

**Detroit River International Crossing Study  
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting  
July 25, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.  
Delray Recreation Center**

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

**Attendance:** See attachment.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

Mohammed Alghurabi opened up the meeting with introductions.

**Meeting Conduct Procedures**

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

**Agenda Review**

Mohammed Alghurabi reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any comments or revisions to the agenda. None were suggested.

Joe Polak of the Detroit Ambassador Bridge Company read a statement into the record of the meeting. He noted a response later in writing was acceptable.

**Public Comments**

Delores Leonard thanked MDOT for flyers she distributed in her community. Mrs. Leonard indicated that there were land speculators indicating interest in buying properties in her area. She wanted the flyers to insure her community knew it was not MDOT making those contacts.

Mary Ann Cuderman indicated that building an international bridge requires a bi-national agreement. There were originally 15 DRIC alternatives that were narrowed to what we have today. In one of those alternatives, the city of Wyandotte was affected. Although that

alternative worked great on the Canadian side, it did not work on the U.S. side because of the impact that it would have to the city of Wyandotte. She indicated that the same kinds of consideration would have to be given to alternatives on the Canadian side. The Ambassador Bridge was ruled out because of the impacts that it would have to the city of Windsor. There is a myth about private investment and public funding. What has not been decided is how that bridge will be funded.

Terry Mattison asked if there were plans to use Schaeffer Road as a truck route when I-75 is backed up.

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that one of the goals of the DRIC study is to create a direct connection to I-75 without impacts to arterial roads. Due diligence will be taken to limit backups from happening so that spillover to roads, like Schaeffer, can be managed.

Terri Mattison asked, “Will consideration be given to when I-75 is closed as a part of the Gateway Project’s construction?” She notes that she believes that Schaeffer Road will be used a relief route. She emphasized Schaeffer affects a low-income, minority community that is already overburdened with trucks.

Andy Ziegler, MDOT Project Manager of the Gateway Project, responded that a lot of work has gone into the plan to re-route traffic from I-75 because of the Gateway Project. MDOT will do everything it can to make sure backups are minimized. MDOT will continue to work with the community to respond to issues as quickly as it can.

A community resident played a tape recording of the sound of I-75 traffic he indicated was recorded from his backyard. He then asked, “What was going to be done about this noise?”

Joe Corradino said that when I-75 was built 35 years ago, noise mitigation was not required. Mitigation could come through the DRIC project in the form of walls. He noted that in past meetings, graphics indicated that walls could be placed along I-75. That information is being refined.

Another participant emphasized the amount of noise on his street and the trucks traveling on his street. He emphasized that there are approximately 25 to 30 trucks each day that come up and down his residential street. In the past, there were signs that indicated “No Trucks Allowed” but they have been taken down. He stated that he can smell the pollution of the trucks and invited MDOT and others to spend a day at his house to gain a better of understanding of what he and his family go through. He concluded that EPA has a report about pollution, and that monitoring equipment was placed in his backyard.

Mohammed Alghurabi responded that there will be analysis of these conditions and reports on them will be presented in the near future.

### **LAC/LAG Meeting Notes**

There were no comments on the notes.

### **Relocation Information Meetings**

Joe Corradino stated that a mailer was sent to residents who could be affected by the DRIC alternatives. There was a mistake in the mailer on the dates and the actual days of the meetings. Therefore, there will be four days of meetings, not three – Monday through Thursday, July 30 through August 2. The mailers were sent registered mail. Follow-up has occurred, including Harvey Santana going door-to-door. The owners of the two apartment buildings in the area have been asked to inform their tenants of the meetings. Flyers were also distributed to churches to get the word out about the meetings.

The relocation information meetings will be staffed by MDOT Real Estate professionals. Translators will be available for the Spanish and Arabic speaking communities. Latino Family Services will be providing the translators. The objective is to discuss relocation, not purchasing property. One-on-one interviews will last about 20 minutes.

### **CSS Workshop – August 8**

The next CSS workshop will be held at the Delray Recreation Center on August 8 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This meeting will focus on the bridge. In the past, the focus has been on other elements of the crossing system.

Joe Corradino noted there will be no piers in the water. A cable-stayed bridge will have very tall towers. They have been analyzed to clear all airport/airplane flight pattern restrictions. A suspension bridge, also being studied, has much lower and different towers.

After this round of CSS, all elements will be tied together to illustrate how the new bridge fits and looks with the community. We will come back in the fall to display graphics of various places in the Delray Community and how changes could occur with a new, conceptual master plan. Cooperation with the city of Detroit will be necessary to make the concepts in the conceptual master plan become reality.

Joe Corradino pointed to a flyer in the handout packages which indicates the time of the CSS meetings is from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the Delray Recreation Center.

### **Status of Deep Drilling Programs**

All drilling is done in the U.S. Analysis of all the data is underway. In writing a DEIS, there will be no preferred alternative. Geotechnical work will continue as the DEIS is being reviewed. The schedule of the geotech work might slip as much as two months. Nonetheless, an April 2008 announcement of the Practical Alternatives is still on schedule.

Len Kozachuk indicated there are two holes left to be drilled to completion on the Canadian side of the river. He expects them to be finished in the middle of August. There have been some problems with one of the holes which are being addressed.

Len also indicated Public Information Open Houses are to be held on August 14 and August 15. For more information, he referred to the hot line: (800.900.2649) and the Web site: [www.partnershipborderstudy.com](http://www.partnershipborderstudy.com).

### **Other LAC/LAG Issues**

No issues were presented.

## **Public Comments**

- C.** The pastor from a COGIC church asked how he will know if his church is on the list of properties that might be acquired.
- R.** Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that Sherry Piacenti could meet with them at the back of the room to discuss this.
  
- C.** Terry Mattison asked if the DRIC study still looked at building the plaza contiguous to Southwestern High School.
- R.** Joe Corradino said the plaza boundary would be against the rail line behind the school property. But, the plaza activities would be away from the boundary and buffered. Those activities would be some distance from the school buildings themselves.
  
- C.** Terry Mattison asked if there were a time when trucks are not restricted from crossing the border.
- R.** Maria Elena Rodriguez indicated that the Ambassador never shuts down. Also, she explained that the Ambassador Bridge opens up more lanes during peak periods and closes down lanes during low-traffic periods.
  
- C.** Bill Muir asked how many acres the entire River Crossing system takes up in the U.S.
- R.** Joe Corradino presented a graphic of the project footprint and estimated the total area is 200 to 220 acres.
  
- C.** Allen Martin asked what if your home is a block or two blocks away, how will those people there be affected by the pollution and noise?
- R.** Joe Corradino explained buffering walls for noise mitigation would be installed at some sections along I-75. In terms of air pollution, the preliminary DRIC analysis indicates EPA regulations on engines and fuels will reduce pollutants significantly in the next 10 to 20 years. He also noted no homes will be directly against the plaza as an open space buffer of about 50 acres is being planned.

- C.** A community member indicated he knows of homes in the area that are over 100 years old. He asked if there will be pictures of the homes taken before and after construction to ensure any damage will be repaired by MDOT.
- R.** Mohammed Alghurabi said pictures could be taken.
  
- C.** Another community member asked about the surrounding neighborhoods and revitalization of those neighborhoods.
- R.** Joe Corradino spoke about the conceptual plans to revitalize the area. He noted such plans need a partnership among government agencies and the private sector to succeed.

Mohammed Alghurabi referred the speaker to the Web site for drawings about the plans to which Joe Corradino was referring.

- C.** Bob Benson noted revitalization of the community is not MDOT's responsibility. MDOT will make recommendations; it will be someone else's responsibility to implement those plans. Some people may have the impression that MDOT is going to lead the revitalization of the area.
  
- R.** Mohammed Alghurabi noted MDOT is responsible for the DRIC study. And MDOT will be responsible to build the new bridge, plaza and interchange, if the project is approved. He noted MDOT will need partners to revitalize Delray.

With that, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



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July 25, 2007

Mohammed S. Alghurabi  
425 W. Ottawa Street  
P.O. Box 30050  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Alghurabi,

In Nov. 2005, DRIC consultants issued its "Evaluation of Illustrative Alternatives on the U.S. Side of Border" which clearly stated that the Ambassador Bridge [X-12/II-4] was a "very high performing alternative in regional mobility" while "[t]he other two alternatives in the I-75-I96 Area rank in the teens or worse." (p. S-31) the report further stated that the Citizens' and Technical Team's weightings placed the Ambassador Bridge option in "either first or second place due to relatively few impacts on neighborhoods and the natural environment." (p. S-31) In fact, the DRIC US report acknowledged that the Ambassador Bridge was among the top two cost effective alternatives and were "very much apart from all other alternatives." (p. S-47)

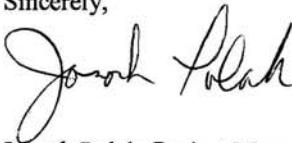
In addition to the obvious advantages of the Ambassador Bridge location documented by the US consultants, the additional advantages to Michigan taxpayers of private investment defraying the cost, providing state & local match to obtain federal funds and substantial investment in the Gateway connections are not factored in to the recommendations. Moreover, the Ambassador Bridge's independent development (separate from the DRIC premise of a Government-only built crossing) has never been accurately acknowledged.

Instead, the advantages of the enhancement at the Ambassador Bridge were not carried forward because of Canadian consultant preferences based on false assumptions of the negative impacts on the Canadian side of the river. The parallel Canadian report from Nov. 2005 acknowledged that the "twin Ambassador Bridge was identified as one of the top overall performers on the US side... The Ambassador Bridge is connected to three interstate freeways in Michigan... [its] plaza is undergoing an expansion ... [and that] this alternative also had a better performance than most alternatives in terms of improvement to regional mobility." (Generation and Assessment of

Illustrative Alternatives – Canadian Side, p. 127) They even acknowledged that the US Project Team recommended carrying this alternative forward. (p. 131) But the Ambassador Bridge was eliminated from further study by Canada’s preference, “[i]n consideration of the high community impacts to the residential area impacted by the Canadian bridge plaza and the expansion of Huron Church Road to the freeway facility on the Canadian side...the disadvantages of this alternative outweighed the advantages.” (p. 132).

My question, simply, is this: What will the US team do to hold taxpayers harmless if the premises of the Canadian preferences - the basis for halting your continued consideration of the “top performing” Ambassador Bridge in the DRIC alternative – are demonstrated to be false and misleading?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Polak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph Polak, Project Manager