

DRAFT
Detroit River International Crossing Study
Local Advisory Council
Meeting Notes
June 20, 2005, 7:00 p.m.
Southwestern High School

Purpose: To review the progress of the Detroit River International Crossing Study, including introduction of the preliminary Illustrative Alternatives.

Discussion:

Introductions

Mohammed Alghurabi asked for introductions of the Council members and observers. He then reviewed the meeting conduct procedures and agenda. There were no suggested revisions to the agenda.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

LAC Meeting Notes

Mohammed Alghurabi asked if there were any comments on the May 25, 2005 LAC meeting notes. There were none.

Review of Illustrative Alternatives

Joe Corradino made a presentation using slides of the work that had been performed to define a preliminary set of Illustrative Alternatives. A booklet covering the process was distributed. He noted a CD was included in the booklet that illustrated each Illustrative Alternative alignment from freeway interchanges to plazas on the U.S. side of the border. He then identified the steps in defining an Illustrative Alternative: 1) identify potential plaza sites; 2) link the U.S. plazas with their counterpart Canadian plazas across the Detroit River; and, 3) link the U.S. plazas to the U.S. freeway system. He showed a slide of all preliminary plaza sites, and then focused on Plaza C3 as an example. He described the size, and general characteristics of Plaza C3, noting that, with few exceptions, plazas were a minimum of 80 acres, per consultation with U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Customs and Border Protection Agency and the General Services Administration. Plaza sites larger than 80 acres were identified, where possible, in the event that joint inspection for both countries may be conducted in one country.

Regine Beauboeuf next explained the results of analysis of bridge and tunnel types and whether they were considered feasible and prudent for crossing the Detroit River. The conclusion was that a bridge crossing is feasible at all locations in the Detroit River area, but that a tunnel is only feasible from the Central area

north and here it would be in soft ground, not rock. River width affects the type of bridge and whether piers must be placed in the river.

Joe Corradino then explained the use of a computer program called QUANTM to generate multiple alignments for consideration as an Illustrative Alternative. The 50 alignments generated by each QUANTM run were then consolidated to a family of 20 alignments to eliminate the redundancy in routes. The QUANTM runs were uniformly limited only by avoidance of park and registered historic sites (due to protective laws) and cemeteries, as these are known to be very difficult to disrupt from a timing standpoint. Once the alignments were reduced to 20, many other land uses were examined through application of a Geographic Information System (GIS). This allowed a quantitative assessment of the impacts of each. Together with visual inspection of the alignment and use of aerial photography, the list of 20 alignments was systematically reduced to a single alignment. Joe Corradino used King Road to depict how this process was followed. He also reviewed the Conner and St. Jean alignments as “upriver” examples of the definition of Illustrative Alternatives.

To make the Illustrative Alternatives understandable, oblique aerial photography was prepared. He noted “stations” were placed around the room to view the 15 Illustrative Alternatives photography for the Downriver, Central and Belle Isle areas.

In his presentation, Joe Corradino noted that some corridors, like Sibley, could not support a prudent alternative as cemeteries and parks were unavoidable. In this case, another road alignment option is available as a plaza-to-freeway connection.

Joe Corradino also noted that plaza and freeway interchange connections to the Illustrative Alternative road alignments were “engineered” as compared to using QUANTM to make the connections. In cases in which the proposed plazas are so close to a freeway (I-75), the connection was also engineered. Plaza C3 connections in Del Ray were used as examples.

Joe Corradino turned to the question of how the Illustrative Alternatives evaluation process would work. He referred to the draft paper “Proposed Evaluation Factors and Performance Measures” included in the booklet that had been distributed. He emphasized the authority of the Border Partnership Steering Committee of U.S. and Canadian government representatives to make the final decision on an alternative inclusion in the evaluation process.

Mohammed Alghurabi suggested a break during which LAC members could review the presentation materials around the room at six viewing stations. Prior to the break he asked if Council members had

any questions.

Q: What is the status of the list of LAC members who agreed to have their names released to others?

R: The list is almost complete and should be available at the next LAC meeting.

Q: You offered two example corridors in your presentation. Is information available on all the corridors?

R: Yes, all the alternatives will be shown at the viewing stations and all are on the CD.

After the break there were additional questions.

Q: What are the times and locations of the Canadian meetings?

R: This information was read aloud by Mohammed Alghurabi.

Permitting Process

Mohammed Alghurabi distributed a paper listing all the permits and authorizations necessary to successfully implement a new border crossing, based on U.S. federal, state and local laws and regulations. He noted information is still being compiled on the Canadian process.

Evaluation Process

Joe Corradino noted the Evaluation Factors shown in the booklet previously distributed would be used over the summer to screen the Illustrative Alternatives and determine the Practical Alternatives to be studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Next the “Scoring Form – Evaluation Factors” was discussed. Joe Corradino said about 10 forms had been received to date. He showed how the forms should be used and explained that the Purpose and Need of the project had been included on the back of the form as a reminder that national and international trade and travel considerations cannot be overstated. He said the weighting of the factors by the community and the DRIC Project Team (Working Group and Consultants) would be used in the evaluation of alternatives.

Q: Will one person fill out each form, or will they be filled out collectively by a group?

R: All forms are to be scored individually and then aggregated by the total of all forms submitted. The results will be made public.

Q: Are the factors still open for discussion? What happened to the several suggested modifications

that were made?

R: Some revisions were made. Others relate to the Study of Practical Alternatives and will be studied at that time, such as local economic impacts.

Q: What happens if some particular group stacks the deck insofar as the weighting of criteria? The forms should have a place for a name.

R: Mohammed Alghurabi responded that concern would be addressed. (Later a space was added to the evaluation form for the name of the person completing it.)

C: I don't understand the form. You are making people make choices when all factors may be important to them.

R: All factors could be given a single score, making them all of equal weight. This will be stated on the revised form.

C: Will information on all the corridors be presented to the public next week?

R: Yes.

C: Can the presentations be tailored to the area where the presentation is being made?

R: It is expected that interested persons from any area could attend any meeting. However, the presentation will be targeted to the area where the meeting is being held.

C: Can the stakeholders be prevented from promoting their alignments at the public meetings?

R: This is not possible in light of the openness of the public meetings.

C: There is an "interstate" section of photos on the disk. Where is that in the room?

R: It is included in the Central Area.

Review of June 27, 28, 29, and 30 Public Meetings

Mohammed Alghurabi explained the newspaper and radio ad campaign being used to notify the public of the upcoming meetings. He asked the LAC to spread the word to their constituencies.

Other Business

There was no other business

Public Comment

Mohammed Alghurabi next moved to the second public comment period. There were no comments.

Mohammed then noted that the next meeting would be July 20th at a location yet to be determined.