

Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council Meeting #2
Meeting Notes
April 27, 2005, 7:00 p.m.
Southgate Holiday Inn
Southgate, Michigan

Purpose: Local Advisory Council Meeting No. 2.

Attendance: See attached.

Discussion:

The meeting was called to order by Andy Zeigler, who proceeded to ask that everyone at the table and observers in the room identify themselves.

Next, Andy Zeigler discussed the conduct of the meeting and the agenda items. He reiterated the role of the Local Advisory Council being an independent perspective review of documents as a liaison to the many interest groups as a way for those groups to help shape the project.

Andy Zeigler opened the floor to public comments, which was agenda item number 4.

Comment: As a point of order, the group has no legislative power.

Response: Andy Zeigler noted that was correct. Nevertheless, the group's input has value and would be closely considered as the project advanced.

Question: How is the meeting being run and how is the agenda set?

Response: Andy Zeigler said he appreciated these comments. The agenda was set in advance and is related to the schedule for the project. Issues are put on the agenda as they come up with respect to that schedule. These could include issues brought up by the LAC. The membership includes, among others, the local legislative representatives and representatives of municipal governments.

Question: Are we running by Roberts Rules of Order or some other official meeting procedures?

Response: No, the meeting is intended to be informal. That may be re-evaluated as needed, but the intent is to solicit the comments in an informal way from the LAC.

Comment: Referring to the notes of the April 11th public meeting, it is asked if citizens get a vote. The commenter proceeded to state that the concern is that government can set fair market value. That older homes east of Ford, in particular, may be of less value and may not get a fair price. The concern is that there is no oversight on the part of citizens. He encouraged the citizens' right of a

representative, they can. His feeling was that the project could provide no good to the infrastructure of Downriver communities. Wyandotte is coming back economically, and Riverview has a limited area in which to develop. They are great communities. The speaker was suspicious that something else is going on.

Response: Andy Zeigler reiterated that there is no direct vote on the part of citizens or any committee. Nevertheless, the outreach program and all its committees is established because the community input is vital to the process and to what MDOT is doing. With respect to property acquisition, there are legal processes that are well established in state and federal law to provide fair housing and fair prices.

Comment: I can't open my door today due to dust from construction. There have been no streetlights for some time. Cars and trucks have been driving in my front yard.

Comment: In reading through the comments that were handed out with the agenda, the speaker wondered how many comments had been returned, and asked if a list is kept of the number of comments received.

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that approximately 800 persons had attended the first round of public meetings in April and that approximately 20 had turned in comment forms and approximately 15 e-mails had been received through the date of the Local Advisory Council meeting, April 27th.

Comment: I received no notification in Riverview, which is a small community of approximately 14,000 persons. There are about 6,000 to 7,000 homes. If a bridge or tunnel were built, the speaker could anticipate 500 to 600 homes being eliminated, which would represent 10 percent of the tax base. The speaker's feeling was that the ideal place for a new bridge would be by the existing Ambassador Bridge because of the infrastructure there already. He suggested making the new bridge one-way with the existing bridge, and making a one-way pair of the two. He further stated that the Golden Gate Bridge uses reversible lanes.

Response: Twinning of the Ambassador Bridge will be considered as will all other options.

Comment: It is not clear to me how the need for the project was determined. When one sees the decline of population and jobs in Michigan, it is hard to understand the growth that is anticipated and expressed in the project need. Right now, the traffic holdup is at U.S. Customs. It makes sense to increase the capacity there. Finally, the speaker ended with a question, asking if anyone has considered tunnels.

Response: Andy Zeigler noted that a number of these comments and questions will be addressed in subsequent presentations that will occur after the public comment period.

Question: Why not build a tunnel? Why tear up the south when Detroit has infrastructure? People here are all going to be affected. The project is one-sided. Displaced families may not want to leave.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Question: A presidential permit is required for the project, is that correct?

Response: Joe Corradino said yes, there has to be a presidential permit along with a number of other permits, plus the process required in both countries must be appropriately subscribed to. If someone wants to apply for a presidential permit, the appropriate agency to contact is the State Department. Joe Corradino noted that more information will be provided in the presentation.

Question: How do we get news of meetings?

Response: This is a Local Advisory Council meeting. The list of those members and observers to the Local Advisory Council is continuously expanding. Notifications are sent to all of those persons. Public meetings will be announced to a much broader group of people. The mail-outs are on the order of 22,000 individuals.

Question: Can we get a list of all LAC members because we want to contact that group.

Response: The actual minutes of LAC meetings will be posted on the Web site. The list of attendees and sign-ins is for the purpose of contacting individuals for future meetings. Due to privacy law, MDOT policy is to list only first names and places of residence in public meeting notes, where given. Last names and contact information typically are not given out.

Comment: I want people to contact me.

Comment: I'm asking for LAC membership only.

Response: Andy Zeigler said that if no one objects, then the names can be distributed of those people who give their concurrence and are present at the meeting. He also noted that the LAC meetings are held at a regular time each month, the last Wednesday of each month. Andy Zeigler said he would discuss with those at the policy level within MDOT insofar as what information could be released internally to the LAC if members agreed.

Question: Is it possible to receive documents earlier?

Response: Joe Corradino said that documents are provided as early as possible. The documents in the agenda packet for today's meeting were only approved earlier in the day.

Comment: It says the Illustrative Alternatives will be completed by the end of May 2005, and yet the next meeting will be after that.

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that the sentence referred to continues to say that the Illustrative Alternatives will be presented to the public in June so that the public can comment on those alternatives. Further, the LAC will see the Illustrative Alternatives prior to the round of public meetings.

Comment: In the list of evaluation factors, I don't see anything about the effects on businesses or employees.

Response: Andy Zeigler noted that will be discussed during the presentation.

Question: Will there be a health study?

Response: No, no health study will be conducted. Joe Corradino clarified by stating that the administration of USDOT in response to the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project indicated that health studies would not be performed, due to a lack of federal regulations and the status of current science.

Question: Is that consistent with current regulations?

Response: Joe Corradino said there are no standards with respect to toxic pollutants and that regulations do not specify that health studies be performed.

Comment: That's not a fair question to the chair.

Response: Thank you. Joe Corradino indicated that there is a letter from the USDOT and he can make that letter available as a reference to the question about health studies.

Question: Why can't proponents be stopped by MDOT? The answer is unclear; please expand on your answer.

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that they are private interest entities that can pursue their own plans at their own cost and on their own schedule. Regardless of that fact, they do need permits. MDOT does not control any of those permits. More approvals are needed. Joe Corradino indicated that he would edit the notes referred to by the commenter to clarify the answer.

Comment: The response on health issues is too brief. Issues related to health should be covered in the quality of life analysis.

Response: Joe Corradino reiterated that health will not be addressed in terms of an independent study. It will be addressed by examining the pollutant burdens that occur on the regional and local roadway network. Quality of life will be covered in the Illustrative Evaluation paper.

Comment: The minutes need to be more accurate, so that we don't get bogged down with this kind of discussion.

Comment: The health issue is ongoing. The Canadian government will be studying health effects. That may help explain some of the project effects.

Comment: The University of Michigan took a stand with DIFT and corresponded with the Federal Highway Administration. I can share that information stemming from a three-year experience. We need to keep the dialogue open.

Comment: The speaker thought that at the public meeting in Wyandotte, it was stated that private entities would have a difficult time pursuing a river crossing, but then in southwest Detroit, it seemed as if it is possible for them to go ahead.

Response: An individual indicated that the Detroit International Bridge Company has started a permit process. There are issues in Canada. The clearance had been given in the United States to freeway access. The Coast Guard has not yet given clearance and the Canadians have not yet given clearance. Joe Corradino added that if there are no federal dollars involved, he believed that the private entities can proceed as long as they get the necessary permits. He stated that the minutes of the public meetings will be amended to clarify this issue, as well.

Review of Public Meetings

A binder was distributed which included the minutes of the first round of public meetings held April 11th through 14th. Comment forms received subsequent to those meetings were also included, with the names redacted. Joe Corradino noted that in terms of future locations and times of meetings, any comments were welcome to improve for the next round of meetings to be held at the end of June.

Comment: The record appears to be pretty accurate, but it should be noted that there is ongoing anxiety that the process in its veracity. It made sense that there was strong turnout from the Pennsylvania area. There should have been sufficient parking at the first Wyandotte meeting. The speaker commended Riverview for coming out for the meetings. He noted there would be a

political uproar if Pennsylvania were chosen. People must be comfortable. It's clear that a better facility will be needed for the next meeting.

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated that he would try harder and get a better location for the next Wyandotte-area meeting.

Comment: I would like to see a draft of the Purpose and Need Statement.

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that it is on the Web site, that hard copies were not available on the night of the meeting.

Question: Do you want comments on the Purpose and Need?

Response: Joe Corradino indicated there would be a meeting later with cooperating agencies and a meeting is scheduled for formal scoping in August. At that time, the Purpose and Need Statement will be finalized.

Comment: There should be a red light to private sector getting any permits. Who should information requests be addressed to?

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that part of the Federal Highway Administration in Michigan is Jim Steele, whose office is in Lansing. At a day-to-day level, Jim Kirschensteiner was the Chief Technical person as he had been on the Ambassador Bridge project.

Comment: Does the Web site have times and locations of meetings?

Response: Joe Corradino said that for the LAC, upcoming meeting dates would be in the minutes of the meetings.

Comment: Everybody should put that information on their Web site.

Response: Andy Zeigler thanked the speaker and noted that that was an appropriate request.

Comment: The Detroit Planning Department has done a good job in southwest Detroit notifying individuals of important meetings. It was suggested that they be contacted insofar as public outreach goes, as they have a very good model.

Question: Can we comment on the minutes of the public meetings?

Response: Yes.

Comment: At the Wyandotte meeting, Pennsylvania was shown on an aerial as a potential corridor. This frightened people. The speaker doesn't believe it would pass the first cut. In this emotional

setting, issues are hard to focus on. The comments seem to be based on fear. The speaker recommended that MDOT diminish the profile of these alternatives. If they are not feasible, get rid of them. The direct focus should be on how the river crossing can be built. Without the fear factor, people would have a more intelligent focus on the project.

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated the need to bring all alternatives to the table. All will be carried through the process. He noted that it takes time and information to allay fears.

Question: What other locations have been considered?

Response: That will be covered in the presentation which will follow.

Illustrative Alternatives Evaluation Presentation

Joe Corradino reviewed the Illustrative Alternatives Evaluation process and referred to a paper included in the handout, especially the evaluation factors listed and explained in the handout. He noted that Pennsylvania Road was simply an illustrative example used on the aerial photographs and that many more places were being examined. After two or more years, the process will be followed and the number of alternatives will shrink as the information about those alternatives grows. For example, brine wells are a geotechnical issue in some locations, such as Hennepin Point and Zug Island. It would be necessary to do detailed analysis at a later date of the potential for a tunnel or bridge in these areas. All this information and many, many other items will lead to conclusions drawn in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). For purposes of the Illustrative Alternatives, there may be two dozen or more alternatives, and these would be reduced at the end of the year 2005 to perhaps half a dozen.

The Purpose and Need Statement in the handout is considered to be part of a legal statement and it has gone through several drafts and will continue to go through the draft process.

The conclusion of the Purpose/Need and Feasibility Study is that a road-based solution is necessary to meet the project Purpose and Need. Transit and ferries will not meet the need. Information to this effect is on the project Web site. Forecasts include changes in the relationship of U.S. and Canadian dollars, 9/11, the size problem in Canada, changes at the casinos. The ferry is important as a mode that, in and of itself, cannot address the Purpose and Need.

A variety of factors will guide the Illustrative Alternatives evaluation. Thinking about the project, one can think in terms of a connection to a freeway on either side, plazas on either side, roadways connecting the plazas to the freeways, and the river crossing itself. At present, plazas are considered to be of 80 acres or larger. Alternatives are not limited to those put forward by the proponents. All feasible and prudent alternatives will be considered. Things such as air quality burden around plazas, and noise effects will be

considered. Later next year, more analysis will be performed on a fewer number of Practical Alternatives. The evaluation factors will be weighed by the public and by the LAC and by the MDOT consultant team. The weightings of those factors will be applied during the summer to determine how well each alternative meets each evaluation factor. The process is set up so that there is no backtracking. The project is not a local project. The project is regional, national, and international concerns. Expounded on the need for the U.S. and Canadian economies to prosper and to do so by allowing freedom of movement of freight. As time goes on, those at the policy level will look at all the analyses to ensure that the project meets the stated Purpose and Need.

Cost is not in as a factor at this time. However, the factors in the performance of each alternative will lead to the score for each alternative. Then, at the end of the process, the scores will be related to cost to give a means of evaluating each alternative in terms of benefit/cost.

Above all, the processes must be honored to have a sustainable product. A tool used in the generation of Illustrative Alternatives is QUANTM. Using that engineering software, 50 Illustrative Alternatives can be generated at a time. These will be reduced in number from 50 to 20 and then to 10 or some smaller number until a reasonable number of Illustrative Alternatives remains. It is that reasonable number of alternatives that would be presented in June. In the end, the LAC and other groups will influence the outcome of the analysis but ultimately the client has the final say to make a determination on the Illustrative Alternatives, and later on the Practical Alternatives, and the Preferred Alternative.

Public Comment

Comment: Cost is a factor but it is not on the list. What about the effects on the communities in terms of fire and police protection in the tax base?

Response: Joe Corradino said economic issues on a broad scale have been addressed in the Purpose/Needs and Feasibility Study. Later, the number of jobs will be measured for each alternative. Factors related to economic performance sound more at the Practical Alternatives stage, such as the effects on the tax base and the number of jobs. At the moment, the criteria in front of the group is that for Illustrative Alternatives only. The evaluation factors will change for the Practical Alternatives.

Question: The process is designed to be open, but how much will be available with agencies making all the decisions?

Response: If we do this right, you will see all the information. We cannot go through the screening process without reporting on the factors and the performance of the alternatives.

Comment: This is a long and expensive process. MDOT and FHWA should put the red light out for the proponents that are proceeding independently of the Bi-National Partnership.

Response: Joe Corradino stated that with respect to issuance of permits, information would be sought as soon as possible from the Federal Highway Administration.

Comment: The process diagram showing the triangles with alternatives reducing as information increases is helpful. Is there something more detailed?

Response: Joe Corradino indicated there is more specific project schedule and it would be provided. In terms of the immediate schedule, the next round of public meetings would be held June 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th at similar locations except for Wyandotte, as were held in the first round. The order would be reversed. The Wyandotte might occur at the Yak Arena. The next round of meetings would be November for the LAC and December for the public. The client would establish a Preferred Alternative in March 2006 based on public input. A public hearing is scheduled for January 2007.

Question: Does a road-based solution include rail?

Response: Joe Corradino said that the diversion to rail was considered but does not eliminate the need for a road-based solution, a highway solution.

Question: What does Illustrative mean insofar as Illustrative Alternatives?

Response: Joe Corradino noted that means a broad-based analysis to deal with dozens of preliminary alternatives that lead to a fewer number of Practical Alternatives. The Illustrative Alternatives will show plazas, roads, and interchange connections.

Question: If the evaluation factors are in draft form, should comments be sent to Mohammed Alghurabi?

Response: Yes. By the middle of May, please.

Comment: Will the work on road-based solutions be reported on in the Web?

Response: The Purpose/Needs and Feasibility Study has information on the road-based solution needs. Since the beginning of 2005, more analysis has been performed and a report reflecting that analysis should be available in June. At the next meeting, there will be a matrix showing how the evaluation factors are to be measured. The LAC and observers will score the evaluation factors.

Other Issues

Andy Zeigler asked if there were other issues that could be considered.

Question: At the beginning of the meeting, it was stated that the meeting would be informal, and two people raised the issue of control of permits. Can we pass a resolution with respect to withholding any permitting?

Response: Joe Corradino said, we have indicated we will get you an answer. The push-and-pull of a resolution will not do anything more.

Comment: Some of us believe we would be better represented by our own consultant, where the client has additional funding for the LAC to get its own consultant.

Response: Andy Zeigler said no. We do the best we can through an exhaustive public process, including its many committees, the LAC, the Local Government Agency Committee, and many one-on-one meetings. MDOT is relying on the LAC membership relationships to distribute information.

Question: I'm confused. In other jobs I've participated in, the Advisory Groups usually chair their own meeting.

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated MDOT will consider such a situation. It was not the intent of MDOT to do so originally. It is important that the chair move the meeting forward.

Public Comment Period

Question: Could you be more specific with respect to project needs?

Response: Joe Corradino indicated that needs were being considered in terms of all the system elements, including Customs, plazas, the access road, capacity of local street networks, and the like.

Question: Do we really understand what is going on in other places around the country at similar border crossings?

Response: We have on our team experienced individuals who have worked with border crossings worldwide. Recent experience includes that at Port Huron and the Peace Bridge in New York. We have people who understand what agencies require and the agencies themselves are looking over the shoulders of the study team on an ongoing basis.

Question: What can technology do at the existing Ambassador Bridge or the tunnel?

Response: FAST is operating to speed up processing in terms of truck movements with more emphasis on primary clearance and less on secondary. The border crossing and Customs officials are subject to constant technological advances and plaza changes have been made in recent years on

both sides. More are proposed. Need information is projected out for 30 years. The new data to be released in June will show a continuing need.

Question: Do you encountered this kind of resistance in other projects?

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated there is always resistance to a project.

Question: Who is the client? Who is providing the \$16.5 million project fee?

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated that is being shared by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, whether it's a bridge or a tunnel.

Question: Where's the information for the street locations, other sketches? Where will the bridge land? Has something been done already?

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated the study is just beginning. Many options remain. There are no specific alignments yet identified. Practical Alternatives remain to be defined at the end of the year.

Comment: When the study is done, they will put it where they want it. We are working in the dark.

Response: Andy Zeigler stated that MDOT is working as fast as they can and being as specific as they can at the time.

Comment: A representative of BridgeWatch said she had paid attention to the Purpose/Needs and Feasibility Study and that the words "fear" and "hostility" applied to all the communities along the river. The best we can do is stay informed. Everyone has the same concerns. Communities need to work together to understand what may come. It is important to give the people something that is a win situation. Someone will have to suffer, whether it's Delray or Grosse Ile. This is based on experience around the Ambassador Bridge. The speaker noted her belief that once Transport Canada receives applications for permits, they have to approve them.

Comment: Based on the schedule I have seen, how will you coordinate with Canada? If they don't want it in Canada, what happens? The closest point is Zug Island. How are you contacting Canada right now?

Response: Andy Zeigler indicated that it is a challenging project. There is a partnership. The partnership started work in 1999 and have worked together to establish the study process. It is difficult to pull the process together. Bridges are rarely built. Border crossings are rarely built. The cooperative ongoing relationship is important and meetings are held regularly to ensure that schedules and procedures have been adhered to in both countries.

Question: Will we have an answer in 2007?

Response: Yes.

Comment: You just used the word bridge. You didn't say bridge or tunnel.

Response: Andy Zeigler, I should have said bridge or tunnel.

Comment: Can the Ambassador Bridge be taken by eminent domain?

Response: We will be considering all reasonable and prudent options.

Comment: We need to get the word out.

Response: Andy Zeigler said that MDOT is following up on all comments received.

Comment: In the March 29th minutes from Wyandotte, it stated there would not be a health impact study. Why is the health impact not being considered?

Response: Joe Corradino said that the simple answer is that agencies do not fund sufficient scientific report.

Comment: Is there a national study of health effects going on?

Response: Joe Corradino said that eventually these national studies may lead to a more substantial scientific process. If the regulations change, the Federal Highway Administration will change the nature of its analysis.

Comment: A study is being done in Juarez, Mexico. With regard to its Web site, there is scientific data provided for that location.

Comment: I've been trying to figure out what the LAC is for, and how it should be run. If you want my opinion, you should have resolutions. Grosse Ile has passed a resolution that will be put into the record, and that was handed to MDOT at that point.

Response: We will inquire about any changes to the formal process.

Comment: We understand you're writing notes, but we believe that you are writing us in the out to in the minutes.

Response: Andy Zeigler said we'll show you the minutes at the next meeting and you can comment on them.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was established for May 25th. The location has yet to be determined.

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