

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group
Meeting Notes
February 25, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School**

Purpose: To review the progress of the Detroit River International Crossing Project and discuss the process of moving forward into the design phase.

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting and asked for introductions. He then explained the meeting conduct procedures which would allow public comment at the beginning and the end of the meeting allowing the LAC the opportunity to conduct its discussions uninterrupted in the core of the agenda.

Agenda Review

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

Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

LAC/LAG January 28th Meeting Notes

No changes were requested.

Meetings Going Forward

Mohammed Alghurabi commented on his expectations for future meetings with the following groups:

- LAC – He indicated that he expects the Local Advisory Council to continue to meet for as long as the project goes on, including the period of construction. The exact frequency, for the time being, will be monthly. Eventually, the frequency may be adjusted. He urged continued participation and asked those in attendance to reach out to others so that they may be involved.

- LAG – Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the Local Agency Group would involve such government agencies as the City of Detroit, Detroit Public Schools, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the City of Dearborn, and SEMCOG, to name a few. He noted that he was asked by the Community Benefits Coalition to be permitted to participate in these meetings. He had advised the CBC that he will make a determination after he confers with others. But, he indicated that the meetings would be very technical. The frequency of the meetings is yet to be determined.

- Team II – Mohammed Alghurabi noted that Team II would involve the City of Detroit departments in one-on-one discussions with MDOT. These meetings are also expected to be very technical. They are likely to be conducted monthly.

- Community Benefits Coalition – Mohammed Alghurabi noted that MDOT met with the CBC the previous day. Information continues to be exchanged. He noted that a number of items are being “parked” for further discussions. These include the definition of enhancements versus mitigation and job training. He expects that the CBC will meet again in March. Mohammed Alghurabi asked CBC members to comment. Tom Cervenak responded by indicating that the objective is to keep the lines of communication open with MDOT.

- Contact Sensitive Solutions – Mohammed Alghurabi pledged to continue to work with the community to refine the look and fit of the various DRIC components – bridge plaza and interchange – with the community. He indicated that a design guide would likely be developed in draft form for review with the LAC.

Other Meetings – MSHDA

Tom Cervenak indicated that he had been meeting with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. He indicated that MSHDA has hired a consultant to prepare a redevelopment plan by taking what presently exists and developing a “village concept.” He expected a detailed operations plan to come out of the work which includes the various

participants/players responsible for certain actions and a timeline for action. Tom Cervenak stressed that he hoped that federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds would be made available to Delray to move the plan into reality. A proposal for such funding is due in about a month.

Rashida Tlaib indicated that she expects the consultants to do an extensive survey of the area. This will help in future funding opportunities.

Mohammed Alghurabi noted that MDOT will continue to work with MSHDA and its consultant. He noted that MDOT has a wealth of information it will make available to help.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Mohammed Alghurabi noted that he had received a number of calls from people in the community asking “is my property to be acquired by the DRIC project?” He stressed that he was thorough in getting his response to ensure that accurate information is provided. In some cases, a response may take a day or so, he advised the LAC. Additionally, Mohammed Alghurabi pledged to inform the LAC of any major property acquisition to be undertaken for the DRIC. He stressed that very limited funds are now available. He also noted that it will be difficult to accept hardship cases.

Joe Corradino noted that, in light of the conversation earlier about another consultant in the community doing a survey, coordination is necessary because homeowners and renters in the area are extremely sensitive about outside people often portraying themselves as a representative of the government interested in buying houses.

Rashida Tlaib stressed that if individuals are trying to sell their home and have any questions, they should consult with the Michigan Legal Services Agency.

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that he was developing a checklist with items to be “parked” to be resolved with the LAC and the Community Benefits Coalition. One item includes air quality and the installation of monitoring devices. Also a number of practical steps could be taken in the

community to address air quality issues like retrofitting trucks from existing fleets in the area. On job training, Mohammed noted that Mrs. Leonard had asked about training people in the community to have DRIC project related jobs. Mohammed stated he wants to launch that training effort as soon as possible. He asked Mrs. Leonard to comment further. She indicated that she would e-mail Mohammed on the matter.

There were then a series of announcements including the following:

Representative Tlaib noted that she was trying to re-start the group called Bridge Watch Detroit. The first meeting will be on Saturday, February 28th. She also noted that the U.S. Coast Guard was having a meeting on March 17th on the draft Finding of No Significant Impact associated with the second span of the Ambassador Bridge. She wanted to encourage everyone to attend; her goal that is as many as 300 people would participate.

John Nagy wanted those in zip code 48217 to be aware that Representative Tlaib was hosting a forum on potential City of Detroit action to extend Systematic Recycling's permit to operate in the Delray area. He indicated that the operation "doesn't pass the smell test" and, therefore, permission to continue should not be granted by the City. He noted that the meeting would be March 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at the Delray Neighborhood House. Mr. Rosen asked if the community had been in contact with the City with respect to Systematic Recycling. Representative Tlaib responded "yes."

Simone Sagovac noted that the Community Benefits Coalition had a meeting in January at which 85 people attended even though there was inclement weather. She noted that she is cooperating with the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation as they conduct their research in the area. She also indicated that the board of the CBC had voted to incorporate as a 501(c)3 organization for various purposes. She said that an election of CBC board members would be held in April. A mailing notifying the community of such would go out in March. Finally, she indicated that the CBC got some additional funding to continue its work.

Public Comments

Mr. Rosen stated that, several months ago, the question arose about using a pedestrian overpass and having to walk across the service drive from the foot of the overpass. He wondered if the issue of how to handle those crossing with signs and/or signals was being addressed. Mohammed Alghurabi responded by indicating that that was an item which will be addressed as part of the continuing collaboration with the City of Detroit. Any decisions on the matter would be made known to the LAC.

Mr. Benson then indicated that he supports the CBC being allowed to participate in any and all meetings affecting his community as it relates to the DRIC.

With that, the meeting ended about 8:00 p.m. with Mohammed Alghurabi indicating that the next meeting would be on March 25th at Southwestern High School.