



## Community Development Corporation

March 29, 2006

The Honorable Phil LaJoy  
State Representative-21<sup>st</sup> District  
Chair, Transportation Committee  
State Capital  
Lansing, MI 48913

Dear Chairman LaJoy,

On behalf of Mexicantown Community Development Corporation we welcome the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study. We have not experienced a transparent community engaged process on what needs to be done regarding another border crossing (if needed) prior to the DRIC.

It is our mission to advocate for and build a stronger, more prosperous future for the historic, vibrant, and diverse Mexicantown community of Southwest Detroit through economic, business, and cultural development.

To accomplish our mission we implement a comprehensive strategy built on proven economic growth and community development principles. We are a strong team with strong networks working to successfully build Mexicantown, Detroit into a world-class destination neighborhood. Our practice is to engage the maximum number of stakeholders in our programs including residents, businesses, churches, local and state-wide economic development organizations, federal, state and local governments, as well as other community organizations.

As a result, we have witnessed several local businesses in Mexicantown that after 30 to 50 years decided to reinvest over \$200,000 in façade improvements alone. Also, the \$17 million investment at the Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado to open this fall. The commercial district enhances the approximately \$50 million investment made by Bagley Housing Association and the local churches thus creating a full fledged vibrant neighborhood.

We strongly support the DRIC study above all because we can have an open discussion as to how our neighborhood can be affected. We can hold *some body* accountable for decisions made. In a private process, as we have experienced over the last ten years that has not been the case.

Clearly, we support that any additional border infrastructure or crossing be considered in an open, inclusive public process and be publicly owned. It is obvious that if Southwest Detroit is to bear the burden of a new border crossing, that community benefits agreement be negotiated with the local community.

Based on the climate we live in, we believe that it is money well spent to continue with the DRIC process in order to come to an equitable agreement.

We must not put the private sector's interest above public safety and our community's economic prosperity.

Best regards,



Maria Elena Rodriguez  
President