

**DRAFT**  
**Detroit River International Crossing Study**  
**Local Advisory Council**  
**Notes**  
**January 25, 2006, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Southwestern High School**

**Purpose:** To review the DRIC Study work since completing the evaluation of Illustrative Alternatives.

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

Mohammed Alghurabi welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions by the LAC and the observers. Following introductions, he reviewed the meeting conduct procedures and the agenda, noting that the public would have several opportunities to speak. There were no suggested changes to the agenda.

**November 28, 2005 Meeting Notes**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked the LAC to review the notes of the previous meeting. No comments were received and the notes were accepted.

**Public Comments**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any public comments.

*Q: The Gateway Project is building a plaza and there is this DRIC project as well. That seems like duplication in the same neighborhood.*

R: The Partnership effort began in 2001. There has been an extensive analysis process that included twinning of the Ambassador Bridge. The process eliminated that alternative and others like the DRTP proposal, as they were not found to be practical. DRIC project continues to address the need for another crossing during the planning horizon which is 2035. The area between Zug Island and the foot of the Ambassador Bridge is considered the best place for that new crossing.

**Public Meeting Notes (December 5-8)**

The handout materials included a binder with notes from the ongoing community workshops. Mohammed Alghurabi asked that the public review the notes and get back to MDOT with any comments.

## **Draft Vision Statements**

Joe Corradino presented a summary of the materials developed during the December and January public workshops. He started with the area of continued analysis that resulted from the evaluation of Illustrative Alternatives, noting the long route in Canada and the relatively narrow area of focus in the U.S. because the projected plaza will be very near I-75. A series of oblique aerial photographs were used to describe the characteristics on the U.S. side of this focused area, which is generally considered the Delray neighborhood of Detroit.

Next the vision statements formed in December and modified in January were reviewed. Changes in text from the original were highlighted to show the evolution of the statements. Taking a broad view, vision statements of a future with a bridge and without a bridge carried many of the same themes. Specifically, there is a concern for an improved quality of life stemming from redevelopment, especially of residential uses, and the need for support of the city of Detroit.

Several differences did emerge in the vision statements with and without a bridge. One difference was a greater opportunity with the bridge to support the vision through financial mechanisms such as tax increment financing. Another was free housing, or at least protection for residents against increased taxes from the increased property values in the area that would come with redevelopment/revitalization. Finally, whatever benefit/mitigation package might be developed because of a new border crossing should focus narrowly on Delray, not on a larger area.

A master planning effort has begun to support the vision statements. It was discussed more fully later in the meeting.

Joe Corradino asked if there were further questions/comments at this point.

*Q: When you were describing Delray, you mentioned the intermodal yard.*

*R: Yes. The intermodal activity at the yard at Waterman is expected to be relocated to the Livernois-Junction Yard. But, the terminal at that location is expected to continue serving non-intermodal rail traffic.*

## **Plazas**

A slide was shown depicting the area within which it is expected the plaza will be developed. The area shown is about 310 acres, while only about 150 acres will eventually be needed for the final plaza area. The 310-acre area avoids the denser residential sections of West Delray. The community was asked how the area might be further reduced at the January 4<sup>th</sup> workshop. A core area of about 150 acres was identified, but, due to engineering considerations, it would be

premature to reduce the 310-acre area at this point. Not enough is yet known about the constraints imposed by brine wells, or about final bridge connections that will be feasible from the Canadian side of the River. Joe Corradino noted the core area resulting from the public involvement is very close to the original C-4 Plaza evaluated in the Illustrative Alternatives phase.

### **Questions**

*Q: What might be the interface between a new bridge and Fort Wayne?*

R: There is recognition that there must be a connection from the plaza to the local street system serving Fort Wayne. The master planning effort will help address this. MDOT hopes to sponsor a tour of other sites that could include Fort Michimilimackinac. This would offer a perspective on the relationship of a bridge to an historic fort.

*Q: You mentioned a buffer when talking about the plaza. Can you explain?*

R: The 150 acres for a plaza includes a planned buffer between surrounding land uses and the plaza itself.

### **Master Planning Process**

Joe Corradino used a slide to show the master plan being undertaken as part of the project. This planning process will provide more detail than the current draft City of Detroit master plan covering the area. To support this effort, data collection has been taking place throughout Delray since early December. Constraints and opportunities are being identified to prepare alternative concepts for development consistent with the vision statements. The objective is to set dates and places for master plan workshops, where the community will be involved. It is expected that staffs from the Detroit City Planning Commission, the Planning and Development Department, and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation will be involved. The community will also be invited to engage in Context Sensitive Solution workshops once preliminary bridge crossing locations are identified in March. As noted earlier, a bus tour is planned of a variety of locations to aid the master planning and context sensitive solutions work. All this effort will lead to the final master plan concept for inclusion in the Draft EIS in August.

### **Questions**

*Q: In the master plan effort, what about the I-75 Rouge Bridge, Schaefer, and Southfield Roads?*

R: Traffic counts are being conducted now and by April traffic analysis will start including definition of truck routes. One point to be made is that the number of interchanges along I-75 could change, possibly affecting the River Rouge bridge and/or the Livernois/Dragon one-way pair connection to I-75. For example, that connection may

be closed to the north or I-75 might be shifted towards Fort Street, so that impacts of flyover ramps from the plaza are lessened on the north side of I-75. Preliminary concepts of the river crossings and the connections to I-75 will be shown on February 8.

### **Social/Cultural Effects Evaluation**

Joe Corradino showed a slide of the area that will be evaluated for social and cultural impacts. It extends into S.W. Detroit, Dearborn, River Rouge, Melvindale, and Ecorse. Basic socioeconomic information is available for the Census Tracts covering that area. The meeting handout materials included a list of organizations that will be interviewed. The discussion form was also in the handout. Each interview would be a free-flow discussion but, at a minimum, would cover facilities, services, issues/concerns, and opportunities related to key populations. Key populations are ethnic and low-income groups. Comments from LAC members were welcomed, especially any additions to the list of those who should be contacted.

### **Other Topics/Concerns**

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any other items of concern that the Local Advisory Council would like addressed. None were mentioned.

### **Public Comments**

*C: Please add Citizens with Challenges and the Ecorse/Rouge Chapter of the NAACP to the list of organizations to be interviewed.*

*Q: What about the drilling and the mineral rights that the salt companies have to mine up to Fort Wayne?*

*R: It is possible some mineral rights might have to be purchased. Drilling will be done to depths of 1,200 feet and then technological devices will be used to determine where there are voids in the ground caused by salt mining/brine wells. The footings for the bridge must be away from the zone of influence of the brine wells. There will be more information on this topic as it develops.*

*Q: Will there be an opportunity for a meeting between the US and Canadian local advisory groups?*

*R: There are three public meetings/events on context sensitive solutions scheduled for April, June and August. The thought now is to have some of those meetings in Canada. One joint local advisory groups meeting was held in September, in the form of a boat tour on the Detroit River. Opportunity for another joint meeting will be examined.*

### **Next Meeting**

The next LAC meeting will be February 22, 2006. In March, due to the scheduled public meetings on March 29, the LAC meeting will be held one week in advance on March 22. On March 29, two public meetings will be held in separate locations. The morning meeting is expected to be between 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM at the new Delray Recreation Center, and the evening meeting between 5:00 and 8:30 PM at Southwestern High School.

The meeting concluded by showing a video tour of the Central Area.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM.

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