

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Joint LAC/LAG Meeting
January 30, 2008 7:00 PM
Southwestern High School

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting with introductions.

Meeting Conduct Procedures

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the meeting will be conducted so that the observers could comment both at the beginning and at the end of the meeting. The Local Advisory Council and Local Agency Group will conduct their business uninterrupted in the core of the meeting.

Agenda Review

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

Public Comments

Q: *Victor Abla stated that in his review of the November, 2007, LAC/LAG notes he noticed the remarks made relating to Clark St. and Springwells interchanges and wanted to know when that information would be shared with the public. He stated that he got the impression that people were not pleased with the access issues at those interchanges.*

R: Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the information will be in the DEIS which will be available soon. Joe Corradino indicated that November meeting to which Victor Abla referred was open to the public.

Q: *Victor Abla stated that he wished the information was available at the meeting of December 12, 2007. He indicated his belief that the interchange information will be difficult to find in the "1,200-page" DEIS. He also indicated it is not sufficient to simply say that it is available in the DEIS without having a public debate on the subject.*

R: Joe Corradino indicated the information to which Victor Abla referred was made available as far back as the meeting held in December 2006 at which it was discussed with the public.

- Q: *Victor Abla indicated that in the notes, John Nagy spoke of plans for revitalization of the community, yet access to Delray would become limited and more difficult according to the DRIC plans. He concluded that he did not understand how you can revitalize a community and cut off access at the same time.*
- R. Mohammed Alghurabi: Thank you for your comments and if you need answers to your additional concerns, we are available after the meeting to sit with you and go over everything.

LAC/LAG November Meeting Notes

No changes were requested.

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that he had a phone conversation with Mrs. Delores Leonard earlier in the day and that, regrettably, she could not attend this evening's meeting. However, Mrs. Leonard requested that Mohammed ask a question on her behalf for the record. Mrs. Leonard wants to know about how the action of the Michigan Legislature affects "advanced acquisition." Mohammed Alghurabi indicated, in response, that the legislative language mandates what MDOT can do and cannot do as it relates to property acquisition. There are two forms of advanced acquisition, "Hardship" and "Opportunity" buying. "Opportunity" buying is done on a case-by-case basis. For example, if a business were expanding into a project's footprint, MDOT may acquire the property to avoid additional costs later. "Hardship" buying occurs when the homeowner is facing hardship in one of three categories: financial, health or safety. If a homeowner's property is within the project footprint and believes one of the three categories applies, they can request MDOT acquire the property. Typically, MDOT does not do any acquisition until after a study is finished and the project is officially approved. But, legislative action allows MDOT to undertake "hardship" acquisitions.

- Q: *John Nagy stated that he would like to know if MDOT is not doing any appraisals or offers to purchase homes for the DRIC. He has received inquiries from senior citizens in the community that people are approaching them with offers to purchase homes.*
- R: Mohammed Alghurabi stated that he could firmly say that those offers are not coming from MDOT.

December 12th CSS Meeting

Joe Corradino noted the December 12th Context Sensitive Solutions meeting, held at Southwestern High School, was attended by 130 to 140 people. The various renderings of two years' worth of work on the

look and fit of the crossing and land uses were on display. The renderings displayed what a potential revitalized Delray neighborhood could look like in the future through a public/private partnership. He noted a number of people whose property could be acquired attended the meeting.

Status of Technical Reports and DEIS

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated there are seven federal agencies that are reviewing the preliminary DEIS. In addition to the preliminary DEIS, there are 13 Technical Reports that needed review prior to release of the preliminary DEIS. The review process is coming to an end. The current schedule is publication of the Notice of Availability in late February and the public hearing in mid-March. Two public hearings will be held. There will be a 60-day comment period.

C: *John Bendzick asked at what time will there be a recommendation?*

R: The Preferred Alternative will be announced in the spring of 2008 according to the schedule.

Tentative Briefing on DEIS – February 27th

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated LAG/LAC will be briefed on the DEIS on February 27th, according to the current schedule.

Q: *John Bendzick asked when there will be final word on the Canadian decision?*

R: No one country can jump ahead with their selection of a Preferred Alternative. Like the U.S. process, each is waiting to receive the final geotechnical results. One difference in Canada is there is a long access road to the crossing which is still being analyzed. When the DEIS public hearing is announced, the Canadian Consultation Group members will be notified and may choose to attend the February 27th LAC meeting.

Q. *Richard Rosen asked about the access road in Canada from EC Row to the Plaza.*

R. Len Kozachuk responded that the road will be a freeway from Highway 401 to the new plaza.

Q. *Mark Petro asked for an update on the drilling. Is there anything we should know about any anomalies?*

R. Joe Corradino responded that the final geotechnical results on both sides of the border are still awaited. Nonetheless, preliminary U.S. data indicate there is no geotechnical reason to block a crossing from being built on the U.S. side of the border. Len Kozachuk indicated the situation in

Canada is different as brine wells are known to exist. The analysis is focused on determining the edge of the brine well fields to establish the safe zone for bridge foundations.

General Questions on Process

Q: Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any questions on the study process?

Q: Lisa Goldstein asked if the Technical Reports are going to be available to the public at the same time as the DEIS?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi said yes, they will be available on the Web and at depositories like libraries, schools, etc. Joe Corradino read a list of depositories including the Detroit Main Branch Library, Southwestern High School, Bowen Branch Library, and Delray Recreation Center.

C: Lisa Goldstein suggested that the Campbell Branch Library and Kemeny Recreation Center be included as depositories.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi said they will be added.

Q: Linda Wesley asked if copies of the DEIS will be sent to every Detroit City Council member?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi said yes.

Q: Earline Jones: Will the information in Southwest Detroit be made available in Spanish?

R: Joe Corradino responded that the DEIS Summary document will be available in Spanish and Arabic.

Q: Maria Finn: Could you elaborate on the LAC/LAG process and will the definitions of terms like ROD be available?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi went through the acronyms and what they mean, such as ROD (Record of Decision). On the role of the Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group, he noted meetings are held monthly to provide the latest information on the progress of the study. The role of the members of the LAC is to act as representatives of the community because we understand that the entire community is not going to be at every meeting.

Q: Arthur J. Divers: Will this information be sent to the Detroit Area State Representatives and Senators?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded yes.

Q: *Chris Gulock:* When will the FEIS be released?

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded late fall.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Q. *Mary Ann Cuderman:* The EA process on the Canadian side of the border has provided the opportunity for public input throughout the process. In the U.S. process, when does the comment period end?

C. Joe Corradino responded that once the official Notice of Availability of the DEIS appears in the Federal Register, a 60-day comment period begins. The FEIS will include responses to those comments. The Record of Decision cannot be signed any sooner than 30 days after the FEIS is signed.

Q. *Bill Muir* asked if the DEIS will be available on CD ROM.

R. Joe Corradino said the DEIS will be available in printed or CD/DVD form, upon request.

Mohammed Alghurabi stated that Tom Cervenak wanted to give an update on the Delray Recreation Center after the truck incident in early January. Tom Cervenak thanked everyone who had made calls and donations to the Center. The tanker explosion burned the parts of the outside of the building as well as the playground equipment. A house outside the Center was destroyed. The Center will be relocating the playscape once replaced. He concluded by indicating that Representative Steve Tobocman will host a community forum on the issue of community benefits on February 21st at 7:00 p.m.

Ilona Varga stated that there will be other meetings. To find out when and where, she asked those in attendance to call her office at (313) 224-0886.

Public Comments

Q: *Simone Sagovac* indicated that she attended a meeting last year and asked if the plans would consider a bike lane on the proposed bridge.

R: Joe Corradino indicated an allowance was made for pedestrians/bicycles on one side of the bridge.

- C: Tom Cervenak asked if it were possible that homeland security will say no?
- R: Bruce Campbell responded that U.S. Customs will require that pedestrians and bicyclists be subject to screening/inspection but will not uniformly block access to the bridge by them.
- Q: Richard Rosen stated that at last month's CSS meeting there were renderings where people commented that the bridges looked ugly. Mr. Rosen indicated that he crossed the Toledo Bridge and dared MDOT to take another bridge tour to drive over it. He believes an attractive bridge will attract development.
- R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that both a Toledo-type, cable stay bridge and a suspension bridge will be included in the FEIS. The decision of what type of bridge will be made after this environmental phase of the project is completed.
- Q: Maria Finn asked if the rerouting of trucks for the Gateway Project will be associated with any compensation to homeowners. The trucks are traveling down Fort St. to Livernois and Springwells. There are hundreds of trucks damaging the homes.
- R: Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that her question would be directed to Andy Ziegler who is MDOT's Project Manager on the Gateway Project.

Next LAC/LAG Meeting

The next meeting of the LAG/LAC will be on February 27th at 7 p.m. at Southwestern High School.