

**Detroit River International Crossing Study  
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting  
Notes  
September 29, 2010, 7:00 p.m.  
Southwestern High School**

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

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introduction/Agenda**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. He reviewed the meeting conduct procedures and agenda.

**Public Comments**

None.

**Notes of LAC/LAG Meeting of July 28, 2010 (revised) and August 25, 2010**

No further comments on revised notes of July 28, 2010.

Ms. Leonard inquired as to Tom Cervenak's request for a listing of legal actions by DIBC. Mohammed stated that the Attorney General's office was consulted and they were unable to provide a list due to the changing nature of the legal actions. A written response was sent to Mr. Cervenak. The AG's office is available to respond to specific inquiries.

Mr. John Bendzick commented on the \$550 million offer from Canada and reiterated at length his support for the DRIC project. He also stated that there needs to be a greater show of support for the project from the community, they need to stick together on this issue, in light of continued opposition to this project within the Michigan Senate.

No other comments on the August 25, 2010 notes.

## **SWCBC Update**

Debra Williams read a prepared statement (attached) from Scott Brines for the Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition (CBC).

Simone Sagovic provided CBC announcements:

Next CBC Community meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 26, 6 PM at Delray Neighborhood House.

Over 700 trucks were counted on West End Street between Jefferson and Fort between 8am and 5pm.

There will be another truck survey at Fort and Livernois & Dragoon next Wednesday and Thursday, October 6 & 7. CBC needs volunteers for 2-hours shifts to count trucks.

Community meetings at area churches are being scheduled in October/November to give people more of an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.

## **Meeting the DRIC Reporting Requirements**

Mohammed provided a legislative update. The Senate drafted a DRIC-only Public Private Partnership bill in September. The bill has been circulated to MDOT, the Governor's office, Canadian government, and interested legislators in both the House and Senate for review. Comments from MDOT, the Attorney General's office, and our Canadian partners have been forwarded to Senator Gilbert for consideration. After the review and comments there was not sufficient time in the legislative calendar to take action prior to the adjournment of the Senate for September. Senator Gilbert, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, has indicated that the revised language will be formally introduced when the Legislature reconvenes in November.

The Transportation budget passed with the following DRIC related language:

Section 384

(1) From the funds appropriated in part 1, the department may expend from October 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010 an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00 of state transportation revenue under any contract originally entered into before September 1, 2010 for the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC).

(2) From the funds appropriated in part 1, the department may expend from January 1, 2011 through May 31, 2011 \$500,000.00 of state transportation revenue under any contract originally entered into before September 1, 2010 for the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC).

(3)The department shall not commit the state to any new contract related to the DRIC, after September 1, 2010, unless the legislature has enacted specific enabling legislation to allow for the construction of DRIC.

(4) Notwithstanding (1), on or before March 31, 2011, the department shall report to the state budget director, the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on transportation, and the house and senate fiscal agencies on department activities related to the Detroit River International Crossing.

(5) If the legislature enacts specific enabling legislation for the construction of the DRIC, subsections (1), (2) and (3) do not apply once the enabling legislation goes into effect.

Mrs. Leonard stated that this was a “freeze”. Mohammed noted that budget restrictions were similar to action taken last year where there was a FY \$2.5 million cap. So it is only a limitation and becomes irrelevant if authorizing legislation is passed; we believe that MDOT will be able to do what it needs to do to prepare for passage of the authorizing legislation.

Mr. Bendzick underscored again his support for the project, and urged others to do the same and stand strong together as a community.

Mark Hesse stated that he believes Canada can do the project without the State of Michigan by partnering with the Federal government. He encouraged the community to call their legislators daily.

### **Gateway/M-85 Project Updates**

#### **Gateway – From Victor Judnic**

1. Punch (miscellaneous) work continues along all stages of the Gateway project.
2. The hearing on September 23rd in the MDOT lawsuit on DIBC did not occur and the case has been sent back to federal court by DIBC. MDOT filed a motion a few days

ago requesting Judge Duggan remand this case back to Wayne County Circuit Court. Judge Duggan quickly issued an Order requiring DIBC to file its answer to MDOT's motion to remand by Monday, Oct 4, 2010.

3. Superior Global is filing a new lawsuit which demands MDOT open the highway ramps, also apparently seek to prevent completion of the dedicated truck road, ramps, and bridges leading to S32, the truck ramp to I-75 not yet connected. They demand that truck access to Fort Street be maintained. This new case was assigned to Federal Judge Cook.
4. The lawsuit of three trucking firms trying to force MDOT to open some new ramps as part of the Gateway project has a scheduled hearing in the middle of October.

#### M-85 – From Matt Chenowyth

Removal of the existing viaduct continues; basically the entire south half of the viaduct has been removed, plus the walls.

The contractor recently submitted his preliminary removal plan for the portion over the railroad. This has not been approved by the railroad as of yet, and we suspect there will be some back and forth before it is approved.

A meeting regarding the emergency response issues in the area was held at the Detroit TSC on September 1st, between MDOT, City of Detroit, Police, Fire, EMS, and Wayne County. Representative Rashida Tlaib was also in attendance. MDOT has requested from FHWA to allow funding for additional police during the viaduct project. This funding is already in place for the Bascule Bridge project, we are trying to move it up given the impacts of the current project. The City of Detroit is going to provide MDOT an estimate of what this would cost.

#### **Post-DRIC Traffic Flow**

This item was requested by Representative Tlaib. Mohammed noted that MDOT brought presentation boards from earlier context sensitive solutions process that everyone could look at and ask questions on.

Bruce Campbell did a quick walk through of the presentation boards. Hugh McNichol described the characterization of traffic on Fort Street. Bruce Campbell noted that the Level of Service on the Fort Street intersections in 2035 would be A or B, on a scale of A to F. Mohammed noted that MDOT is aware of the ongoing truck traffic issues in the neighborhood and will continue working with the City of Detroit.

There was a question about Green Street Boulevard. Bruce described the proposed boulevard, which will start at Green and the railroad crossing and proceed south toward Jefferson, angling over toward Harrington Street. One of the objectives was to avoid sandwiching residents between the boulevard and the plaza. This was in response to comments about the original boulevard proposal which stayed with the Green Street alignment.

After the meeting participants reviewed the displays, and MDOT and Parsons answered questions regarding Fort Street.

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

City of Detroit Planning Update (John Baran):

City of Detroit held 5 meetings in September; first few had over 1,000 people in attendance, all meetings had at least 800.

There will be 40 focused topic meetings coming up. The meetings will have more content and framing. The City is looking for visionary and aspirational comments. The full process will be completed in late 2011; however, there will be immediate action items earlier. John provided the Web site address for the effort, [www.detroitworksproject.com](http://www.detroitworksproject.com).

### **Additional Public Comments**

Q. Charles Cini – What is the schedule for removing the Ambassador gas station and duty free?

R. This is dependent on the timing of the judge’s decision. The judge has indicated he would allow one year.

Q. John Nagy – asked why MDOT won’t open the ramps to the Ambassador Bridge.

R. John was referred to earlier meeting notes for statements from Victor Judnic on this topic.

**Next LAC/LAG Meeting**

The next LAC/LAG meeting will be on October 27, 2010 at Southwestern High School. With that, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

**DRIC-LAC, Sept. 29, 2010**

**CBC Comments by Debra Williams**

As you know our Coalition—your community benefits coalition—has been working hard with few resources to make sure that we do not see more harm than good come with a new bridge.

Residents have gone to Lansing, and testified at hearings, and met with individual representatives. We have been to City Council and got a resolution of support, and we have gone before many others to communicate our concerns for Delray and Southwest Detroit.

We were encouraged when the House of Representatives passed a community benefits bill to support us. But now the legislation has been held up by Republican Senate leaders and they say they do not like the community benefits bills and will not discuss them.

We must let you all know that we are concerned that after the elections a bill to support the DRIC may pass without guarantees important to the community and making it livable. There are possibly other ways to ensure what we need and we hope that MDOT, the Governor, and others will do all that they can to protect the community.

It is possible that a new bill will say that the new private operator of the bridge must include community benefits and would have to negotiate with the community.

We want any company or project coming in to make things better than when they came.

We want to see guarantees for enough new housing for all who wish to stay in Delray, and home repair funds for those who will stay and live with the project.

We need the diesel pollution from trucks addressed for the long term and we are asking for a Clean Trucks program, which has been done successfully at ports in California.

This would get filters on all old trucks to reduce pollution in the neighborhood where the

plaza will be, rather than bring more negative air impacts near Southwestern High School and homes.

We are still advocating for alternative truck routing because people should not have to live with the hundreds of trucks on streets with houses.

And we want to ensure that resources from parks that will be taken in Delray are put back into resources for new parks and green spaces in Delray.

Southwest Detroit is a growing community and we deserve to be a healthier, safer place to live and raise families. And with the most important, busiest trade crossing in the country, we believe all of these things are surely possible if we all come together for the common good.

We know our Representative Rashida Tlaib continues to fight for our best interests.

We plan to do what it takes to continue pushing for a bridge WITH benefits. We will be going back to Lansing when hearings are scheduled and we ask all of you to come along.

Let's keep up the fight for a bridge to a healthy community.

### Announcements

Next CBC Community meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 26, 6pm at Delray Neighborhood House

Truck Survey at Fort and Livernois & Dragoon – Next Wed. and Thurs, Oct. 6 & 7—We need volunteers for 2-hour shifts to count trucks....

Community meetings at area Churches are being scheduled to give people more of an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.