

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting
Notes
October 27, 2010, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School

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

MaryAnne Cuderman asked if the recent letter to Attorney General Cox from Senate Republicans will in anyway delay the process. Mohammed noted that this issue will be discussed later in the agenda, but that there are no issues raised that MDOT does not have an answer for and which they will provide to the legislators.

John Nagy stated that he was at a forum with gubernatorial candidate Snyder and Mr. Nagy's district candidate for Senate, and he asked Mr. Snyder what his position on the DRIC is. Mr. Snyder replied that his preference is for the private sector to build the bridge. After further questioning he stated that MDOT has not come forward with a detailed plan on financing for the bridge.

An unidentified participant inquired with regard to the taking of property on Harrington vis-à-vis the realignment and reconstruction of Green Street to a Boulevard. Bruce Campbell stated that properties on Harrington would be acquired under the current plan. [Note that this was confirmed after the meeting.]

Richard Rosen asked if further DRIC meetings would be held after the election. Mohammed stated that he can't answer that question.

John Bendzick stated that he attended the Community Benefits Coalition meeting held October 26th where there was a presentation on legislative efforts. He stated that he understood that the legislature would come back into session on Nov. 8th and stay through Christmas break. He stated that Representatives south of 8 Mile Road are generally supportive of the project while those north to Flint are representing a constituency that is drowning in red ink. Therefore, they are not supportive. He suggested that people go to or call Lansing and go to other representatives than their own local ones to express their support for the project. He further stated that it was his opinion that people should not make their support dependant on the Community Benefits Agreement.

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

No further comments on notes of September 29, 2010.

SWCBC Update

Scott Brines stated that the CBC support for the project was absolutely dependent on a Community Benefits Agreement. Development needs to be done right. However, there are many options with regard to an agreement.

Mr. Brines provided an update on CBC activities:

CBC held a neighborhood meeting October 26th. Attendance was a little light due to the weather.

CBC is doing a housing survey and encouraged the community to participate.

Meeting the DRIC Reporting Requirements

Mohammed provided a legislative update. The Senate drafted a DRIC-only bill which was made public this week. It will be taken up by the Senate Transportation Committee in early November. If passed it would go to the floor of the Senate. Then after a 5 day waiting period it would go to the House. He is optimistic it will pass but the political process is not predictable. MDOT will continue to work with the community. Mohammed asked if there were any comments from the LAC on the legislation.

Tom Cervenak stated that he spoke with a Senator regarding the bill. The Senator stated that support is diminishing due to the lack of set-asides for Detroit residents. He asked what MDOT is doing regarding this. Mohammed noted the involvement of MDOT's Terrence Hicks in the project. He also noted that, as is done in other locations, MDOT is exploring breaking contracts into smaller pieces to encourage competition and local involvement. Although he noted that larger contractors also need to utilize local labor, they can't economically bus a bunch of workers in. MDOT also has DBE/WBE requirements. An example of breaking up contracts would be within the property acquisition process where demolitions are needed. These could be let in smaller contracts and allow for salvage and deconstruction.

Mohammed addressed the Response to the request for an investigation by MDOT (attached). He stated that at the beginning of 2010 MDOT put out a Request for Proposals of Interest, which received many positive responses. These responses were reported to the Legislature in MDOT's April 30th report. In the report it was specified that the Plaza-Bridge-Plaza project would be developed under a Public-Private Partnership (P3). The report identified that as an approximately \$1 billion project. Other elements of the project were separate from that P3 and not subject to tolls, such as; 1) Windsor Essex Parkway which is being procured under a separate process and the winning bidder is about to be announced; and, 2) Michigan I-75 Interchange and portions of the Plaza. For this portion of the project Canada was providing \$550 million in an equity stake. Regarding the issue of traffic projections being "pumped up"; MDOT used higher local traffic values during the environmental impact analysis to assure they were capturing the potential environmental effects appropriately. MDOT acknowledged recent declines in traffic at all steps in the process. Mohamed asked if there were any questions from the LAC on this issue.

Mrs. Leonard asked what the "pink elephant" reference was. Mohammed noted that MDOT's response was in reference to materials provided to the media and a letter from Senate Republican's to Attorney General Cox. Mohammed could provide these references if needed. He went on to explain that the "pink elephant" reference was from an email from an FHWA staff person in Washington DC to an FHWA staff person in Michigan. The email, from 2007, expressed an opinion that at a total cost of \$6 billion he was doubtful that the project could be privately financed, therefore the "pink elephant" reference. However, the email went on to state

that if the project was broken up into smaller elements those could be privately financed. This is what was done in the report to the Legislature.

John Bendzick stated that 2 years ago many of the elements of the project were still under consideration, like the bridge location or Plaza size. He further noted that this planning process has been ongoing for over 7 ½ years and the most relevant information is from the last 6 months.

Gateway/M-85 Project Updates

Gateway – From Victor Judnic

- MDOT continues to install the landscaping on the Gateway Project and complete miscellaneous punch list work.
- The MDOT lawsuit against DIBC to comply with the MDOT/DIBC contract is awaiting the Federal Judge Duggan to make judgment or schedule a hearing. MDOT cannot speculate on when this will happen. Basically, this is the fourth appeal by DIBC in a case that MDOT has won in Wayne County Circuit Court.
- The Trucking Companies lawsuit against MDOT has a hearing scheduled for November 29th at 4PM in Federal Court with Judge Lawson. Trucking companies are trying to force MDOT to open certain highway ramps. MDOT filed a motion to dismiss on grounds of lack of subject matter and Federal jurisdiction.

M-85 – From Matt Chenoweth

- The MDNRE approved the contractor's plan for a concrete crushing facility on Sanders between Liebold and Liddesdale. At first, the contractor was running large trucks on Liebold, which has a bunch of residents on it. We received many calls, and directed the contractor to take Liddesdale, which no longer has any houses on this segment of the street.
- I've had a lot of back and forth with Mrs. Leonard, the Sierra Club, and other residents of the area, and whenever they bring up a concern, we address it pretty quickly.
- The contractor has begun driving piles for the foundations, so the residents will notice that new sound.
- MDOT had a conference call with FHWA to discuss funding for additional police resources in the project area. The City of Detroit gave us a proposal, but it is quite high, so we'll need to negotiate with them.

Mrs. Leonard noted that in addition to the construction trucks running through the neighborhood the CSO work was backing noxious gasses up into the neighborhood homes. She also noted that some signs prohibiting traffic from the neighborhood had recently been removed. She would email Matt Chenowyth regarding this issue.

Other LAC/LAG Business

No other issues. One comment - John Bendzick stated that the increase in the diversity of commodities unable to use the Ambassador Bridge is critical to the economic development related to the proposed bridge.

Additional Public Comments

- 1) Hazardous material can't come across Ambassador but they can come across on the ferry.
- 2) Time Magazine, article on Intelligent Cities, we have everything we need in the City of Detroit to handle commodities.
- 3) A certain State Senator is against community benefits. You should call him and express your opinion.

Q. Richard Rosen asked who is behind the latest charges from the Senate.

R. MDOT had no comment.

Terrence Kennedy stated that Councilor Ron Jones of Windsor was reelected by 3 votes. Every vote counts. Get out the vote.

Q. Unidentified Person – Has Canada started the bridge?

R. Terrence Kennedy replied no, but Canada has started the \$1.8 billion approach roadways, where there are substantial community benefits.

Next LAC/LAG Meeting

The next LAC/LAG meeting will be on **November 17, 2010** (one week early) at Southwestern High School. With that, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.