

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory/Local Agency Group
Meeting Notes
December 10, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School**

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions/Agenda/Meeting Conduct

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting and offered a special thanks to Southwestern High School for hosting the meeting in the auditorium. He reviewed the agenda. A discussion of the local traffic effects of the DRIC and DIFT was added to the agenda at the request of Mrs. Leonard.

Mohammed noted that the principal focus of the meeting is to review the contents of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and to provide an overview of the Preferred Alternative. He indicated each LAC member received a copy of the FEIS. It is in the depositories, as listed in the handout, as well as posted on the Web site.

Public Comments

Tom Cervenak said he had been with the LAC since near the beginning of the DRIC when some in the community opposed the project. He and others had tried to make the proposed project into a “win-win” situation geared to redevelopment of Delray. He believes the Green Sheet and FEIS do not show the necessary commitment, especially to housing. The MSHDA efforts on housing do not seem to be going anywhere. He feels that if there is a choice between a bridge and no development or no bridge and no development, he would go with the latter.

John Bendzick said he had been continuously checking, and the Canadians want to move forward.

A Delray resident said he felt anything that happens in Delray is a good thing.

Scott Briggs of the CBC said he believes it is possible to develop the bridge with more benefits to the community.

LAC/LAG Meeting Notes

The amended notes of October 29 and those of November 19 were reviewed. There were no suggested changes.

Presentation on Preferred Alternative and FEIS

Joe Corradino used a series of slides to discuss the DRIC study process and the analyses that led to the identification of the Preferred Alternative. He also summarized the environmental and social impacts of that alternative and the mitigation and community enhancements associated with it. He was especially descriptive in his presentation as visually impaired persons were in attendance. At the end of the presentation, he summarized the benefits and impacts of the No Build Alternative and the Preferred Alternative. He noted the Preferred Alternative's cost is estimated at \$1.85 billion. He then asked for questions/comments.

Q. What triggers the Environmental Justice analysis?

R. The purpose of the EJ Executive Order is to protect minority and low-income people. EJ is applied when there is a high concentration of these peoples. He said the analysis is in Section 3 of the FEIS and mitigation is on the Green Sheet in the FEIS following Section 4.

Q. What about local traffic and the DRIC bridge?

R. 99 percent of the traffic on the DRIC bridge will be to and from I-75.

Q. What is the process/recruitment for construction jobs?

R. The concept is to provide job training and English as a Second Language (ESL), where needed, to help some be better equipped to get jobs. More specifics will be provided as time goes on and at later meetings of the LAC.

C. *The City of Detroit requires that 51 percent of jobs be given to Detroit residents.*
R. That is possible where the project is paid for with City money. The DRIC is a federal/state project. Therefore, it is not possible to direct jobs as the City does.

C. *Please explain bridge type and Crossing X-10A.*
R. Crossing X-10A was so long (1.3 kilometers) that a cable-stay bridge was not being considered (as no such bridge has been built in the North America) and as a suspension bridge would be the longest in America. This caused additional cost for the X-10A bridge and, therefore, further risk to the DRIC cost and schedule. So, a bridge at crossing X-10A is not the preferred crossing.

Q. *Will my property at 6330 Lafayette be taken?*

R. No.

Q. *Some time ago I had understood the railroad tracks in Delray would be preserved, but you said something about removing it.*

R. The comment during the presentation was that the trains on the rail line would be removed, but the track would stay.

Q. *Once the Record of Decision is signed, what are the steps to the ground breaking?*

R. There would be 18 months of right-of-way acquisition. There would be no construction until 2010.

Q. *What about funding?*

R. The bridge would be financed with the tolls. The interchange would be publicly funded. All the funding is not worked out. And, the Michigan State Legislature will have to pass legislation allowing for tolling, involvement of the private sector in a public-private partnership, and DRIC construction.

Q. How does the DRIC project affect the second span at the Ambassador Bridge?

R. They are totally independent projects.

Q. Mohammed Alghurabi asked the Detroit International Bridge Company representative if their planned span was a replacement span.

R. The Detroit International Bridge Company representative said it was.

Q. You implied there could be some kind of concessionaire. I assumed the state of Michigan would get a loan and build the bridge and get tolls.

R. As was stated, tolls will be the funding source for the bridge. How that funding will be established is not yet decided. A public-private partnership may build and, perhaps, operate/maintain the bridge. But government will retain ownership and control. The legislature will have a say in all that.

Q. The pedestrian bridges are all shown with ramps leading to them. The road bridges with sidewalks are not. Why are ramps needed with the pedestrian bridges?

R. The pedestrian bridges are located over the high points of I-75, while I-75 is at its low points under the road bridges. So, the pedestrian crossings must be higher and, therefore, ramps are needed to access them. These ramps must meet Americans with Disabilities standards.

C. As a representative of the Fort Wayne Advisory Council, I would like to thank you for the meeting you set up with us. We believe the project represents a hindrance to our conduct of large scale events at Fort Wayne. We will be sending a rebuttal to your findings related to the Fort.

R. Comment acknowledged.

Q. Will my property at 351 Campbell be affected by the project?

R. No.

Q. I have been reading about the project and about the Ambassador Bridges actions to build a new bridge. So, I went over to Sandwichtown to look. I found a bunch of boarded up buildings that looked abandoned and what looked like a bridge being built. Then on the U.S. side, I saw a bridge deck being built by Fort Street. What's going on?

R. The Bridge Company has a proposal that must be reviewed by the U.S. Coast Guard for approval. On the Canadian side, the review will be by the Port of Windsor and the Canadian federal

government. So, government on both sides of the border is involved in the decision-making regarding that the second span of the Ambassador Bridge.

Role of the LAC/LAG Post Record of Decision

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated the LAC will continue to meet, but a schedule has not yet been set. In discussions with representatives of the City of Detroit, it was clear they wanted to have separate meetings, so the Local Agency Group (LAG) that had been merged with the LAC would be split out again. Likely SEMCOG and Wayne County would be invited to these meetings, as well. They would be during working hours, while LAC meetings would continue to be held in the evening.

Q. What about those design meetings?

R. Mohammed Alghurabi said there will also be Context Sensitive Solution meetings. These will be public meetings, as in the past.

Canadian Process

Dave Wake of the Ontario Ministry of Transport explained that Public Information Open Houses were held November 24 and 25. About 1,500 people attended. Written comments on the information presented are due by December 12. These will be responded to in the Environmental Assessment to be completed by the end of the month. The agency approval process will take another six months. Meanwhile, in Canada, right-of-way acquisition and design are moving forward.

Q. Does Canada have a permit like the Presidential Permit in the U.S.?

R. Yes, it has something like that.

Q. Is there money in Canada to do this project?

R. Federal and provincial funding is in place.

DIFT and DRIC Traffic

Joe Corradino used graphics that showed the DRIC area and the DIFT rail yard to demonstrate the relationship between the two projects. He spoke about the relationships of the projects and their traffic.

At the Livernois-Junction Yard, CSX, NS and CP will operate. CP will be new to that area occupying land to be acquired on the north side of Kronk Street. CN will not participate at the yard, but is part of the project in other ways.

The road system surrounding these projects has a large amount of excess capacity. There will be no congestion caused by the DRIC or DIFT.

With DIFT, on the east side of the yard, all the trucks will use Livernois north to/from I-94. The I-94 interchange will be improved and the gate to Livernois built so trucks can only go to/from the north. Further, the removal of the I-75 interchange at Livernois/Dragoon will reinforce this need to use I-94 and Livernois to enter the terminal from the north. Also, the existing Dix/Waterman/Vernor gate into the yard will be closed. This will lessen traffic in neighborhoods and place it on a road—Livernois—that can handle it with no congestion. Likewise, terminal access from the west will use I-94/Wyoming Avenue, not local streets.

Joe Corradino showed a slide of the local road system in Delray that had the percentage distribution of trucks on the north-south roads. Heaviest truck use is currently on Dearborn, Westend, and Clark. With the project eliminating truck movements through the plaza area, trucks would have to shift. The greatest shifts would be to Clark and to Westend. International traffic – bridge traffic – will increase. But, local traffic is going down as documented in a SEMCOG report. The DRIC analysis assumed traffic would not continue to go down, but increase. This makes sure the worst case was analyzed.

Comments/Questions

- C. *John Nagy said he was not speaking for any group, but for himself. He said he was disappointed with the lack of progress on the Community Benefits Program (CBP) requests. He felt that many of the benefits were items for which he already paid taxes. He said he had hoped the future in Delray would be made better by the DRIC, but now felt Delray would go down with or without the DRIC. Of the 62 items submitted by the Community Benefits Coalition, almost all had come back “no.” He does not consider that MDOT working together with the community. He prefers to be disappointed without a bridge than with a bridge.*
- R. It is important to note that the combined cost of community benefits for the DIFT and DRIC projects is almost \$40 million. There is no housing in this, because MDOT cannot do housing.

- C. *Simone Sagovac said she had particular concerns: 1) she wanted to make sure there are guarantees that those relocated would be compensated enough; 2) she said there should be funding to upgrade existing trucks; MDEQ supports this; and, 3) though MDOT is spending \$40 million on enhancements on the two projects, other projects in the nation are spending up to 15 percent.*
- R. Comment acknowledged.
- C. *Scott Briggs said to put the \$40 million in perspective, the study cost is \$33 million. Timing is a concern; they want more time to comment on the FEIS.*
- R. Comment acknowledged.
- C. *Lisa Goldstein said that 100 trucks may not sound like much, but that's a lot if they are on your street. CBC still wants a truck route.*
- R. Comment acknowledged.
- C. *John Bendzick said he had been in the neighborhood and up and down Kronk for many years and felt any investment, like that of the railroads, would be good. The projects just need acceptance.*
- R. Comment acknowledged.
- C. *Mr. Rosen said he applauded Mr. Corradino on the routing of trucks with the DIFT and DRIC projects. He said he was in sympathy with the representatives of Fort Wayne, regarding access and signing and said it was as important as Berwalt Manor, which could be rebuilt. Fort Wayne is unique.*
- R. Consultation had occurred with the Fort representatives and had found adverse impacts to Berwalt Manor, but not Fort Wayne. Nonetheless, Fort Wayne is getting a lot of attention from the City of Detroit, the Department of Interior, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation. They, together, are working on the list of things that can be done for the Fort through the DRIC.

Next LAC Meeting

Mohammed Alghurabi said the next LAC had not yet been scheduled but would likely occur on the last Wednesday of January.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.