

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA STUDY SAMPLE COMMENTS FROM HEARING TRANSCRIPT

General Comments, Issues and Questions

- Provide a drive (possibly one-way) from proposed Welcome Center north to west Water Street to circulate visitors back to Port Huron and Fort Gratiot businesses.
- You are taking my neighbor's home, but not mine, and I am concerned what it will do to my property value.
- The plan is unsafe because Pine Grove and 10th Ave. could be blown up.
- Work closely with Port Huron and St. Clair County planners to make corridor "friendly" for transiting traffic to easily get off in our community. Use signage to direct motorists.
- We don't want more noise, traffic and pollution in our community.
- Spend the money on people, not on big business.
- We local people need ID cards.
- There needs to be a visitor's center on northbound where people can stop for essentials and obtain information on Port Huron and points of interest.
- There should be a 25-cent per toll fee from all vehicles passing over the bridge to offset the loss of tax base the city will be incurring.
- Commit in writing the verbal pledge to not divert any bridge bound traffic off of I-94 on to local streets at any time during construction. Offloading truck traffic alone would virtually paralyze transportation and commerce in the city of Port Huron.
- Reconsider cancellation of the fast track policy, but allow city to collect property tax on properties acquired for time it would take under current procedures.
- Provide a new site from which to provide emergency services to avoid maneuvering through construction.
- Lighting: basic, most efficient on expressway areas; Walls: simple, basic with greenery on side with traffic, minimum maintenance; Landscaping: natural, least maintenance.
- Unmanned booths are a great problem – if they can't be filled now, how will they be filled when there are twice as many?
- Why can't trucks be inspected before crossing the border?
- How will the noise and smell pollution affect my parents' quality of life?
- Will there be noise screening on the north end along Pine Grove approaching Hancock?
- Cannot understand how this project will improve security and benefit the local economy when someone could blow up the bridges in the middle of the river.
- Solve the traffic problem by stopping or reducing the trash haulers (18 percent of traffic).
- The booths should be two to three deep to process cars/trucks two to three at a time per lane. This would save space and not require taking neighborhoods.
- Leave Pine Grove under the plaza by building a blast shield.
- Look into reverse border inspections again; they do this at the Peace Bridge.
- MDOT can't tell federal officers what to do (open more lanes), so why spend the money?
- Concerned this could go the same way as the I-75 bridge over the Saginaw River, constructed at a highly inflated cost and shown over time that a huge one wasn't needed.
- Please add enough lanes for FAST trucks and NEXUS card holders for increased usage.
- Why so long to get the Draft EIS when the process began in 2003?
- Could be a positive element for our community if done correctly.
- Will local people be used for construction?
- Expand the footprint to enable more people to sell their properties, otherwise those just outside the footprint are stuck with the side effects of such a massive project.
- Re-bore the old PR tunnel to keep the truck traffic in a current industrial zone; it would be much easier to protect a tunnel than a bridge.
- Will barriers be high enough at 15 feet or would it be better to go higher?

- The Welcome Center should be built in the center median, allowing access for visitors coming from east and west.
- Local contractors and labor should be utilized to the fullest extent possible.
- The plaza and corridor projects will pour millions of dollars into our communities, they will provide badly needed jobs, and provide our children with a brighter future.
- Signs are needed to recognize Fort Gratiot and Port Huron when exiting plaza at Pine Grove.
- Prefer No-build, but that doesn't mean do nothing. Do nothing vs. try everything! Re-assign bridge traffic, one for trucks/commercial, one for passenger cars/buses/RV; fill all immigration/customs posts ALL the time; develop staggered immigration posts with final clearance chit collection; encourage/facilitate NEXUS use.
- Why is truck plaza in City West Alternative three times the size of Canadian plaza?
- Why is ground level plaza any safer than elevated since the bridge is elevated?
- The new Black River bridge should be at least 100% wider westbound (four lanes).
- The DEIS does not adequately answer environmental concerns related to mobile source air toxics.
- Commit to create a sustainable (Green Building Design) building implementation plan for the plaza, incorporating such things as recycled materials, natural light, passive solar heating, energy efficient lighting, water conserving plumbing, innovative storm water management, and Energy Star equipment.
- The DEIS fails to provide full public disclosure of impacts, does not adequately justify the project's costs/negative impacts, does not evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, and does not provide adequate mitigation for the massive negative impacts which are anticipated.
- The Black River Bridge improvements should be evaluated separately as previously planned.
- The 65-acre plaza size is not justified based on the information presented in the DEIS.
- A supplemental DEIS is needed to address the shortcomings of the present DEIS.
- Include pre-inspection of vehicles prior to entering the United States.
- Allow easy access for travelers on and off the Blue Water Bridge.
- Any construction will negatively affect emergency room access.
- A Welcome Center located in the center of the median would service both directions, and would allow travelers to turn around and head back toward the Port Huron-Fort Gratiot area, providing much needed support for the financial condition of the area.
- It is not clear how the background information presented in the DEIS was used to decide upon the future growth rate applied to the existing traffic counts.
- There is nothing comparable to the events and improvements that contributed to increased crossings from 1982 through completion of the second span in 1997 that would justify the growth rates predicted in the DEIS.
- There is no discussion of the effects that a proposed third crossing in Detroit, new passport requirements for travel between the countries, and Canadian trash trucks, would have on future BWB crossing volumes.
- The DEIS does not provide any details regarding existing and future vehicle delays/queues at the plaza and a benchmark or goal for the desired acceptable delays after plaza improvements are made.
- The Peace Bridge DEIS includes a very extensive analysis of bridge plaza delay times and queue lengths for existing conditions and all alternatives presented.
- There is no specific information about how the projected traffic volumes relate to the required size and layout needs for each major component of the plaza.
- What impact would development of a proposed casino near the bridge plaza have on traffic volumes/operations both crossing the BWB and on the local street network?
- CBP staffing is not addressed for any of the alternatives.
- The DEIS information does not adequately explain the need for a border plaza size of 65 acres.
- The size of the Peace Bridge plaza (39 acres) is inconsistent with the plaza size for the BWB project, which should be reduced to something more similar.
- There should be a new alternative evaluated of approximately 40 acres in size.

- MDOT should not have eliminated reverse inspections from consideration while negotiations with the Canadians were apparently still under way and with a new administration in Washington, D.C. forthcoming.
- The DEIS does not address the impacts of construction to Garfield Elementary School located within ¼ mile of the 10th Avenue/Garfield Street intersection.
- How will the in-bound Canadian traffic be routed onto I-94/I-69 westbound once they exit the plaza through the temporary gate on Hancock? This would lead to complete gridlock on the surrounding street network and could potentially impact local businesses.
- There needs to be more analysis of storm water impacts.
- The preferred alternative is inconsistent with the city's land-use plan and zoning plan.
- The DEIS should identify cumulative impacts to the homes that will become the new "front row" to the plaza.
- The residences along Riverside and Hancock Street and 10th Avenue should be included in the noise study because they will experience more traffic and/or will be the new front row to the expanded plaza.
- The DEIS does not analyze the potential impacts of PM2.5 or PM10 (particulate air quality measures) for any of the alternatives, nor does it provide a comparison of each alternative.
- The DEIS does not adequately convey the severity of social and economic impacts when considered together.
- The housing stock required for the plaza footprint will be difficult to replace or duplicate within the city limits. The DEIS should provide specific analysis of where the replacement properties are located. The same is needed for business relocations.
- How will the city be compensated for the taking of public rights of way needed for the project?
- The CBP needs to provide a guarantee of minimum staffing levels relative to delay times at the bridge plaza.
- MDOT needs to provide more details on its general statement that it will work with local communities to identify possible resources outside the jurisdiction of the agency, including identifying and security funding of a visionary world-class economic development consultant to develop a plan for the area surrounding the plaza.
- Costs to the city of Port Huron's budget/infrastructure, i.e., providing emergency services and utilities, are not fully disclosed.
- The re-combining of the Black River Bridge and BWB Plaza improvements was not announced through the Federal Register.
- Need assurances that the retaining and security walls will be aesthetically pleasing and will become a community asset. We need to have an architectural WOW!
- Needs to be a plan on where to locate the livestock/plant inspection and quarantine facility. What are the facility's plans for holding livestock? How will animal waste be disposed? Is there a quarantine facility in the plaza? If so, where? How will infected or diseased animals be handled?
- Request that Welcome Center be in the freeway median even if it requires lowering speed limit to 55 mph.
- Sufficient ingress/egress must be provided in the construction zone for emergency routes for law enforcement, fire and EMS. We cannot jeopardize response times.
- MDOT needs to officially recognize the M-25 alternate route and work with the local road agency to contribute the necessary resources for long-term maintenance of it.
- A non-motorized crossing over the Black River is needed to tie into a route connecting the township park with Edison Parkway.
- No specific state and federal resources were identified in the DEIS for assisting the communities. There needs to be a Community Assistance Team to help obtain various grants for projects such as: a sewer separation project in the city; retraining the workforce; rehabilitation of the McMorran Plaza; emergency and first responder equipment and training; and revitalization of the M-25 corridor both north and south of the plaza.
- What measures will be taken to decrease the severity and occurrence of crashes along the corridor, on the plaza and along M-25?

- Safety and security and the proposed Welcome Center should be coordinated in close cooperation with local law enforcement agencies.
- What steps did MDOT take to ensure that the general public had access to and input to the design of the initial 19 illustrative alternatives?
- How would the scope and impacts of the no-build alternative be changed if 1) plaza staffing was increased or altered from its current state; 2) standard operating procedures were changed to alleviate congestion; technology solutions were implemented; or 3) operational system changes were implemented?
- What steps did MDOT take to ensure that residents in the study area had representation on the Advisory Committee?
- What are the design and operational issues that are being considered for visually impaired pedestrians at any roundabout?
- What type of isolation facility will you have for person(s) suspected of being infected with hazardous communicable disease (i.e., SARS, Avian Flu)? Will there be a first-aid station that can double as a quarantine facility with proper ventilation?
- Document minority and low-income population, within the study area by block group.
- Need more specifics on job opportunities for the environmental justice population and access of low-income persons to relocated businesses.
- There seems to be conflicting statements as to the overall impact on low-income residents in terms of changes to public transportation routes and access to businesses that will have to relocate as a result of the project.
- How will each alternative impact the demographic character of the surrounding neighborhoods; affect interaction among persons and groups; and change social relationships and patterns.
- Identify the Environmental Justice population for the project footprint.
- Unemployment data needs to be updated to figures from at least the quarter prior to release of the DEIS and analyzed.
- There needs to be more specifics on the existing struggling economic times that the city currently faces.
- There needs to be more specifics and analysis of the Canadians who cross the bridge to work in St. Clair County.
- What are the factors that will lead to an increase in congestion under the no-build alternative, and what additional alternatives were considered to deal with the projected congestion?
- The DEIS does not include comprehensive analysis of how the build alternatives would affect the nearby commercial zones in Fort Gratiot Township or the City of Marysville.
- There are no specifics to support claims that the presence of the Blue Water Bridge assists businesses in the city of Port Huron.
- MDOT needs to provide more specifics on how it will manage traffic moving in and out of Port Huron between the city and Fort Gratiot along M-25 both during and after construction.
- Have baseline studies been conducted of air quality within the project footprint and vicinity? When will "hot spot" air quality study be completed?
- Have baseline noise measures been established at the Plaza and throughout the corridor? What steps will be taken to minimize the impacts of noise on surrounding land uses, residents and businesses?
- What floodplains and wetlands will be directly impacted by construction and subsequent development? How will project planners work with the community to mitigate impacts?
- What threatened or endangered species of plants or wildlife exist within the study area?
- What steps will be taken to protect and preserve those historic and culturally significant structures within the study area, including interpretative signage and memorials honoring historically and culturally significant land uses, structures, activities that may have occurred within the study area that will no longer be readily accessible to the public?
- What measures will be taken to ensure pedestrian and other non-motorized access around and through the construction site during the construction period?

- How will construction noise, dust, fumes, be minimized as to respect and protect the health and safety of those in surrounding neighborhoods?
- Who will be assigned to take and respond to complaints during construction?
- Long-term and permanent steps will be taken to minimize the adverse effects of lighting, increased noise and a growth in noxious fumes around the plaza and the corridor? Where can complaints be file and responded to?
- There does not seem to be a lot of substantive data to support the concept that surrounding entities will benefit from the preferred alternative.
- How will this project impact energy consumption for the immediate neighborhoods, city and townships? What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans?
- All mitigation issues mentioned as needing further exploration should be resolved and documented prior to issuing the final EIS and selection of the preferred alternative.
- What steps will MDOT take to ensure that families and businesses that must be relocated will relocate within Port Huron city limits?
- While the current plaza is simply inadequate to meet CBP's needs in a post-9/11 world, the traffic projections used to develop the preferred alternative are overly optimistic about future needs.
- In general, all of the proposed alternatives should result in a reduced congestion and idling at the BWB and thus provide better air quality than would be experienced under a do-nothing scenario. However, more detailed information and analysis is needed.
- PM2.5 hotspot analysis should be performed on the preferred alternative.
- The document promises a public meeting to develop design aesthetics and landscaping treatments for the new Welcome Center. It also should include design aesthetics and landscaping in and around the plaza itself.
- More information on the detailed storm water management techniques should be provided.
- The storm water detention needs to be built in a way that detracts Canada geese, which create an additional source of pollution.
- Without clear directional signage, the Fort Gratiot businesses will be by-passed. Travelers will simply go down the corridor and exit out of the area.
- If the plaza infrastructure is not complete by the City's deadline to complete the water/sewer in 2016, MDOT should provide assurance that the city will not be found in compliance due to the lengthy nature of the plaza's process.
- There should be analysis to determine if the border toll fee structure should be increased or adjusted.
- It doesn't appear that you've evaluated and compared an adequate number and range of options for construction detours and staging. If we thought it was bad for our business in stage 2, we can expect total gridlock in stage 3 with the use of Hancock as a detour.
- Would like a ban on all cars and trucks to turn off their engines so they don't pollute the area.
- MDOT should consider a Range Road bypass to reduce the number of expanded lanes required for the Black River bridge.
- Would like a westbound exit ramp at Lapeer Road to allow travelers to circle back to Port Huron after visiting the Welcome Center.
- Homeland Security should fund the entire project and then collect it from mostly trucks (90 percent) and cars. The highway trust fund should not have to pay.
- All of the booths should be open and staffed with two people per booth—one to inspect the car and the other to ask questions. Tractor trailer inspection crews should have 3 or 5.
- Visual character, air quality and land use are not included in the Summary of Impacts table for the four alternatives yet they are very important issues. It needs to be complete.
- In looking for the opportunities that this \$433,000,000 project provides to facilitate change, particularly the increase of freight and visitors to the Greater Port Huron, just overwhelms any negative objectives.
- The simple truth is a half billion dollar project over an extended period of time will have a profound and irreversible long term, positive economic impact on the Port Huron community, let along any private sector opportunities resulting in the change.

- How many times have you driven along the highway and noticed a rest area on the other side and wondered why they couldn't have placed one on the side on which you were traveling?
- Please build a tunnel for trucks only. Inspections should take place before going on the bridge.
- Do you people realize that there is a large elementary school (Garfield) that will be downwind of the plaza? Also parks, daycare center? Don't tell us that people won't be getting sick. What will the human suffering and healthcare costs be 10, 20 or 30 years down the road?
- The expansion would help with the pollution because it would keep the semis moving instead of having them sit there for hours. MDOT should fight with everything they have to get the plaza expansion put in.
- Both governments must agree that reverse inspections is the only safe way to inspect vehicles.
- Start this today!!!! We need the jobs and economic boost!!!!
- If there is not enough room to build the Welcome Center in the middle, then put it above the freeway.
- Port Huron should have the way clear from the U.S. Congress to construct a casino in the city to help compensate for some of the losses and reasons given for the large footprint in the middle of the city.
- There needs to be an eastbound rest area closer to the bridge.
- Put a berm or some kind of noise barrier along westbound I-94/69 from the Plaza to Black River to protect the residents from noise and pollution.
- True security is found in defusing the hatred, not in thoroughly bomb-hardening your homeland.
- This project is being done to benefit the commercial trucking industry, Let them pay. Maybe a \$3 surcharge for each truck, which would go to the city of Port Huron, would make it an acceptable project.
- Suggest that the property known as the GTW railroad property in Port Huron be considered as a site for the Blue Water Bridge truck plaza expansion.
- Your goal should be to save the city, not give in to the fear tactics of Homeland Security.
- Speed up the process. It has been five long years. Make a decision and get it done!
- Security inspection should take place on I-94 similar to a weight station and trucks sealed.
- There should be a separate tunnel for handling trucks similar to the Jobs Tunnel being proposed for Detroit.
- Will there be a tax break for properties close to the expanded plaza in exchange for lower property values?
- How can the belching exhaust from hundreds (?) of smoking diesel trucks, parked daily at the proposed city plaza be ignored when there is a ban on cigarette smoking in many St. Clair County business establishments, and most likely, soon to be banned outside in the open air?
- There should be modern air recovery units that will capture the exhaust while the trucks are moving in line to go through the toll booths.

Comments in favor of City West Alternative

- This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the entire Blue Water area as the gateway between two great nations; it's time to capitalize on our unique position.
- The plaza constructed in Port Huron would best serve the interest of all of our communities.
- The plan should allow on and off traffic with Pine Grove Avenue.
- Illuminate the major commercial centers of the area through new signage.
- Will significantly increase processing capacity at this crossing and result in traffic queues approaching the border being eliminated for all but the highest security conditions.
- Would provide improvements to border processing and reduce congestion to accommodate the projected traffic growth through 2030.
- The inadequacy of the present facility does not allow CBP officials to process vehicles in a timely manner and to open more lanes when required.
- The dedicated lanes across the Black River will improve safety as it will reduce weaving movements between trucks and cars bound for Canada.

- The dedicated lane for FAST and NEXUS participants will expedite the traffic, which will assist with the reduction of traffic backups and resulting environmental issues.
- It will eliminate the traffic weave, a dangerous situation that presently exists, and improve traffic flow.
- The Township Alternative presents concerns with safety and security in the creation of a dedicated corridor from the bridge to the proposed plaza, including access for emergency response vehicles in the event of an incident in the corridor as well as the safety of emergency response personnel, truckers or anyone else trapped in the corridor at the time of the incident.
- The Township Alternative would create problems for cross border users traveling to destinations north of or near the existing plaza.
- The City East Alternative is problematic due to the close proximity of the spans to 10th Avenue, which would run under the bridge and be vulnerable to a terrorist action.
- City West Alternative best meets the purpose and need of the study.
- Improvements to the plaza will increase the competitiveness of U.S. companies trading with Canada.
- It will help reduce congestion and accommodate projected traffic growth through 2040. Delays in processing both commercial and passenger vehicles often exceed 2 hours and at times are reported as three hours or more. The lack of inspection booths and secondary processing facilities restrict CBP's ability to open more lanes when required.
- Would improve the flow of traffic and would provide adequate capacity for current and future traffic on local roads, freeway segments, and mobility through the plaza, resulting in less vehicle queues and backups on the freeway network.
- Addresses the potential congestion problem along the M-25 corridor by improving the intersection capacity, adjusting traffic signal operations, adding turn lanes, and/or through lanes.

Comments in favor of Township Alternative

- The City West Alternative would cause too many traffic hazards and interrupt the flow of traffic through Port Huron.
- The Township Alternative causes fewer disruptions to lives and requires less money to remove homes and businesses.
- Current Welcome Center is seldom used and should be left where it is.
- The City West Alternative will cause the city to suffer further with lost tax base, a divided city and pollution "truck stop" issues.