

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Meeting Notes
Local Advisory Council
July 26, 2006
(Revised August 31, 2006)
DoubleTree Hotel

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

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

Introductions/Meeting Conduct

Mohammed Alghurabi began the meeting by asking all in attendance to introduce themselves. He then explained the meeting conduct procedures, indicating that following a review of the agenda, the public would be invited to comment. Then, the LAC would conduct its business followed by another public comment period. He asked if there were any suggested changes to the agenda. There were none.

Public Comments

Richard Rosen mentioned that a *Metro Times* article referred to the Peace Bridge as having a different pricing schedule for tolls than the Ambassador Bridge. He indicated that he does not want the private owner of the Ambassador Bridge to own the new bridge. Mr. Rosen indicated that he was for public ownership. He indicated that under public ownership, proceeds from the tolls should go to improve the Delray and Sandwichtown neighborhoods.

Otis Mathis requested a “binder” of the land use planning designs and zoning maps of the Delray area. In response, Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the land use planning work that was done for the DRIC was posted on the Web. Joe Corradino indicated that the consultant team had not prepared zoning maps for the area but they were available on the City’s Web site. Later in the evening, Marcell Todd of the City’s Planning Commission indicated that he could make available for distribution to the LAC zoning maps of the Delray area. Otis Mathis then indicated that he has no preference for whether the next bridge is publicly or privately owned. But, in the end, anything that happens in Delray would affect the area in which he lives, which is zip code 48217.

Terry Mattison asked why the brine well cavity drilling program had to be 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Joe Corradino responded that, in order to finish expeditiously, the drilling would be conducted around the clock. For some holes, that would mean completion within 15 or fewer days. For other holes, that would mean completion in 30 or fewer days. Terry Mattison then indicated that drilling should be suspended after normal business day to not impact the residents in the area. Joe Corradino noted that it was hoped that MDOT would soon act upon a proposal to relocate all residents of residential structures within 300 feet of each borehole. If that were the case, then the residents would not be exposed to any nuisances caused by the drilling when conducted 24/7. Terry Mattison asked what kind of noise would emanate from the drilling. Joe Corradino responded that field review of the noise from the drilling rigs

indicated that it would be contained well within 200 feet of the drilling source. He stressed that the drilling operation would not involve pounding into the ground, like a pile driver, but it would be a rotary drill like someone would use to drill a screw into a piece of wood.

John Nagy then asked about security of any of the homes from which residents would be relocated. Joe Corradino indicated that personnel from the drilling operation (somewhere between a half-dozen and a dozen people) would be on and around the drilling site at almost all times. John Nagy stressed that some kind of additional security should be provided to ensure the homes were not vandalized. Joe Corradino and Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that would be taken under consideration.

That concluded the first public comment period.

Meeting Notes

Mohammed Alghurabi pointed to the April 26th and May 31st meeting notes, indicating that that April 26th notes had been revised. Mrs. Leonard asked in what way the April 26th notes had been revised. Joe Corradino noted that on May 31st, Mrs. Leonard requested that the April 26th meeting notes should include MOSES, the Delray United Action Council, and Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision as co-hosts of the April 26th meeting. However, Joe Corradino indicated that somehow the April 26th notes had not been changed. He stated that they would be and then posted on the Web. With that, there were no further comments on the meeting notes.

Review of the June 8th Bus Tour

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any comments on the June 8th bus tour. Joe Corradino noted that DVDs with presentations of 30 minutes each had been provided to those in attendance of the tours to the Toledo and Port Huron bridges. He indicated that others in the room had been in attendance at the tour and invited them to comment. Delores Leonard indicated she thought it was a very educational event. John Nagy noted that he had gotten an e-mail from a long-time environmentalist friend who noted that the project in Toledo had gone extremely well because of good communications by the consulting team. He hoped that the same would be the case in the current DRIC Study.

June 23rd Master Planning Workshop

Joe Corradino indicated that the June 23rd Master Planning Workshop involved the public to express, through a form of voting, their preferences with respect to each of several master plans that were displayed for alternative plaza locations. He indicated that those data were now being summarized and used to prepare for the Context Sensitive Solutions Workshop of August 24th. At that time, the data from the June 23rd Workshop would be explained. There was no further comment on the June 23rd Master Planning Workshop.

Update on the Drilling Program

Joe Corradino reviewed the drilling program as it relates to drilling deep holes to determine whether there are brine well cavities 1,200 feet or so below the surface. He indicated that progress was slow but steady in gaining access to a number of properties for the 14 holes. Most of those properties are now controlled by the City, particularly as two holes, #7 and #16, had been moved from the neighborhood to an area

along the edge of the river. He further commented that cooperation with the City is advancing on preparing the hydrogen sulfide contingency plan. That process has become more and more detailed and has not concluded. Therefore, the drilling of the deep holes is not beginning in July and likely not in August. He also indicated that there were other drilling programs to be done to determine soil conditions for both structural and environmental purposes. Those drillings would be shallow and would start in August in the public rights-of-way (i.e., of local streets). The City of Detroit has been cooperating in this area. Additionally, Joe Corradino noted that about 75 individual private-property owners had granted permission for additional drilling so it is likely over 100 holes will be drilled in the area to shallow depths to locate the plaza and its ramps, as well to define environmental conditions.

John Nagy asked when the soil conditions results will be made known to the public. Joe Corradino indicated that, at the latest, the information would be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. He would determine if it could be made known earlier.

Claudia Barden-Jackson asked how much notice will be given before drilling begins. Joe Corradino noted that the first borings in August for the shallow drilling will be preceded by at least one week's notice of all appropriate agencies, as well as the community by door-to-door distribution of a flyer.

Steve Tobocman asked what the deep drilling equipment would look like. Joe Corradino, using PowerPoint slides, displayed photos of the large drill and discussed the noise, vibrations and odors that would emanate from the drilling operations. Again, Joe Corradino stressed that the drilling is a rotary operation, not a pounding operation, and is not associated with the typical noise that people have experienced from operations like pile-driving.

In response to a question about hydrogen sulfide, Joe Corradino noted that hydrogen sulfide is contained in groundwater in a layer several hundred feet below the surface: it does not extend down to the salt cavity areas at v1200 feet. The H₂S is brought up in what is known as the "mud" used in the drilling to penetrate the rocks. That mud, when brought to the surface, is placed in special tanks for eventually disposal at a certified landfill. While the mud is in the tanks, the H₂S is treated with various chemicals to minimize the odor. Additionally, there will be monitors on the site to detect H₂S levels, monitors on the rig, and personnel at the site will wear H₂S monitors to regularly detect the levels of this gas. Finally, there will be specific plans to respond to critical H₂S levels, including an evacuation plan.

Update of Public Involvement

Regine Beauboeuf of Parsons Transportation Group explained in detail the August 24th workshop on Context Sensitive Solutions. She noted that the meeting will combine an examination of the bridge with the plaza and interchanges, taking a look at issues such as colors, landscaping, gateway treatments, buffer zones, and various aesthetic components including lighting at both crossings X-10 and X11. The Canadians have been invited to participate in this workshop and all others to define common elements of the crossing. Regine indicated that as a goal, the August 24th workshop is to define the theme for the new crossing system.

In October, the workshop will last from 10:00 AM until dinnertime. There will be a dozen computers that would allow the community to indicate its treatment of components of the crossing system. For those who are not comfortable using a computer, an artist would be available to draw the person's description of the preferences. Additionally, computer output will be displayed as the workshop proceeds for others to observe. The use of computers to allow the community to participate in a more interactive way is anticipated to be used on the Canadian side of the study area as well.

In December, Regine Beauboeuf indicated that the CSS theme for the crossing and other unique elements that seem to be common to the communities in the U.S./Delray and Canada/Sandwichtown would be presented in a public meeting.

With that, the meeting turned to the second round of public comments.

Public Comments

Terry Mattison indicated that she is not concerned about the color or the theme of the new bridge but about air quality. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that the evening's meeting focused on the Context Sensitive Design of the crossing system as a workshop would soon be conducted, but other meetings had focused on air quality. He indicated that he would be more than happy to discuss the air quality issue after the meeting. He also pointed to the notes of previous meetings at which it was discussed. Joe Corradino indicated that there is an air quality analysis displayed on the Web that is very comparable to what will be performed for the Detroit River International Crossing Project. It is for the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project which is across I-75 in southwest Detroit. He noted that calculations for the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project had been made of the quantity/burden pollutants at various locations for mobile source air toxics as well as carbon monoxide and particulate matter, both large (PM₁₀) and very small (PM_{2.5}).

Terry Mattison then asked about the impacts the drilling will have on the foundations of homes. Joe Corradino noted that the vibrations analysis of the drilling operation indicated that any significant vibrations would dissipate well within 100 feet of the drill rig. Nonetheless, vibrations will be monitored at the edge of the drill site (about 100 to 150 feet from the drill rig). If any unusual vibrations are encountered, then a program would be enacted to do inspections of foundations of nearby structures. Terry Mattison then asked, as it relates to soil boring for environmental purposes, what kind of toxins will be removed. Joe Corradino responded that he did not know at the present time as the drilling had not commenced.

Otis Mathis asked about the study limits of the DIFT air quality analysis. Joe Corradino indicated that it extended beyond the freight terminal up and down several streets into the neighborhoods, those streets being Lonyo, Dragoon, Wyoming and Livernois. Again, he referred Otis Mathis to the DIFT Web site and the air quality technical report that can be found there. Otis Mathis indicated that he wanted coordination between the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project and the Detroit River International Crossing Project so that a complete analysis of truck movements would be undertaken.

Otis Mathis then indicated that he and others, like John Nagy, had worked on the Detroit Revere Copper site and established a redevelopment plan for the area once contamination was remediated. John Nagy offered to provide that plan to MDOT.

Mr. Rosen asked how the decision would be made on whether the bridge was publicly or privately owned. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that there was an analysis being conducted parallel to the DRIC environmental study that would address that matter. Steve Tobocman also indicated that House Bill 4868 is waiting consideration in a Michigan House committee. It would set-up a public authority for all international crossings, much like the Mackinac Bridge Authority. Action on that bill is still pending.

An observer then indicated there are rumors in the Delray neighborhood that this is the site for the new bridge. Mohammed Alghurabi responded that the Detroit River International Crossing Project is focusing on the Delray area. On the other hand, the Ambassador Bridge is proposing to build a second span next to its existing bridge near Mexicantown.

Dena Nagy spoke in favor of the DRIC Study. She said she favored it because of its accountability. She indicated that she was excited about the plans for rejuvenating the Delray community.

David Nagy indicated that Delray residents had been cooperating with Sandwichtown and Windsor elected officials about the DRIC Study. He explained there is close collaboration between the two communities so that they understand the decisions being made on each side of the border. He believes that the DRIC project is one of accountability and has found that those involved are telling the story without embellishment or untruths.

Otis Mathis asked again for an elaboration on the drilling for the deep-bore holes. Joe Corradino indicated that access to both City-owned and private properties are much more complicated than expected. He noted that, for example, one private property owner has refused to even answer his phone or respond to a series of letters. So, the process is moving forward but at a slower-than-expected pace. As soon as rights-of-entry are permitted, the deep drilling will begin.

Terry Mattison then asked about the proximity of the new plaza to Southwestern High School. Joe Corradino noted that the distance was reported in the March meeting notes and he did not have the specific distances for each of the alternatives readily available to recite. Nonetheless, he referred to the meeting notes for the exact distances. He also indicated that while a plaza may look like it is on the edge of Southwestern High School's property, in many instances the plaza's activities for collecting tolls, inspecting trucks and cars, or the duty-free shop are away from the school. Next to the school, in many instances, is a buffer of green/open space.

With that, the meeting came to a close at about 9:15 p.m.