

**Detroit River International Crossing Study**  
**Joint Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting**  
**Notes**  
**May 27, 2009, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Southwestern High School**

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

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting by asking everyone introduce themselves.

**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. The public will have time at the start and finish of the meeting to ask questions/make comments. The LAC/LAG members would conduct their business uninterrupted in the core of the meeting.

**Public Comments**

*Q: What is the importance of a recent letter written by Michigan Congressmen to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and how does it affect legislation?*

**R:** Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the letter was important. With respect to enabling legislation, it is needed at the state level, not the federal level. Recently a bill was introduced that would allow a Private-Public Partnership to be created. It is packaged with a number of other bills dealing with transportation.

*Q: Will the much-discussed Private-Public Partnership Plan (P3) last indefinitely?*

R: Mohammed Alghurabi and Joe Corradino responded that, typically, a P3 would last for a term of 30 years, or maybe up to 45 years. However, the project's ownership will always reside with government.

*Q: While the private partner can assist in financing the project to a significant degree, will it have a strong say in what the bridge will look like in an effort to minimize costs?*

R: Joe Corradino and Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the P3 would not be selected only on the basis of cost. P3 selection will be a value-based decision in which cost will be one of several factors. The other factors to be taken into consideration are yet to be developed but will be in the public record as part of the solicitation of private partners for the DRIC project.

### **LAC/LAG April 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Notes**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any comments, corrections or revisions to the April 22 LAC/LAG meeting notes. There were none.

### **Community Benefits Coalition (CBC) Comments on Delray Redevelopment Plan**

Scott Brines indicated that the grant application for new housing (26 units) has been advanced through the first screening at the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and that a final decision is awaited. Lisa Goldstein indicated that nominations for the CBC board of directors will take place on June 3rd at 6 p.m. Results of a recent mailing will also be reviewed.

### **Status of Team II and Local Agency Group**

Mohammed Alghurabi reported that a meeting was held on May 1<sup>st</sup> with the City of Detroit's Team II. The Planning and Development Department, in conjunction with the Environmental Affairs Office, is assembling a number of city departments to discuss how to move forward on the DRIC. These discussions will include various break-out sessions to "drill down" on topics such as workforce training, English as a Second Language (ESL), traffic-related matters, etc. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that a meeting was held earlier in the day with the City's workforce development organization to advance the training/ESL program. Mohammed also

noted that this is one of the many steps being taken by MDOT to advance the implementation of the DRIC mitigation/enhancement measures.

Tom Cervenak noted that Peoples' Community Services would be happy to host any training at the Delray House.

Mrs. Leonard wanted the record to reflect that she had hand-carried a letter to Mr. Bobb at the Detroit Public School System about the DRIC and its relationship to Southwestern High School. A representative of the Detroit Public School System, who was in attendance, indicated that she would answer any questions the group may have on behalf of DPS.

### **Recent Developments on the DRIC**

Representative Rashida Tlaib spoke about the recent legislation introduced by Representative Gonzalez to the House of Representatives. This is a package of bills that will address the Private-Public Partnership that is very important to the DRIC.

Marc Hesse asked about environmental cleanup of the properties in the Delray area. Joe Corradino responded that those properties requiring remediation that will be acquired by the DRIC are listed on the project's Web site in the documentation known as the PSI Report. He noted it is government's responsibility to remediate these sites to a level that will reflect their ultimate use. Marc Hesse indicated that there are number of other properties that need to be cleaned up including industrial properties. Joe Corradino responded that of those properties outside the DRIC will be the responsibility of those parties that redevelop them.

Tom Cervenak asked about the lawsuit that was filed by the Detroit International Bridge Company. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that it is not appropriate for MDOT or its representatives to comment on that specific lawsuit. The attorneys from the Federal Highway Administration and other federal agencies will prepare a response to the lawsuit.

Tom Cervenak asked whether the lawsuit could last as long as two, three, four, or five years. Joe Corradino indicated that he could not comment on the specific lawsuit filed by the DIBC.

He did note that it was his experience on other lawsuits involving the National Environmental Policy Act that they do not take two to five years. Usually, the courts act expeditiously in dealing with these suits.

Lisa Goldstein asked if there was any way to stop the project, such as an injunction. Joe Corradino indicated that an injunction, or a temporary restraining order (TRO), that may be requested in such a NEPA lawsuit is issued if there is a demonstration of irreparable harm. The court will make that judgment.

### **Public Forum Review for the Private Sector**

Joe Corradino indicated that the April 23<sup>rd</sup> forum to introduce the DRIC to the private sector was hosted by the Detroit Chamber of Commerce at its offices. He indicated that over 220 people attended, one-half of which were from the state of Michigan. He noted that all the materials used at that meeting, including follow-up videos, were on the project Web site. Video material had also been hosted on YouTube.

### **Other LAC/LAG Business**

No other issues were noted.

### **Other Public Comments**

Kurt Hesse asked what the biggest challenge was for the DRIC project to go forward. Joe Corradino responded that, in his mind, the hardest part of a project is getting started—getting the environmental approvals, financing and any needed legislation.

Mr. Rosen asked if irreparable harm could be proved by the Bridge Company because the DRIC bridge would take away its traffic. Joe Corradino responded that he would not comment as that was at issue in the DIBC lawsuit.

Mr. Rosen complimented MDOT for the proposals to help restore Fort Wayne.

State Representative Rashida Tlaib asked if there were people in the room who were to be acquired by the DRIC project. A few people raised their hands. She encouraged them to bring their neighbors to these meetings. She urged that, if they are approached by someone to buy their house, to call her office. She then commented on what she indicated was the essence of the DIBC lawsuit which is to label the DRIC as a “racist bridge.” She reviewed her history in addressing the community’s needs as it relates to both the DIBC/Ambassador Bridge as well as MDOT’s proposed DRIC project. She indicated that the DRIC represents a hope to revitalize Delray; such revitalization can be considered a “basic human right”. She encouraged the community to be more vocal in the fight to revitalize Delray and to resist those who would not be interested in doing that.

Representative Tlaib then indicated that the acquisition phase of the DRIC project could take up to three years, once started. This represents a huge challenge for the neighborhood. Representative Tlaib indicated she will do whatever is necessary to assist the community to achieve their goal of revitalization.

Mr. Rosen wondered if Representative Tlaib’s comments were a reflection on the work of MDOT. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the comments made by Representative Tlaib were not interpreted as a reflection on MDOT’s work. He stressed the need to keep meeting with the Local Advisory Council and the Community Benefits Coalition on a regular basis to assure that progress continues to be made.

Emma Brenson, who lives in Delray, noted she was upset with the DRIC process. She asserted that “MDOT is going to do what it very well chooses to do”. She further indicated that MDOT said the project would be finished in the fall of 2009. Mohammed responded that the Fall 2009 date is related to the Gateway Project not the DRIC.

Rashida Tlaib noted that residents of the Delray area are depending on the DRIC to come through. Both MDOT and the community need to be forthright and honest. She warned that people are tired of waiting.

Linda Wesley indicated that attorneys should be brought to a meeting to answer questions on the DIBC lawsuit. She noted that people in Delray are not going to agree 100 percent of the time, but 80 percent of those people are with MDOT on this important matter.

Mrs. Leonard asked when the Delray Truck Analysis was to be discussed. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the matter had been deleted from the agenda. Mrs. Leonard noted that this was the second time in two months that this had occurred.

**Next LAC Meeting**

The next LAC meeting is scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup> at Southwest High School. With that, the meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.