

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
June 27, 2005
Public Meeting Notes
Martin Luther King, Jr. High School**

These notes are of the formal presentation portion of the DRIC public meetings held June 27, 28, 29 and 30, 2005. Written comments received at each meeting follow these notes.

The meeting locations were:

- Monday, June 27, 2005 – Martin Luther King Jr. High School in Detroit
- Tuesday, June 28, 2005 – Southwestern High School in Detroit
- Wednesday, June 29, 2005 – River Rouge High School in River Rouge
- Thursday, June 30, 2005 – Crystal Gardens in Southgate

All meetings followed the same format: Mohammed Alghurabi of MDOT introduced the meeting and the purpose of the study. Bob Parsons of MDOT explained the public comment process of the meeting; Joe Corradino and Regine Beauboeuf made presentations. At the end of the presentation, the public was provided an opportunity to speak in the order in which they had returned speaker cards to Bob Parsons.

Presentation

Joe Corradino explained the presentation would address the contents of the “Blue Book” handed out to the attendees. He also noted that the graphics on display at the meeting depicting the Illustrative Alternatives are included on a CD in the pocket folder at the end of the Blue Book.

Joe Corradino used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the steps in forming Illustrative Alternatives: Step 1) locate plazas on each side of Detroit River; Step 2) connect plazas with proposed river crossings; and, Step 3) connect the plaza to a nearby freeway. He noted that for several alternatives, the plazas in the U.S. are connected to both I-75 and I-275 or I-75 and I-94.

Regine Beauboeuf then reviewed the various crossing issues. She concluded that while a bridge is an option for all proposed crossings, a tunnel is only viable between the Zug Island and Belle Isle.

Joe Corradino then continued the PowerPoint presentation by explaining the use of a technique known as QUANTM to connect U.S. plazas to nearby freeways. He used a series of oblique aerial photos to illustrate how the freeway-to-plaza routes and plazas themselves would cover areas most relevant to the public meeting location. The meeting then turned to public comments/questions.

Comments/Questions

Question: Jimmie Brown noted he is a native of Detroit and worked in the Public School system before retiring. He is 70 years old. He then thanked people for coming to the City of Detroit. He noted many of his questions were answered during the presentation. But, an area that remains of concern is the size of each plaza. He noted he does not like the current plaza at the tunnel crossing nor the off-site inspection for trucks associated with using the Ambassador Bridge. He urged that the new plaza should have enough space to inspect the entering traffic and room for expansion. He also noted his concern (safety & security) with the distance the bridge crosses over land from the river's edge to the plaza. He indicated he would like to see an electronic device placed on trucks for tracking purposes and the possibility of x-ray inspection of the trucks before entering the bridge.

Response: The bridge plaza will be large enough for the inspections, toll collection, duty free services, etc. The potential plaza site for the crossing at Belle Island is 110 acres; right-of-way for the freeway route is 80 acres, plus about 30 acres for the interchange at I-94 for a total of 120 acres of land for the border crossing system.

Comment: Diane McMillian noted she entered her name on the sign-in sheet at the April round of meetings, but did not receive a notice for this meeting. She then indicated she is a long-standing citizen and precinct delegate for the community. She commented on the QUANTM analysis program which highlighted areas of concern such as churches, schools, etc., but did not show anything about housing and concern with residential areas. She

concluded that she will present the information concerning the DRIC Study to a July town meeting.

Response: This summer, the impacts of the Illustrative Alternatives will be measured including effects on businesses and residences. The oblique aerial photographs illustrated those elements of each area in the presentation. Also, it was noted mailings were sent based on the sign-up sheets from the previous public meetings.

Steve Walker asked the following questions:

Question: What type construction are the Detroit Windsor tunnel and the rail tunnel?

Response: Both are submerged tunnels.

Question: What is the rationale for extending the freeway connection to I-275 or I-94 beyond I-75 in some areas and not others?

Response: The reason for the expansion of a freeway to I-275 or to I-94 is to analyze if this will remove traffic from the core of the urban freeway system thereby possibly alleviating the need to expand/reconstruct the existing I-75 freeway.

Question: Delray alternatives do not show extending the freeway past I-75 to I-94. Why?

Response: The Delray area is at the core of the urban freeway system, so extending the connection to I-94 will not unload traffic in this area and just create disruption.

Question: What happened to MDOT's solution for the Ambassador Bridge connection to the freeway system developed years ago?

Response: That project is under construction with completion scheduled for 2007.

Question: What local access will be provided the freeways connecting to the plazas?

Response: The analysis of the cross/local street connections to the new freeway will be conducted this summer.

At this point, the questions/comments period was paused while Joe Corradino made the second part of the PowerPoint presentation on the Evaluation Process and use of the evaluation factors which, he noted, was also covered by the material in the last part of the "Blue Book." After this presentation, the commentary resumed.

Comment: Olga Savic indicated she was speaking for Representative Steve Tobocman. She noted he had introduced two bills in the Michigan legislature, one, the Michigan Border

Protection and Development Act, would create a statewide authority to manage border areas; the second (the Detroit River International Crossing Authority) would establish a public authority to manage/operate and/or own the new bridge. She indicated she will be available at the end of the meeting to provide more details on these bills. She then stated Southwest Detroit is continually affected with infrastructure projects and inundated with freeways, intermodal terminals and the Ambassador Bridge. She stressed the importance of completing the evaluation factors form.

Comment: Ken Davies indicated the presentation was interesting and understandable. He stated that Detroit has suffered greatly with all the freeways in the area. He stressed Detroit is made up of neighborhoods, but construction of the freeways in the 1950s marked the decline of the city. He noted he has lived in Midtown (wife lives in Grosse Ile) and noted the surrounding noise from the freeways where he lives. He urged that during planning of the border crossing, MDOT consider what it would be like to have in “your backyard” an expressway to a bridge. He noted he wants to see Detroit recover and that the decision on the new crossing should not be based on what makes traffic flow the best, but by what is good for the local people and their homes. He stressed the least intrusive option is to twin the Ambassador Bridge, given that Moroun owns a lot of the land needed to expand. If a new bridge were publicly owned, it would remove property from the tax rolls and pay no taxes itself. On the other hand, Moroun owns the land around the bridge so it generates taxes. His bridge operation also pays taxes.

Response: This decision on a new or expanded crossing is not based on any one issue. The process includes putting all the facts on the table to make the correct decision. That decision will be made with MDOT’s Canadian partners and the Federal Highway Administration. This is a very complicated issue and public input is appreciated.

This concluded the public comments of the Monday, June 27th DRIC public meeting at the Martin Luther King, Jr. High School.