

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Joint Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group
Meeting Notes
April 22, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
Delray Community House

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting by asking for introductions.

Agenda Review

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any suggested changes or additions to the agenda. There were none.

Meeting Conduct Procedures

Mohammed Alghurabi explained the procedures for the evening's meeting.

Public Comments

C: *A representative of Young Detroit Builders expressed concern about jobs. His experience on the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project had been that individuals had gone through job training, but that they never got a job. He asked how the DRIC project would be different and how it could be demonstrated that there would be jobs for local persons.*

R: Mohammed Alghurabi said it was MDOT's highest priority to provide jobs to local residents to the extent that it could be done. Many people were watching out for the public in that regard, especially Representative Tlaib and the City of Detroit. He noted that the next day there is a forum designed to inform contractors about the DRIC and get the word out on the jobs that it would provide. He cautioned though that it would be at least another year before construction actually begins. He said that MDOT was

collaborating with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) on job training.

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Mrs. Leonard asked that her comments on page three be clarified to note that she wanted air quality monitoring at Southwest High School inside and outside the school and that a baseline be established. She also said, with respect to her comments about jobs, that while she stresses local residents lack skills and need to be trained, it is necessary that those who get training get jobs. She asked that that be put in the notes.

Mohammed Alghurabi said that, with respect to job training, MDOT was coordinating with the City of Detroit and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, among others. He noted this is the time to develop the strategy with respect to jobs – prior to actual construction.

C: Mrs. Leonard said that she understood that MDOT had Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) requirements.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that MDOT is committed to providing opportunities to minorities and women. That has been one topic in discussions with the Community Benefits Coalition (CBC).

Q: Who would be doing the hiring and firing; for example, on the plaza.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that plaza development will be the responsibility of the General Services Administration (GSA). A public-private partnership may design and build the bridge. The legislation for the public-private partnership is expected to emphasize that the concessionaire needs to hire locally.

Q: Will the plaza be federal property?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that it has not yet been determined if GSA will buy the land from MDOT or lease it.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Presentation by the CBC

Mohammed Alghurabi introduced several members of the Community Benefits Coalition noting that their presentation will be on the development of housing in Delray. MDOT cannot build housing. But, to the extent possible, it supports the attempt to help residents stay in Delray.

Scott Brines, a resident of Delray and member of the CBC, opened the presentation. Tom Cervenak of People's Community Service followed. He said that the non-profit organization Bridging Communities will act as the applicant for federal money through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). That money, together with funds from MDOT paid to those who are to be relocated by the DRIC, is expected to equal the purchase price for 26 homes to be constructed in West Delray.

Gerardo Evangelista of Bridging Communities explained that Bridging Communities provides services to elders. In Southwest Detroit, they've successfully completed several high-quality, energy-efficient, low-maintenance dwelling units. He said that, with respect to Delray, everything depends on the success of the application for federal funding through MSHDA. He said if anyone had questions, they could call him at 313-361-6377.

Chris Bradley of the Warm Training Center explained that homes would be about 1,200-1,500 ft². He noted that the homes anticipated for Delray would have utility bills on the order of \$800 for a year.

Scott Brines closed this portion of the program thanking MDOT for their support and noting that the CBC is still concerned about truck traffic.

Comments from LAC

C: *Mrs. Leonard wanted a clarification with respect to the housing. She asked if there were two populations involved -- one for those with foreclosed homes and the other being those to be relocated.*

R: Tom Cervenak clarified that the lots to be purchased for the new homes were foreclosed for tax purposes. They are vacant lots outside of the DRIC acquisition area on which new

houses would be built for those relocated by the DRIC. There was no program for those whose properties had been foreclosed upon.

Q: Mrs. Leonard said that she understood there were about 250 dwelling units needed for the project and asked how all that need could be met with 26 homes?

R: Joe Corradino explained that, accounting for the fact that a number of the relocatees were in apartments, there were, perhaps, 200 single-family dwellings involved. A fourth of those to be relocated indicated in a 2007 survey that they wanted to remain in Delray. That accounts for 50 houses. This means the need to stay in Delray of half of those 50 could be satisfied through this first application for funding just discussed by the CBC. If the first effort is successful, there could be a second phase.

Q: With reference to jobs and local hiring, will that apply to the housing development?

R: The representative from Bridging Communities said that, in his past work, more than 50 percent of the labor force had been Detroit residents.

Q: Would those workers come from Delray?

R: The Bridging Communities representative said he couldn't specify how many jobs would be for Delray residents stressing that it all depends on the skills that are required and the contractors involved.

Q: How will the people to be relocated who improve their houses be reimbursed?

R: Paul Sander of MDOT Real Estate said that homes to be purchased for the DRIC Project will be evaluated based on their quality. Improvements will be reflected in the total value of the house. It's important to keep receipts for repairs, but there will not be a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement for home improvement repairs.

Q: How will the economy affect the worth of the houses?

R: The requirement is that those relocated will receive the fair value of the house, plus an additional 25 percent. Next, they have to be relocated to a comparable dwelling. It must be "decent, safe and sanitary." If such a decent, safe and sanitary house costs more than

the house being vacated, then MDOT must make up the difference in the payment to the relocatee.

Q: Where would this housing that you're talking about be built?

R: Steve Brines said that it would be in an area west of the DRIC plaza all the way over to the Delray Neighborhood House and between the railroad tracks and Jefferson Avenue.

Q: How can I volunteer?

R: Tom Cervenak said volunteers were much appreciated. He went on to say that People's Community Services was trying to develop a home repair program through the City of Detroit for façade improvements. That might be a place for volunteers to participate as well as in the development of new housing.

Q: Would all the homes have the same floor plan?

R: There might be three plans, each with three bedrooms and two baths. There would be various options for the interior and exterior, including front porches and off-street parking. The builder would like to provide at least a pad for a future garage, if not the garage itself, depending on budget. Geri Ayers added that building on larger lots meant that there was more room for things such as garages.

Q: If there are more than 26 applicants for this program, how will the selection go?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi stated that, if necessary, there could be a lottery to determine the priority. He added that if anyone within the plaza area wants to state/restate in writing their commitment to stay in the area, they should write him. In any event, those in Delray to be relocated by the DRIC Project will have the first priority on the housing.

Q: Is there enough vacant land that had been foreclosed in Delray?

R: Yes.

Team II and Local Agency Group

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated the City of Detroit continues to work to ensure that the issues it raised during the EIS process are addressed. The Local Agency Group (LAG) will be separated from the Local Advisory Council (LAC).

Delray Truck Analysis

Mohammed Alghurabi said that, due to the length of the meeting, the truck analysis will be presented at a later date.

Public Forum for Private Sector Review

Mohammed Alghurabi explained that the Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a program wherein potential contractors can become familiar with the DRIC project. The meeting will be held downtown in the Chambers' office the next day. He asked if there were any comments or questions on this topic. There were none.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Tom Cervenak thanked Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision for working with the University of Michigan to plant 30 evergreen trees along the back of the community house.

Other Public Comments

Q: An individual asked if the use of a Private-Public Partnership is a legal requirement.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi said P3's are not now authorized under Michigan law. Legislation to create the engagement of public/private partnerships is being developed.

Next LAC/LAG Meeting

The next meeting was set for the last Wednesday in May, May 27th, at Southwest High School.