

**Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory/Local Agency Group
Meeting Notes
November 19, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School**

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi asked for introductions of all of those in attendance.

Meeting Conduct Procedures

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the meeting would be conducted so that observers could comment both at the beginning and at 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 asked if there were any changes to the meeting agenda. None were suggested.

Public Comments

Tom Cervenak indicated that he was a member of the Community Benefits Coalition Board. This group of local community representatives is interested in a number of enhancements to benefit the Delray area. He stressed the need for MDOT to consider CBC proposals ranging from a legally-binding Community Benefits Agreement, a role in the “governance structure” for implementation of the project, an allocation of tolls to financially support the proposed redevelopment and upkeep of the Delray area, and a road to serve trucks.

Meeting Notes Review

It was noted by Bob Benson, an observer of the LAC meeting, that words were missing on the second page in the fourth paragraph. The notes were will be corrected.

Presentation on the Status of the Detroit River International Crossing Study and the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project

Joe Corradino, using a PowerPoint presentation, discussed the various issues affecting the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project and the Detroit River International Crossing project. Both are located in Southwest Detroit. He reviewed issues ranging from the footprint of each project to potential acquisitions and the various truck traffic movements associated with each proposed project. He discussed the Preferred Alternatives that have been identified to date for each project. He concluded by indicating the next steps were to continue advancing the Final Environmental Impact Statements so that they could be issued in the near term with the Records of Decision to follow. Questions and comments were then entertained.

Lisa Goldstein asked the following questions:

Question: Can you explain how the study of truck traffic was conducted?

Response: Counts conducted on various streets and freeways were augmented by aerial surveillance so that a base model of current conditions could be established. Then, traffic was forecast into the future. Calculations of congestion were then made for hundreds of intersections throughout Southwest Detroit and Delray. For all practical purposes, neither project, the DIFT nor the DRIC, will cause congestion that would require mitigation at any intersection.

Question: Were conversations conducted with businesses in the area?

Response: Yes. Conversations occurred with entities such as Lafarge, Arvin Meritor, and Yellow Trucking.

Question: Are details of the traffic analysis available?

Response: Yes. There are two volumes of the DRIC Traffic Analysis Report on the Web site. A third volume will soon be posted dealing with the Preferred Alternative. The DIFT traffic analysis report for the DEIS is also on the Web.

Comment: Truck traffic continues to be a concern to the Community Benefits Coalition.

Response: That concern is well understood recognizing the concept in the DRIC study is that redevelopment will first occur closer to the plaza than to the Delray Community Center. The Green Street Boulevard has been incorporated into the plan to provide a non-truck street to support the first 100 acres of that redevelopment. Green Street does not connect to an interchange. On the other hand, Springwells Street and Dearborn Avenue connect

to I-75 interchanges. So, regardless of efforts to build a parallel facility and/or restrict by ordinance or policing, truck traffic will continue to use those two City of Detroit streets. Industry in the area continues to depend on them to gain access to I-75. That includes industries that are in the Zug Island area as well as those in Southwest Detroit, such as Arvin Meritor, Yellow Trucking, and Lafarge. Lastly, the traffic analyses, previously commented upon, do not indicate that there is need for more truck access in the area. Finally, if another road were built to substitute or augment the existing streets heavily used by trucks (Dearborn Avenue, Springwells and Clark Streets), additional property acquisition would be required.

Tom Cervenak asked the following question:

Question: Is it true that the City of Detroit has an interest in using Campbell as a truck route?

Response: Chris Gulock of the City Planning Commission indicated he had not heard of that. Joe Corradino indicated that Campbell Street is not considered by the DRIC project to be a truck route, but, instead, to be a gateway entrance to Fort Wayne. Jim Conway indicated that access to Fort Wayne is a major concern of the City. He discussed the history of access to the Fort. He expressed hope that the access issues could be resolved to the Fort's best interest.

Status of the DRIC FEIS

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the FEIS would be available in the early part of December. He anticipated that the review would be completed in January allowing the Record of Decision to be executed shortly thereafter.

Canadian Draft Environmental Assessment

Dave Wake of the Ontario Ministry of Transport noted that the Canadian Environmental Assessment on the DRIC is now available for public comment. The comment period will end on December 12, 2008. Following that, the Final Environmental Assessment will be submitted for formal review and approval of both provincial and federal governments. The timeline is that the document will be approved in the summer of 2009. Public information open houses will be held on November 24 and 25 in Canada

Lisa Goldstein asked about the format of the open houses on November 24 and 25. Dave Wake responded they will involve informal one-to-one discussions between the Canadian DRIC Team and members of the public; there will be no formal presentation.

Margaret Garry asked when, if approval is provided, funding will be provided to build the project in Canada. Dave Wake said that there are already commitments at the federal and provincial levels to fund the DRIC.

Terry Kennedy asked if the Sandwich Library were a location at which the EA could be reviewed. Dave Wake indicated that he did not know the exact answer, but believed so. Mohammed Alghurabi noted that the Canadian document will also be available in the United States at the 21 depositories.

Other LAC/LAG Business

Mohammed Alghurabi pointed to the handout for a statement on governance. He indicated that the decision had been made that the State of Michigan will own the DRIC project on the U.S. side and the government of Canada will own the bridge and plaza on the Canadian side, while the province of Ontario will own the access road. He stressed that the private sector may be involved in the project but government will have oversight.

Tom Cervenak asked about the lease arrangement with the General Services Administration for the plaza. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the General Services Administration is the landlord for the federal government. This lease arrangement with GSA is a normal practice at an international crossing.

LaReina Wheeler asked for elaboration on the private sector involvement in the DRIC. Mohammed Alghurabi responded that the project is flexible on the issue of exactly where the private sector will be involved. The private sector may be interested in building, operating and/or maintaining the facility in return for a lease of a number of years and the ability to keep the tolls to cover its costs.

Mary Ann Cuderman asked how the bridge will be managed. Mohammed Alghurabi said that an example is at the Blue Water Bridge. However, no specific model has been yet adopted for the DRIC project.

Mohammed Alghurabi then requested the LAC members to determine how frequently they wish to meet in the upcoming year – should it be monthly, quarterly? He indicated that the issue would be resolved in the December LAC meeting.

Bob Benson asked about the unique tie between the DRIC and DIFT projects in terms of the truck activity. Joe Corradino indicated that there is no dependence of one project on the other. Intermodal truck traffic on the international crossing does not drive the forecast for the DIFT project.

Next LAC Meeting

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that he is considering not having the next LAC meeting as scheduled on December 30, but likely after the FEIS is released. A tentative date of December 10 is being considered.