

Detroit River International Crossing Study
December 6, 2005
Public Meeting Notes
Old HQ Building, Southgate
5:00 to 8:30 PM

These notes are of the formal presentation portion (6:30 to 8:30 p.m.) of the DRIC public meeting held December 6, 2005. The list of speakers who made oral comments at the meeting follow these notes. The last section of the documentation covers the written comments submitted at each meeting plus oral comments presented to the MDOT Technical Team during the informal part of the meeting, which lasted from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

The complete list of meeting locations is:

- Monday, December 5, 2005 – River Rouge High School in River Rouge
- Tuesday, December 6, 2005 – Old HQ Headquarters in Southgate
- Wednesday, December 7, 2005 – Southwestern High School in Detroit
- Thursday, December 8, 2005 – Butzel Family Center in Detroit

Each meeting followed the same format: Introduction, Presentation, Public Questions/Comments/Responses

Introduction

Bob Parsons, MDOT's Public Meetings Officer, opened the presentation at 6:30 PM and welcomed the attendees. He introduced Spanish and Arabic translators who welcomed those in attendance in those languages and offered their services, as needed.

He then recognized Southgate Council President John Graziano, Cindy Dingle of County Executive Ficano's office, and Paul Sander, a Southgate School Board member.

He explained there would be a presentation by MDOT consultant, Joe Corradino, and individuals were encouraged to fill out a Speaker Form during the presentation to be called to speak after it. He also noted forms were available for written comments and comments could be recorded on a computer at the back of the room.

Presentation

Joe Corradino reviewed the handout materials to ensure those in attendance had the complete information packet. This information included the Illustrative Alternatives Evaluation Summary Report (Volume 1); a printed copy of the evening's PowerPoint presentation; and, a DVD of three tours of the Delray area. Joe Corradino indicated that the Canadian Team reports would be available on the project's Web site. A summary of the Canadian information was incorporated in the last sections of Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the U.S. Reports.

Joe Corradino then reviewed the Illustrative Alternatives evaluation results using a PowerPoint presentation, copies of which were distributed to those in attendance. The presentation covered a number of topics including unique circumstances which involve the following:

- The elimination of the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership Jobs Tunnel proposal;
- The elimination of tunnels as a crossing;
- The review of Plazas C-1 and C-2 on U.S. Steel property and their elimination; and,
- The review of Fighting Island and its elimination as a component of the crossing system.

Joe Corradino then summarized the results of the evaluation process including the unweighted evaluation of each of the three system crossing components (river crossing, plaza and connecting roadway) by seven evaluation factors (Protect Community/Neighborhood Characteristics, Maintain Consistency with Local Planning, Protect Cultural Resources, Protect the Natural Environment, Improve Regional Mobility, Maintain Air Quality, Assess How Project Can Be Built [Constructability]). He also reviewed the application of citizens and MDOT Technical Team weights to the unweighted scores to develop weighted results for each crossing system. Finally, he discussed the application of the cost-effectiveness procedure and results. The end product of the evaluation is that Plaza C-4 connected to Crossing X-11 was considered a candidate for further analysis based on U.S. and Canadian results. The second span of the Ambassador Bridge, its plaza and connection to I-75 was also considered a candidate for further analysis by the U.S. results. However, because the Border Partnership's position from the outset of the study is that no one country would bear the brunt of impacts for a crossing system, the second span of the Ambassador Bridge was eliminated from the continuing analysis. Its impacts in Canada (plaza and connecting route) are too great. Nonetheless, the U.S. plaza and the potential connection to I-75 are still part of the continuing analysis.

Joe Corradino then indicated that the connection of Plaza C-3 in West Delray to Crossing X-10 was considered a Practical Alternative. The Canadians also agree with this result. All other alternatives were recommended for elimination. These results then led to defining the “continued analysis area” upriver from Zug Island to the foot of the Ambassador Bridge from the Detroit River to the northern edge of I-75. But, all Illustrative Alternative plazas and crossings in this area have been erased. Establishing new crossings and plazas in the “continued analysis area” would be done in cooperation with the community through a series of workshops.

Joe Corradino then used a graphic to illustrate that there would be two workshops in December (the 14th and the 21st), two workshops in January (the 4th and the 18th), and one workshop in February (the 9th) (since changed to February 8th) to help establish the list of Practical Alternatives. Those workshops would lead to a decision by the early part of March by the Border Partnership of the final Practical Alternatives. The public would then be apprised formally of the Practical Alternatives at a set of meetings at the end of March.

Following the presentation, a number of questions and comments were addressed.

Questions, Comments and Responses

Question: Are all the downriver crossing alternatives out?

Response: Yes.

Question: Outer Drive, Schaefer Road, and Southfield Road were noted as possibly getting signing and signals to help out and be reliever routes. Does that mean there might be State maintenance?

Response: If there is a state need for congestion management on a non-state route to serve the border crossings, it is my personnel belief (Joe Corradino) there may be the need for such a road to become part of the State system.

Question: Now that the downriver alignments have been eliminated, what is the guarantee that they will never come back?

Response: There is no guarantee. The Downriver alternatives all score very low. As such, precedent says they will not come back.

Comment: The area would erupt, if they come back.

Question: If there were backups related to the crossing because of events, will the study examine effects on fire and police service, and the like?

Response: The effects of international traffic on these services will be examined.

Question: Will a plan be generated?

Response: Yes, later in the project, perhaps by July.

Question: My perception is the DRTP Jobs tunnel is no longer being considered. Is that true?

Response: Yes. It will no longer be considered in MDOT's DRIC study. The same is true of the proposed second span of the Ambassador Bridge. Both are proposed by private interests which are expected to proceed with their plans, if they so choose; but they will no longer be part of the DRIC Study.

Question: What is the southernmost alternative now being considered?

Response: Upriver side of Zug Island.

Question: What is the preference on the Canadian side?

Response: (Murray Thompson of URS Canada) There is no preference. Like on the U.S. side of the Detroit River, the slate is clean and there will be consultations with the public, much like the consultations in the U.S., to gain input to defining the plaza locations, also routings from the plaza to Highway 401.

Question: As a resident of Southwest Detroit, along with my parents who live near the southbound I-75 entrance ramps at Dragoon, I find damage to their home along the service drive from vibrations. MDOT has responded to our inquiries that the houses are old, and so foundation cracks are common and not attributable to one source, like truck traffic. Under these circumstances, what will the DRIC project do for the neighborhood in terms of health impact analysis and damage to homes from truck traffic?

Response: The DRIC Study may recommend closing or modifying interchanges on I-75 to make the connection to the plaza fit. This may benefit your parents' home. The DRIC Study will not include a health impact study based on current regulations/procedures.