

**New International Trade Crossing Project  
Local Advisory Council/Local Agency Group Meeting  
Notes  
March 30, 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. Mohammed introduced the Spanish language interpreter who asked if there were any in attendance who needed interpretation services.

Mohammed noted that Ms. Leonard was unable to attend and sent her regrets.

**Public Comments**

Mario Hernandez asked that his written comments be added to the record. After further discussions with Mohammed following the meeting, it was clarified that his comments will be maintained as part of MDOT records, but not incorporated as part of the Local Advisory Council meeting notes.

No other public comments.

**Notes of LAC/LAG Meeting of February 23, 2011**

No initial comments.

At the end of the meeting Simone Sagovac made some additional comments regarding the air quality issues she brought up at last month's meeting. She said that trucks will be lined up idling in the plaza.

Mohammed noted that GSA/CBP is very concerned with the issue of trucks in the plaza and is committed to preventing idling. In addition, the plaza will be very modern, not constrained like some

of the other crossings, which will help reduce queuing, and trucks will know ahead of time where they are going.

Thomas Dombrowski noted that trucks will now be pre-cleared, reducing queues and wait times.

### **Detroit Works Update**

John Baran noted that the next phase of the Detroit Works Project, called “Audience Meetings,” is underway. Several meetings have been held so far, but there are many more to come including meetings focusing on youth, faith, artists, entrepreneurs, the environment, and other special interest groups. Please check the “Get Involved” link at [www.detroitworksproject.com](http://www.detroitworksproject.com) for a list of past and future meetings. Mr. Baran also said that there will also be a series of topical summits scheduled in the near future.

Mr. Dombrowski asked when the plan will be implemented.

Mr. Baran said that some elements of the plan will be implemented as early as this spring in targeted neighborhoods. The nature of the initial implementation will depend on the vision and plan adopted following the completion of these meetings. Other elements of the plan will be phased in over time.

### **SWCBC Update**

Tom Cervenak gave the SWCBC update. The SWCBC is continuing to survey homeowners in the project area. They will also canvas those who do not return a survey. SWCBC is working with Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to keep people in the neighborhood. If you received a survey and have not yet completed it, please do so.

On April 16<sup>th</sup> the SWCBC will hold a town hall meeting from 10:00 AM to noon at Holy Redeemer Church. They will be discussing environmental issues and impacts in southwest Detroit. A flyer is attached to these notes.

On April 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM there will be a Delray Visioning workshop. This workshop will continue the community planning work started by Hamilton Anderson in the DRIC EIS and the recent Capital Access planning work. The U of M School of Architecture has volunteered to expand the Capital Access planning work to the whole Delray area in order to develop a preferred plan. There will be multiple sessions and SWCBC will send out notices.

Ms. Sagovac stated that SWCBC has had several meetings with Lt. Gov. Calley to discuss the impact of this project on the neighborhoods and how this might be mitigated by a community benefits package. They have another meeting scheduled for this Friday during which they will discuss a package of accountability bills.

Mr. Hernandez asked how many people are lined up for the new homes in Delray under the MSHDA program.

Mr. Cervanak responded that he did not have an exact number but has heard that around 12 people have expressed interest.

Mohammed added an update of some other items that are important to the SWCBC:

- Local jobs connected to the project continue to be an important issue. The Metro Region Engineer, along with the Southwest Detroit Business Association and other groups, is reaching out to facilitate dialogue so the community is ready when the jobs come. MDOT is also looking at contracting package options such as unbundling some contracts to offer packages to smaller companies.
- MDOT continues to examine deconstruction versus demolition. MDOT is looking at best practices and the experiences in Canada to see how it can best be done.
- The EIS Green Sheet commits to establishing an economic development plan for southwest Detroit. The plan will present the best opportunities to leverage the NITC and DIFT projects for the economic benefit of the community. Since the projects are in the same geographical area, there will be coordination between the opportunities of the two projects. MDOT is developing an RFP which will be ready when the project is authorized by the legislature.

### **Junction Presentation**

Bruce Campbell presented three slides showing the various options associated with the Junction Street Bridge over I-75. A copy of this presentation is attached to these notes. The project proposes to permanently remove this bridge due to conflicts with Ramps A & D of the proposed interchange connecting I-75 to the NITC Bridge plaza. Because these ramps are higher than the existing freeway when they pass Junction Street, the Junction Street bridge needs to be removed. A new pedestrian crossing will be constructed in the vicinity of Morrel Street. People living north of I-75 and east of Junction will not have to travel any significant additional distance to reach the Community Health

and Social Services Center (CHASS). People living north of I-75 and west of Junction Street will need to walk approximately 200 yards further after the NITC is constructed than they do today.

Alternative Option 1 would raise Junction Street enough to clear the new ramps - this introduces a number of additional impacts to both sides of the freeway. Alternative Option 2 would raise Junction Street to clear the new ramps and would also bridge Fort Street. While this reduces some of the impacts of Option 1, it introduces some additional impacts. MDOT is continuing to look at ways to move the pedestrian bridge to reduce the additional walking distances and making the bridge more convenient and inviting to the walking public.

Mr. Cervenak noted that CHASS is a very important part of the community, and he is happy to hear the MDOT is continuing to look for ways to accommodate their needs.

Corkey Benson asked, considering the costs associated with the other options, if the estimated \$4 million could be spent on busses instead of construction. This would help eliminate walking in the winter. Mohammed said that this would be a point of negotiation during the ROW acquisition process.

Commissioner Ilona Varga asked if the City will have set-back requirements for properties adjacent to the new bridge. Mr. Baran said that he does not see any zoning restrictions that would apply. Mr. Campbell noted that the project design includes substantial buffering 100 feet around the plaza, meaning no property would be any closer than it is currently to the bridge, plaza, or interchange.

Mr. Dombrowski asked if Representative Tlaib had been advised of any of the Junction Street alternatives. Mohammed said MDOT sent a copy of the presentation to Representative Tlaib but had not been able to schedule a meeting with her.

Mark Hesse noted that if Junction and/or Fort St. were to be raised, the Berwalt Manor would be isolated by the high level structures surrounding it. He asked if he could be included in any meetings with CHASS, since this issue will directly impact his property. He also noted that the pedestrian walkway over Big Beaver (16 Mile) at the Somerset Mall in Troy was a good example of what could be done to accommodate pedestrians and would likely cost less than \$4 million.

Mohammed clarified that MDOT is not contemplating to change the project as defined in the Record of Decision at this time but has been involved in a dialogue with CHASS regarding their issues. There will be no changes to the scope of the project without substantial public input including the

LAC. The EIS process is very detailed when any changes are contemplated. What MDOT is seeking to achieve is a balance between needs and impacts.

A DDOT representative asked for additional details as to what MDOT is planning for the Livernois/Dragoon corridor.

Mr. Campbell responded that Livernois would be two-way. Dragoon was closed after community consultation in order to reduce the amount of truck traffic heading north on Dragoon.

Ms. Benson asked if MDOT has considered keeping ramps A & D elevated over Junction Street.

Mr. Campbell responded that option was considered, but it would then cause the closure of the Clark Street interchange.

Ms. Benson asked if anyone had an issue with closing Clark.

Mr. Campbell responded that Clark is a major north/south community thoroughfare as well as an I-75 interchange.

Richard Rosen asked if lowering I-75 in the Junction Street area would help with the problem.

Mr. Campbell said no. The issue isn't the height of I-75; it's the height flyover ramps that connect I-75 to the bridge plaza.

Mr. Dombrowski asked if Campbell Street will turn into a boulevard south of the railroad tracks.

Mr. Campbell responded that Campbell Street will be a boulevard south of the railroad tracks. The I-75 exit at Campbell was configured to improve traffic circulation to Fort Wayne.

A DDOT representative asked if DDOT has been advised that some of their bus routes will have to be adjusted as a result of the NITC project.

Mr. Campbell said yes.

Mr. Hesse asked what impact raising the Jefferson grade would have on CHASS. He asked if there is an option to raise Fort Street over Junction.

Mr. Campbell responded that raising the grade of Fort Street would require the taking of the current CHASS facility. Raising Fort St. over Junction would not solve the Junction over I-75 problem.

Mr. Rosen asked if there is an option to curve Junction east to cross-over I-75. Does this carry a different traffic population? Does the traffic that uses Junction use it for a different purpose?

Mr. Campbell responded that this option was examined when MDOT was coordinating with the Public Safety campus. The cross bridge was so close to Clark that it didn't make sense to have a separate bridge. Junction generally serves a local population who use it for community connectivity.

Mr. Rosen commented that there is a group of people who feel it is important to keep Junction open. He stated the same questions were asked years ago when he asked why Livernois and Clark can't be lowered. He was told there was an issue involving a large sewer pipe. He then asked if lowering I-75 would have the same impact as raising it.

Mr. Campbell responded that I-75 is at a low point at Junction and lowering other portions of I-75 would not solve the clearance problems for Junction over the plaza ramp. In addition, lowering the I-75 grade could make the ramp longer which could potentially impact the remaining Clark ramp. Also, the current project does not touch the I-75 mainline; it widens the roadway which only required minimal lane closures. This was done to limit construction impacts and retain the recently reconstructed pavement. Lowering I-75 would have a more substantial construction, maintaining traffic impact.

### **NITC Status**

Mohammed noted that MDOT is still waiting for introduction of authorizing legislation. The legislature will be in and out of session through the last week of April when the bill could come up for consideration.

Deacon Norbert Motowski asked if MDOT has seen the Detroit International Bridge Company's ads attacking the NITC project.

Mohammed said he had seen it. He said positive news about the NITC and list of project supporters can be found at [www.buildthedricnow.com](http://www.buildthedricnow.com).

Deacon Motowski asked if MDOT would be running counter ads.

Mohammed said no.

Mr. Hesse commented that supporters of the NITC can also contact their legislators or register comments regarding these ads, the misinformation contained in them, and news stories showing support for the NITC Project.

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

There was no other business.

### **Additional Public Comments**

Mary Anne Cuderman said she heard MDOT will not be in control of the NITC bridge under the proposed legislation. She asked if there was any information on MDOT's future involvement in the project contained in the legislation.

Mohammed noted that MDOT has not seen a bill yet. What MDOT does know, and has shared in the past, is that the legislation will set up a State of Michigan bridge authority to oversee the NITC. The details of that authority are unknown at this time. MDOT's role in the process may or may not be diminished under this legislation. The other 3 major publicly owned bridges in Michigan (International, Mackinac, and Blue Water) all have structured authorities, and MDOT's role is different at each one. However, public ownership and oversight is maintained at all of those bridges, and it is expected that the final authority structure for the NITC Bridge will also maintain that public ownership and oversight.

Mr. Rosen stated that the handout circulated by Mr. Hernandez was not appropriate and does not belong in the record, because it is not relevant to the project. He asked if MDOT would develop a policy that items can't be added to the record if they don't address project issues.

Mohammed stated that his concerns will be taken under advisory. He further noted that MDOT is hesitant to make any blanket judgments on what is or is not relevant to the project and to unfairly stifle public comment.

Kelvin Banks asked how many properties would be affected by the project. He also asked if there was a set amount for purchase of residential properties. Finally, he asked how many new houses were being provided under the MSHDA program.

Hugh McNichol stated there are 247 households (not properties) being affected by the project. Mohammed added that there are an additional 41 businesses affected. Tom Jay, MDOT Real Estate Division, stated that each property is individually appraised, and the owners are presented an offer that contains 3 items: the value of the property; a relocation supplement to get the residents into comparable housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary; and moving costs. Ms. Sagovac added that there were 26 houses in Phase 1 of the MSHDA project.

Ms. Sagovac said that Mr. Hernandez's written comments contained a heartfelt message regarding the hardship of living in an area where a major project is being proposed. She pointed out the increased dumping of tires and debris in the neighborhood which shows a great disrespect for the community. She further noted that money for new houses in Delray is coming from a federal grant administered through MSHDA, not from MDOT. The purpose of this grant is to keep people who have lived most or all of their lives in Delray from being uprooted. There is also a desire to improve some of the homes already present in the area. Perhaps some of the materials taken from deconstructed homes could be made available to improve remaining homes.

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

The next LAC/LAG meeting will be on April 27, 2011 at Southwestern High School. With that, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

***SAVE THE DATE!***

**Saturday, April 16 \* 10:30am – 12:00pm**

Holy Redeemer Church

1721 Junction St., corner of W. Vernor

Refreshments provided

*Spanish Interpretation Provided*

*Transportation from Delray provided, call (313) 842-1961*

## **Town Hall Meeting**

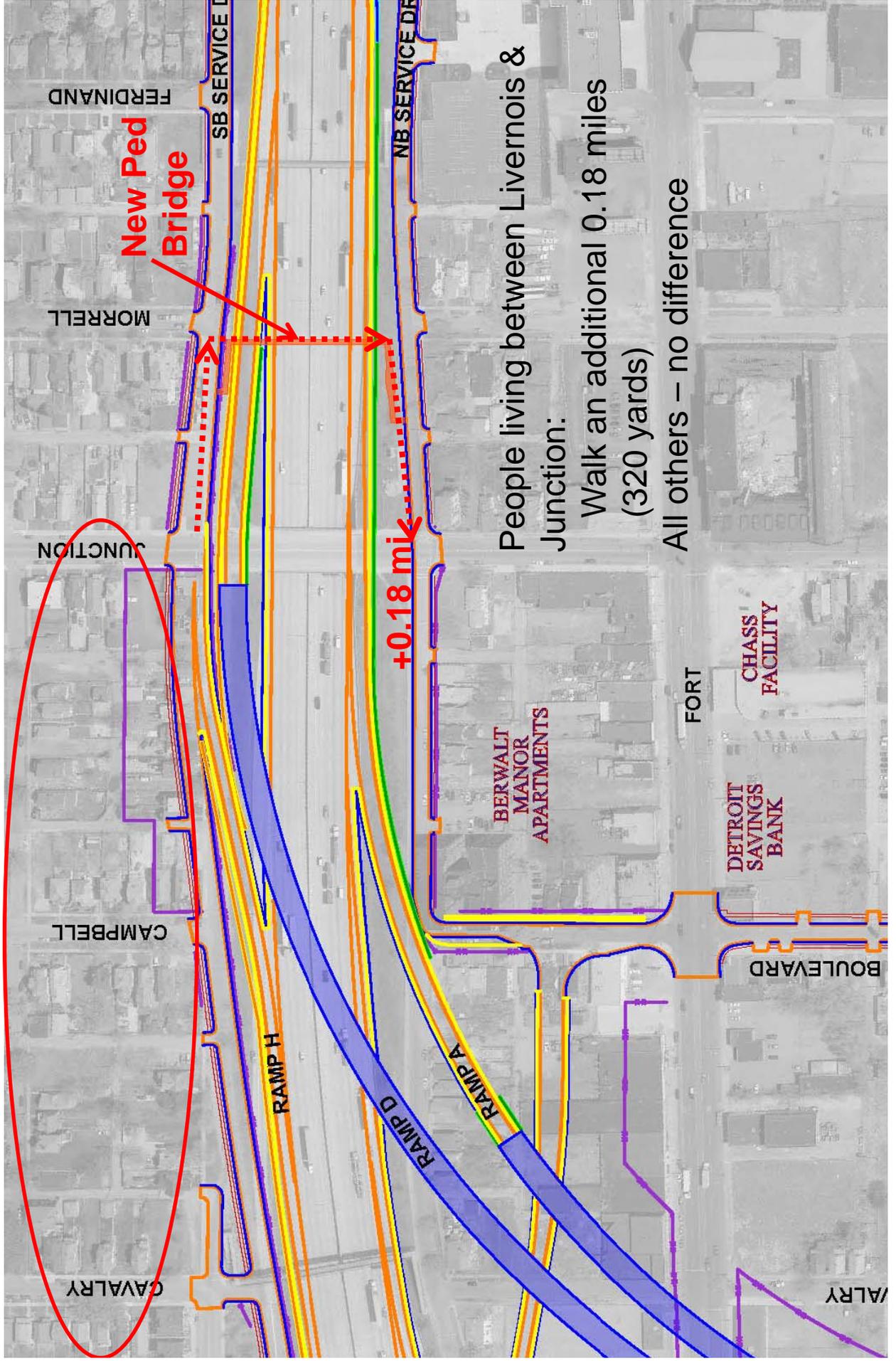
***Fighting for a Bridge to A Healthy Community for all!***

Come To Hear

- Health experts--How truck diesel pollution is affecting our health
- About asthma and heart health issues
- A vision for a healthy border community
- Faith leaders, Representatives, and Public testimony

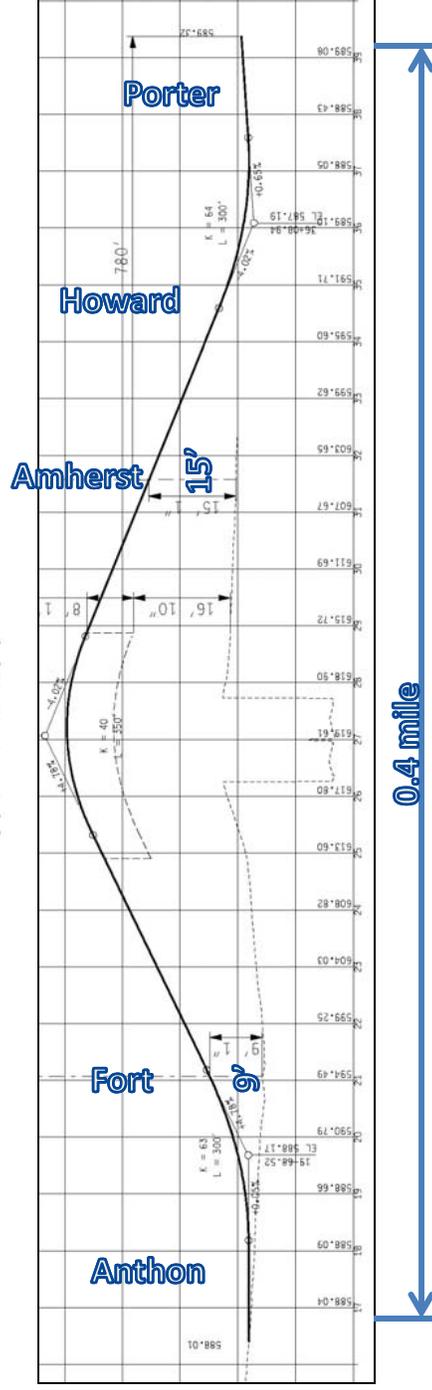
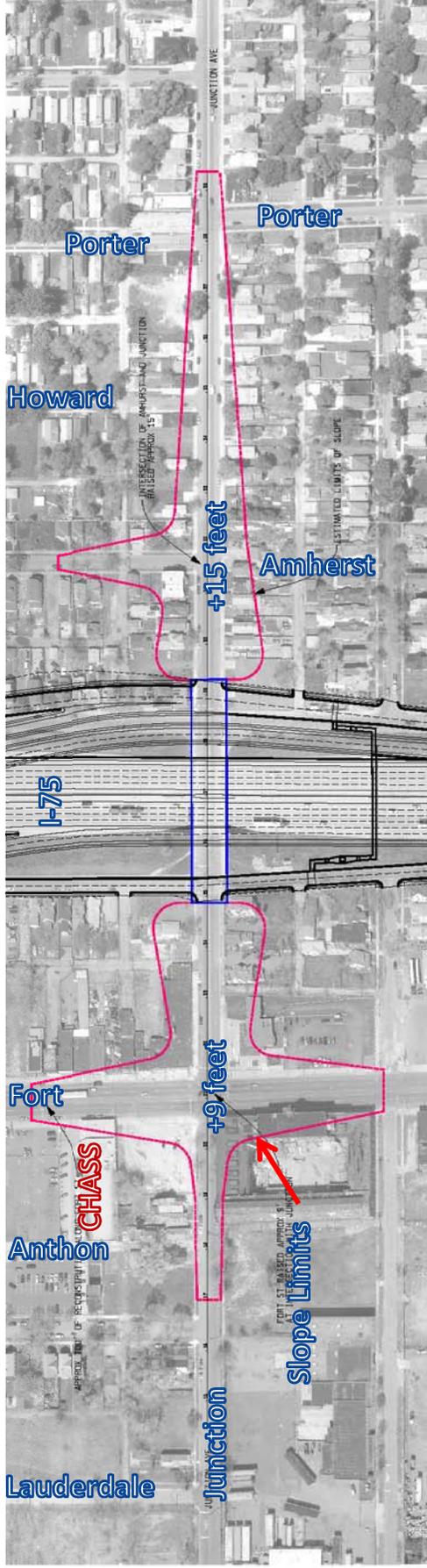
Sponsored by Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition and others

# Junction Closing – Impact on Pedestrians



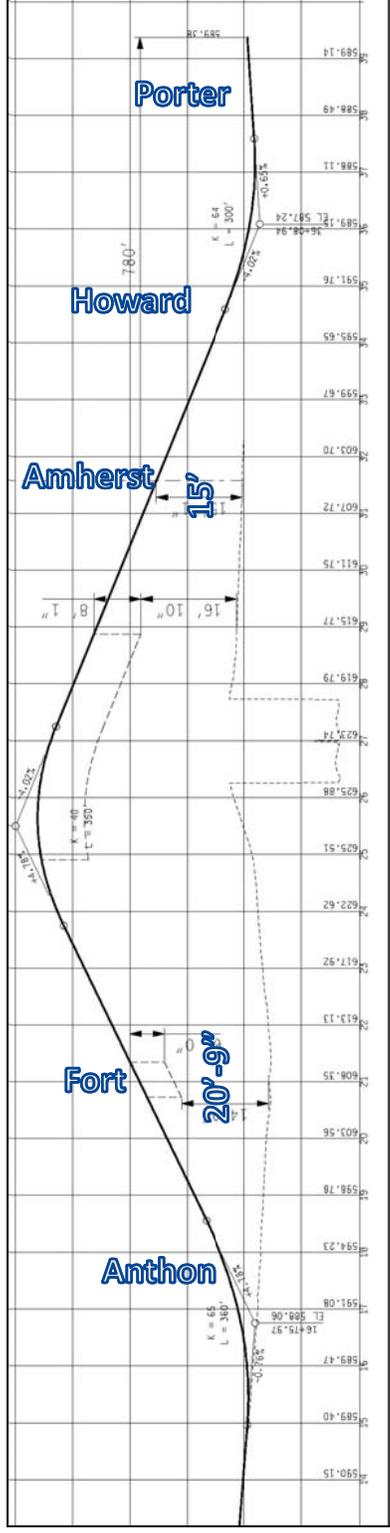
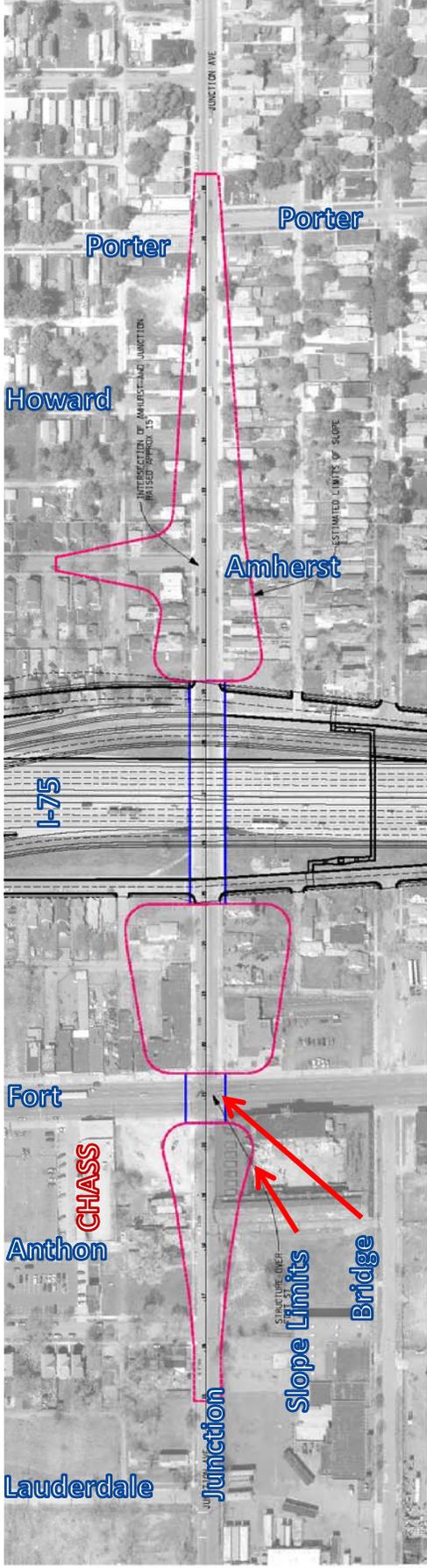
People living between Livernois & Junction:  
Walk an additional 0.18 miles  
(320 yards)  
All others – no difference

# Option 1 – Raise Fort Street



- Raises Fort 9 ft, Amherst 15 ft.
  - Approximately 60 additional properties, 39 along Junction north to Porter.
  - Substantial community impacts.
  - Estimated construction cost \$4 million
- Engineering Issues:
    - Can't raise Fort St. – utility issues
    - High fill is likely not feasible.
    - Likely more bridge than fill, increased cost.
    - Retaining wall could reduce footprint, increased cost.

# Option 2 – Bridge Fort Street



0.5 mile

- Bridge over Fort 20'-9", raise Amherst 15 ft.
- Engineering Issues:
  - High fill is likely not feasible.
  - Likely more bridge than fill, increased cost.
  - Retaining wall could reduce footprint, increased cost.
- Approximately 54 additional properties, 39 along Junction north to Porter.
- Substantial community impacts.
- Estimated construction cost \$4.5 million