

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Joint Meeting
Meeting Notes
August 29, 2007, 7:00 p.m.
(Revised October 3, 2007)
Delray Recreation Center

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 the end of the meeting. The Local Advisory Council and Local Agency Group members will 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 it. None were suggested.

Public Comments

C: *Mary Ann Cuderman* asked if a response had been provided to the letter from the Ambassador Bridge that was attached to the July 25, 2007, LAC/LAG meeting notes.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that it had been and he indicated that it would be distributed and posted on the Web.

LAC/LAG Meeting Notes

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there are any comments or questions, additions or deletions to the July 25th meeting notes. There were none.

Residential Property Owners Meeting

Joe Corradino indicated that the owners and tenants of residential property who could be affected by any of the proposed crossings were invited to a set of meetings on July 30th through August 2nd to exchange

information about the relocation process and to employ that information in developing the Conceptual Relocation Plan which is to be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Joe Corradino indicated that between 140 and 150 owners or tenants attended. However, none of the tenants of the two apartment buildings (with a total of 100 units) had attended those meetings, despite efforts to work with the owners to allow information to be received by the tenants. But, he noted, since then, one tenant of an apartment building had asked to be interviewed for the relocation process. That interview will be conducted by MDOT. Additional interviews will be conducted when possible.

CSS Workshops

Bruce Campbell explained the material that was presented at the public workshop on August 8th to discuss the Context Sensitive Solutions that affect the proposed river crossing/bridge. He indicated that, since then, a survey form had been distributed to allow all members of the LAC/LAG to participate in the preference-indication process similar to what was conducted at the workshop of August 8th. Mohammed Alghurabi urged those in attendance to complete the form. Joe Corradino noted similar input is being gathered on the Canadian side for the crossing. Once review of those data was finalized, all CSS components, as well as conceptual land use plans, will be refined and brought to a public meeting tentatively scheduled for October. He indicated that various agencies of city government had commented on the proposed Delray land use plans and that, plus other public input, was being used to refine the materials.

C. *Tom Cervanek asked if a one-bridge type (suspension or cable stay) was more expensive.*

R. Bruce Campbell said no.

C. *Tom Cervanek asked if the two bridge types had the same useful life.*

R. Bruce Campbell responded that they did.

C. *Delores Leonard asked if there would be piers in the water.*

R. Bruce Campbell indicated there would not be because piers would interfere with ships navigating the river.

C. *Delores Leonard asked for Bruce Campbell to comment on how this DRIC bridge would be better than the one that collapsed in Minnesota.*

R. Bruce Campbell indicated that the Minnesota Bridge was 40+ years old. Since it was built, technology, materials and maintenance practices had changed to make bridges more reliable.

Plaza Revisions

Bruce Campbell explained that the plazas are continuing to be revised based upon engagement of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency/General Services Administration. He noted how changes were being required in order to cross over the railroad that cuts through Delray to connect the plaza to the I-75. He also noted that efforts were being made to create a greater distance between plaza areas of vehicular activity and Southwestern High School.

C. *Tom Cervanek asked if the efforts to eliminate the rail line had ended.*

R. Bruce Campbell indicated they had.

C. *John Nagy asked if that were the case, was it still in the DRIC plan to create a new rail connection at Bacon Street.*

R. Joe Corradino indicated a new rail connection was still planned to eliminate current rail traffic on the line moving through Delray.

C. *John Nagy stated, in that case, additional houses near the new connection should be considered for acquisition.*

R. Joe Corradino responded that acquisition issues would continue to be examined as the project moves forward.

Status of the Deep Drilling Program

Joe Corradino explained that all U.S. field work had been concluded and that detailed analytical work was now underway. He expected that work would lead to a composite report of the findings in the U.S. and Canada to be presented to the peer group of twelve experts (six from the U.S. and six from Canada) by the beginning of December 2007, with a full vetting of that information by the end of January 2008.

Murray Thompson indicated that all fieldwork of the drilling program on the Canadian side of the border had also been concluded. The Canadian data were being analyzed by the same team that the U.S. is using. He indicated that analysis results would be ready so that the peer group can meet and review it at the beginning of December.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any additional business of the group. There was none.

Public Comment

Mohammed Alghurabi then entertained comments and questions from the public.

C: *Otis Mathis indicated that he was aware members of the Fort Wayne governing body were skeptical that the DRIC crossing would be built. He also noted that, in discussions with still others, that they believe that the Ambassador Bridge is at the best location for another crossing. Finally, he expressed frustrations that, while the DRIC study is costing tens of millions of dollar, a simple improvement to the intersection of Fort and Schaefer cannot be made by MDOT.*

R: Joe Corradino indicated that there are many opinions about border crossing preferences. However, each border crossing must go through a rigorous analytical process conducted by a set of reviewers who will finally opine whether any one is capable of being implemented.

C: *Mary Ann Cuderman noted that there was an opinion letter in the Windsor Star by an unnamed U.S. resident who appears to be misguided.*

R: There was no response.

C: *Robert Motowski responded to Otis Mathis' earlier comment by indicating that elected officials from Canada have stated publicly and repeatedly that they do not favor the second span of the Ambassador Bridge. He also noted that he read in a newspaper that the Ambassador Bridge had already started construction of the second span without permission.*

C: *Windsor Councilwoman Postma stated that the people of Windsor she represents do not support the twinning of the Ambassador Bridge. She stressed that its neighborhood impacts would be significant. She further indicated she supports the DRIC process. As far as starting construction of the second span of the Ambassador Bridge, she stressed that the City of Windsor did not approve such an act and noted that nothing can be built without permission.*

Councilwoman Postma continued that there is a heritage designation process that covers Sandwich Towne. It integrates the historical and cultural aspects of a community into a specific designation to protect the area. The second span of the Ambassador Bridge, she noted, would have several impacts on that area. She concluded by noting the Canadian Senate has spoken to the security issues and does not favor a second span of the Ambassador Bridge.

C: Belda Garza indicated that, as a taxpayer, she has concerns about the money being spent on the DRIC study, especially when Michigan's budget is in such bad condition.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that the DRIC study is very important and is supported by a number of organizations and individuals. The trade that crosses in this area is \$140 billion a year. To protect that trade and the economy of two nations, it is important to plan for the future. In regard to the DRIC study, the entire expenditure of Michigan funds to date has been \$4 million. He indicated it is worth that expenditure to avoid the risk of a poor crossing system with inadequate capacity. He stressed that, nonetheless, even if the Ambassador Bridge builds a second span, there is still need for more lanes.

C: Belda Garza stated a number of projects have been studied by MDOT, such as the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal, and had not progressed very far.

R: Joe Corradino noted that the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project is nearing completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Three railroads have committed to the project. Work is now underway with the fourth railroad to move forward.

C: Robert Benson asked if the plazas that were discussed earlier in the program would accommodate Crossings X-10 and X-11.

R: Bruce Campbell said they would.

C: Sharon Dolente indicated that she, too, is concerned about the use of taxpayers' money. But, she stressed, she sees MDOT having created a good process in the DRIC Study to involve the public. With all the impacts associated with any border crossing, public input needs to be considered.

C: Terry Kennedy noted that trade between the U.S. and Canada is not limited to the border crossing in this region. He stated you cannot have "one door in and one door out" to accommodate that trade. If additional border crossing capacity is not provided, the economies of two nations, let alone the province of Ontario and Michigan, will be hurt. Furthermore, truck traffic would grow soon to 40,000 trips per day and there must be a way to accommodate it other than on Huron Church Road.

C: Councilwoman Postma stated that Terry Kennedy's comment about the truck traffic along Huron Church Road which, when gridlock occurs, blocks the cross streets and sends traffic back into the neighborhoods surrounding Huron Church Road. She further commented that the DRIC study is

international. Never has she seen governments in two countries come together to address the future in such a clear manner. She noted that the Canadians are paying their fair share of the DRIC study which will address traffic, trade, and the needs of the private sector. Done right, the DRIC study will help the economy on both sides of the border to rebound.

C: *Otis Mathis noted his earlier remarks spoke to U.S. issues only. The Windsor councilwoman has expressed the Canadian view. Nonetheless, he indicated that he still is concerned that, while tens of millions of dollars if taxpayers' money is being spent on the DRIC study, a simple improvement in his neighborhood at Fort and Schaefer cannot be made by MDOT. Additionally, he indicated that the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project intends to shift significant numbers of trucks to his neighborhood on Schaeffer Road.*

R: Joe Corradino noted that the concept of Schaefer Road as an access road for the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project had been dropped years ago.

C: *Sharon Dolente stated another of her concerns is having two bridges at a single location and that having two bridges at different locations is better for redundancy and security.*

C: *Ken Dobson noted that, on the issue of security, there are a number of locations where two bridges are next to each other. Furthermore, security is not handled solely by the Ambassador Bridge, which he represents, but by the United States government. To augment that capability, some private contractors are hired.*

C: *Terry Kennedy commented that, with respect to security at the Ambassador Bridge, he believes it is important to know that, six months after 9/11, a hijacked truck full of dynamite was brought over the Ambassador Bridge and, on July 7th of this year, he personally observed a missile going over the bridge.*

That ended the comments. Mohammed Alghurabi thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.