

**New International Trade Crossing Project  
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting  
Notes  
February 23, 2011, 7:00 p.m.  
Southwestern High School**

**Purpose:** To review the progress of the New International Trade Crossing Project.

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introduction/Agenda**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. He reviewed the meeting conduct procedures and agenda and requested that speakers identify themselves for note-takers and for follow-up, if needed.

**Public Comments**

Cedric Jones made comments regarding Harrington Street. Mr. Jones held up a warning sign from the Kinder Morgan natural gas line that runs near Harrington. He stated that the presence of the “dangerous” line is a reason that the remaining residents on Harrington should be taken. Mohammed responded that properties outside of the project footprint identified in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) can’t be taken without additional analysis and a separate process. This cannot begin until the project is advanced, and those decisions can’t be made at this time. Mr. Jones went on to state that there are two major issues: 1) health, and 2) no one wants the view out of their front door to be facing a bridge (quality of life).

Robert Benson asked if the NITC is still not a project. Mohammed stated that this is correct until authorizing legislation is passed. However, from a federal perspective, it is an approved project because the Record of Decision was issued.

Scott Brines stated that it is important for residents to state their concerns. He said that CBC leaders will be going to Lansing to meet with legislators and MDOT and may call upon community members to join them in voicing these issues.

Mary Perkins made comments regarding Harrington Street. She stated that she is very upset about the houses (5) left on Harrington Street. Mohammed responded that he understood, and that we are currently in listening mode; no further decisions can be made until enabling legislation is passed, and we proceed to the design and right-of-way phases.

Richard Rosen asked who will be the author of the enabling legislation, MDOT or the legislature. Further, will the legislation address homeowners' concerns such as those expressed by the residents of Harrington Street? What kind of flexibility is there? Tom Jay, MDOT real estate, responded that once legislation is passed, MDOT can immediately begin the purchase of properties already identified in the footprint of the project. Properties outside of this footprint will take a more lengthy process of evaluation on a case-by-case basis.

Patricia Ramirez asked, through a translator, if MDOT has considered the quality of life issues, in particular, the impact on kids in the area. Mohammed stated that the quality of life is important, and that MDOT is doing everything they can to improve it. She further asked about air quality and if anything is being done for trucks. Mohammed noted that there is a CMAQ grant for about \$230K to retrofit truck fleet in the area to eliminate idling. She then asked if that was enough considering the air quality. Mohammed noted that the project EIS air quality analysis shows an improvement to local air quality. The study was reviewed by EPA and MDEQ who concurred with the analysis. Both Gateway and NITC will remove international trucks from the neighborhood, improving air quality. She then asked if there is proof of improvement. Mohammed directed her to talk to Gerri Ayers who can get her a Spanish version of the environmental documents which are also available at the Delray House.

Simone Sagovac noted that the air quality analysis is based on the reduction of congestion due to additional lanes across the border. Also, it assumes an improvement in the truck fleet. But in Delray, the truck fleet doesn't change over very quickly. There are 30-year-old trucks in Delray. She asked for the age of the fleet crossing the border. She went on to note that there is an Environmental Justice forum organized by Rep. Tlaib on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Also, the CBC visited the Port of Long Beach, and they have had success in retrofitting the fleet of trucks servicing the port and retrofitted them in 2 years, reducing pollution.

## **Notes of LAC/LAG Meeting of January 26, 2011**

Ms. Leonard asked what Rep. Tlaib was referring to regarding the “accountability bill” referenced on p. 3, second paragraph. Mohammed stated that he thought it was a reference to community benefits.

She then asked about the commitment to a presentation on the closure of Junction at this LAC meeting. Mohammed noted that the project team made a presentation to SWCBC earlier today, and Ms. Denise Pike from CHASS was in attendance, and the presentation would be made to LAC after input was received from CHASS, perhaps as early as the next LAC.

Ms. Leonard then said that from her experience, residents on Harrington should start a letter writing campaign to the FHWA immediately and send the mail certified to confirm receipt.

She then asked Mr. Nagy about his references to houses between Campbell and Junction at the last meeting and if he had a count. Mr. Nagy stated that he did count them but did not have the numbers in front of him. It is somewhere around 30 families.

Mr. Nagy then asked if there is criteria for how far away a bridge or road must be from houses. Mohammed and Mr. Jay did not know of any criteria. However, the project has provided a 100 foot buffer around the Plaza and is taking full properties in most cases instead of partial takes. Mr. Nagy mentioned that homes seem very close to the I-75/Rouge River Bridge in the Carbon Street area.

Scott Brines asked that the spelling of his name be corrected in the January LAC/LAG notes.

### **SWCBC Update**

Scott Brines noted that CBC is still working for the community and people should continue to be involved.

### **Detroit Works Update**

Mr. Baran was unable to attend. Mohammed read the following information submitted on Mr. Baran’s behalf:

For those who attended the January 29th Detroit Works Project Meeting held in southwest Detroit at the Odd Fellows Hall, the results from the survey conducted at the meeting can be found by visiting the Detroit Works Projects web site at:

<http://detroitworksproject.com/>

Then, select Get Involved and Upcoming Events from the top menu bar.

Please note that all are welcomed to attend any of the upcoming Detroit Works Project Community meetings. The same information will be presented at each meeting. The upcoming meetings are:

**Wednesday, February 23, 6-8 PM**

Focus: HOPE

1400 Oakman Blvd.

**Monday, February 28, 6-8 PM**

Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan

2131 Beaufait Street

**Tuesday, March 1, 6-8 PM**

Brenda Scott Academy for Theater Arts

18400 Hoover Street

**NITC Status**

Mohammed noted that MDOT has been responding to request for information from the legislature and has been assisting the Governor's office.

MDOT is currently waiting for introduction of authorizing legislation.

Mohammed then explained that the Governor secured a commitment from FHWA to apply the \$550 million from Canada as a State match of Federal Aid funds.

Many companies have been coming out in support of NITC.

**Other LAC/LAG Business**

There was no other business.

**Additional Public Comments**

Mr. Rosen asked if Federal government policies are negotiable or set in stone. For example, noise walls and residents left behind. Mohammed explained that for noise walls there has to be a

technical analysis that identifies benefitting units. There could be flexibility on some FHWA policies.

Jerry Pausus, Young Detroit Builders, asked if there will be an effort to deconstruct instead of just demo. He noted that there is a church slated for removal that has many wonderful artifacts. Ms. Ayers noted that MDOT is beginning to look at relocating the church if the structure can sustain such a move. Further, MDOT is following the example in Canada closely to see what might work here.

Mr. Pausus went on to note that there is a grant for rehabilitating homes in the area, and they are looking for interested people. The application and income limits information are attached to these notes.

Robert Benson asked why DRIC had been to NITC. Mohammed stated that it was an initiative of the Governor.

### **Next LAC/LAG Meeting**

The next LAC/LAG meeting will be on March 30, 2011 at Southwestern High School. With that, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**New International Trade Crossing Project  
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting  
Notes – REVISED 03/01/2011  
January 26, 2011, 7:00 p.m.  
Southwestern High School**

**Please see the highlighted areas for the corrections**

Tom Dombrowski made a comment regarding the Gateway legal actions. He noted that no matter what occurs with the bait shop, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street does not belong to the Ambassador Bridge Company.

John Bendzick noted that MDOT Director Kirk Steudle was reappointed. Mr. Bendzick noted that he met with the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional district representative to discuss the project on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Notes of LAC/LAG Meeting of October 27, 2010**

No comments on notes of November 17, 2010.

**SWCBC Update**

Scott **Brines** asked a question regarding the State of the Union address – high speed rail was mentioned. Will the NITC (formerly known as DRIC) consider the use of high speed rail? Mohammed Alghurabi noted that rail/public transit was examined during the EIS and was not found to meet the purpose and need of the project.

Mr. **Brines** stated that there was a SWCBC meeting the previous evening, and they are still positive about things and will soon have a call-in day for legislators.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib noted that CBC led a tour of the area for legislators but noted that support for the NITC (formerly known as DRIC) was only contingent on investment in the community. There is a package of bills being introduced, similar to the benefits for the Blue Water Bridge project in Port Huron. They are looking into creating a NITC (formerly known as DRIC) investment district. Rep. Tlaib stated that she felt it was time for a representative from the Governor's office to begin attending the LAC meetings. She went on to note that the City of Detroit owns 60 to 70 percent of the land in the area and the city should use that to take a position to benefit the community.

**NITC (formerly known as DRIC) Status**

Mohammed noted that MDOT has been supporting the due diligence work with the Governor's office since the election. The Governor's office, as noted in the State of the State address, will be taking the lead and MDOT will be supporting.

Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D – Romulus) spoke regarding the project. The Senator moved into the Senate from the House in January. He is concerned with the vibrancy of southeast Michigan. He introduced Senate Bill 66 to allow a public-private partnership (P3) to build the DIRC project. He is happy to see the support of the Governor. There is an opportunity to engage and inform new members. There is strong support on each side of the aisle in the Senate. The FHWA match that the Governor announced changes the equation as it impacts other districts. Many of the new Senators came from the House and have some familiarity with the project. However, in the House most representatives are new.

Rep. Tlaib then spoke. She noted that a House Bill on the project has been introduced. However, it is just a P3 bill and not an accountability bill. Community Benefits will set the tone for future mega-projects and their impacts on local communities. People need to testify regarding the impacts on their community. Politicians will listen to Michigan residents more than other politicians. There will be one-on-ones next week as well as a breakfast for new legislators.

Rep. Harvey Santana then added that he is convinced that if something positive for the community doesn't happen with the project, then there won't be a community as evidenced by the continuing decline. The support of the community is definitely needed.

### **Detroit Works Update – John Baran, City of Detroit**

Mr. Baran noted that handouts of the schedule of upcoming community meetings were available. These meetings will be reactions and responses to information that the planning teams have developed. There will be 10 meetings with the same presentation at each. The Southwest meeting will be on Vernor. In February/March there will be 10 additional topic meetings, then 10 more neighborhood meetings at a later date. See [www.detroitworksproject.com](http://www.detroitworksproject.com) for additional information.

Rep. Tlaib asked what the community could do to keep the momentum building with the NITC (formerly known as DRIC) going. Mr. Baran noted that attending the meetings and reiterating the communities' issues is important. They already have some of the items such as housing and truck traffic on the to-do list.

### **Other LAC/LAG Business**