be considered further between the plaza and the north-south rail line, where there is vacant Brownfield property. (It could start at Jefferson and curve toward Springwells after it crosses the east-west rail line.)*
- 2. Air quality and health monitoring – both baseline and ongoing to be sure the additional diesel burden is addressed. (The area is still out of compliance for small particulate).*
- 3. Protecting Southwestern High School with filtration, windows, and an indoor recreation facility.*
- 4. Supporting a local job hiring program.*

5. *Incorporating alternative power generation into the project design for a real bridge of the future.*
6. *Having a community role in the bridge governance.*
7. *Providing housing redevelopment in the surrounding area.*

We look forward to making progress on these issues with MDOT and FHWA.

Moving of CSS Public Meetings to October LAC/LAG

Mohammed Alghurabi stated that the meeting previously scheduled for this month has been moved to October and it will start at 6 p.m. We will have CSS sketches of what the area could look like at that meeting.

Continued Update of Status of FEIS

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that we will be finished by the end of the year and have a Record of Decision by the beginning of 2009.

Final EIS Table of Contents/What to Expect

Mohammed Alghurabi reviewed the DRAFT Table of Contents of the FEIS and provided some details of what could be expected.

Other LAC/LAG Business

None was presented at this time

Public Comments

Tom Cervenak asked what could be done for Green Street to make it more aesthetically pleasing? He understands that there are restrictions to what can be done but he would hope that at a minimum there could be something that could be done.

Delores Leonard asked what can be done to preserve the historic buildings in Delray such as St. Paul AME? What provision is there to move or save those buildings? Can those buildings be relocated to Fort Wayne? Mohammed Alghurabi stated that the point is well taken; however, there are limits on what can be done at Fort Wayne as part of the DRIC. To move a building into Fort Wayne creates an issue in which is considered a “use” of the property which is not allowed by federal law as part of a federal project like the DRIC.

Tom Cervenak asked for clarification on the Table of Contents because he was confused on the subject of mitigation. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the items he was looking for are located in the section called the “Green Sheet”.

A question was asked regarding the properties on Green Street and if they would be acquired? Mohammed Alghurabi stated that they would not be acquired.

Frank Rodriguez asked a question related to a comment in the meeting notes that spoke to a legislative stalemate over the Michigan Department of Transportation’s budget and if this were resolved? Margaret Gerry stated that a tentative agreement had been reached and that MDOT can continue forward with the remainder of the study.

Mohammed Alghurabi stated that at the next meeting that he is going to have the Gateway project spokesperson present the latest developments in the project.

Richard Rosen commented that he would like to see more representation from the residents on the Canadian side of the border.

Next LAC/LAG Meeting

October 29th at 6 p.m.