

MDOT I-75 AMBASSADOR BRIDGE GATEWAY PROJECT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public Art For The Bagley Pedestrian Bridge

The slogan for the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project is "Connecting Neighbors." To build upon the spirit of collaboration, public participation and community outreach that has been the hallmark of this project, MDOT is sponsoring a competition to choose an artist to design public art for the Bagley Pedestrian Bridge East Apron. The public artwork, along with enhanced landscaping, will be part of the last phase of the construction project to be installed by Spring 2010.

First, MDOT will convene a Public Art Selection Committee (PASC). The voting members will include:

- ◆ One - MDOT representative
- ◆ 2 - 3 – Representatives of the community/neighborhood that will receive the artwork
- ◆ 2 – 3 – Artists and/or other arts professionals
- ◆ One – Design professional who will be instrumental in incorporating the public art into the construction project.

MDOT is turning to the Public Art Selection Committee to:

- ◆ Provide knowledge and expertise about artists, aesthetic issues and the field of public art.
- ◆ Be a liaison to the community/neighborhood and to represent their interests and concerns.
- ◆ Assist MDOT in defining the artwork project's scope and design parameters.
- ◆ Select artist(s) to recommend to submit a design proposal, and to review and comment on the design proposal.
- ◆ Support the artist(s) selected to work on the project by providing background information and insights so that the artwork is relevant to its site on both aesthetic and functional levels.
- ◆ Ensure that the artwork is well-constructed and of durable materials and that its location is adequately prepared (i.e., electricity, lighting, footings, etc. as necessary).

Between August 2008 and the installation of the artwork in Spring 2010, the following activities will occur:

- ◆ PASC is convened for orientation and input on the scope and process, leading to issuing an RFQ
- ◆ RFQ is issued and the design competition is conducted
- ◆ PASC reconvenes to review the qualifications and select an artist
- ◆ Artist is issued a contract and begins to produce a design proposal
- ◆ PASC meets to review and approve the design proposal
- ◆ Artist completes the artwork and coordinates the installation with the Pedestrian Bridge Apron construction

Currently, MDOT is contributing \$50,000 to the public art project. This amount will cover the artist's design fees, materials, and expenses required to create and install the public art. MDOT is looking for members of the community or local businesses to show support for MDOT's baseline contribution level in order to enhance the scope and scale of the public art and to truly contribute to the vision, "Connecting Neighbors." Contributors will be honored on a plaque that will be erected near the public art piece.

GATEWAY PROJECT BACKGROUND

The MDOT Gateway Project is:

- ◆ The largest single construction contract that MDOT has ever undertaken in any part of the State
- ◆ A \$230 million investment in Michigan's infrastructure that will increase capacity and ease traffic at the economically vital Detroit –Windsor border crossing. It will also provide direct access from the Ambassador Bridge to I-75, I-96 and other area freeways
- ◆ A key element in MDOT's Five-Year Plan designed to accommodate current and future traffic needs and to strengthen Michigan's economy.

The MDOT Gateway Project will:

- ◆ Drive Michigan's economy by facilitating the \$115 billion trade in goods and services (Bureau of Transportation Statistics Special Report, 2007) that cross the Detroit –Windsor border annually
- ◆ Preserve Michigan jobs by maintaining the Detroit-Windsor border as the most attractive alternative for businesses conducting international trade and companies demanding on-time deliveries.
- ◆ Support Detroit's \$5 million tourism industry by providing direct access to the new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center, the entire city of Detroit and the region.
- ◆ Improve access to the over 200 small businesses in Southwest Detroit and Mexicantown communities
- ◆ Bring economic opportunities to residents and businesses in Mexicantown and Southwest Detroit during construction and after the completion of the project.
- ◆ Generate 2,800 jobs over the next three years

PROJECT BENEFITS

Economic:

- ◆ The Detroit-Windsor Border is the busiest trade corridor in the world. The \$230 million MDOT Gateway Project is an investment that will strengthen Michigan's economic future by improving the efficiency of this vital trade link.
- ◆ Over \$1.1 billion* in goods crosses between the United States and Canada each day. By providing more direct access to I-75, I-96 and other freeways, the MDOT Gateway Project will ensure that these goods arrive at their destinations quickly and reliably. This will encourage businesses to continue to use the Detroit-Windsor Crossing rather than choosing alternative routes.
- ◆ Canada-United States trade supports \$7.1 million United States jobs and 221,500 Michigan jobs. The MDOT Gateway Project will make Michigan a more attractive destination for businesses that rely on access both to an efficient international border crossing and to a strong freeway system. This will encourage job growth and job retention for Michigan residents.
- ◆ Tourism in Metro Detroit adds over \$5 million annually to Michigan's economy with 15 million visitors coming to Metro Detroit alone, generating 55,000 jobs. By providing a direct connection from the Ambassador Bridge to the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado, the project makes Mexicantown and southwest Detroit a gateway for visitors, inviting them to explore Detroit and points beyond.

Safety and Aesthetics:

- ◆ Mexicantown has been divided since 1970 when the Clark Street to 12th Street (now Rosa Parks Boulevard) section of I-75 was completed. To help reconnect East and West Mexicantown, MDOT will construct a state-of-the-art cable stayed pedestrian bridge. It will span I-75 at Bagley Street giving residents and visitors alike safe crossing. It will also enhance access to the new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado and to businesses throughout the southwest Detroit community.

- ◆ Currently, truck traffic exiting the Ambassador Bridge travels across local city streets in Mexicantown on the way to area freeways. Once the MDOT Gateway Project is completed, trucks will exit the bridge and move directly to the freeway. This will decrease traffic on local streets and increase overall safety for community residents.
- ◆ Over the years, MDOT has made significant aesthetic improvements in Mexicantown and in neighborhoods throughout Southwest Detroit including the installation of ornamental brick pavers, concrete sidewalks and trees along Michigan Avenue between 14th Street and Rosa Parks Boulevard in 2005. As part of the MDOT Gateway Project, new trees, lighting and landscaping will grace Bagley Avenue making the business district more attractive and user-friendly.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

The fourth phase of MDOT's Gateway Project will take approximately two years to build and is expected to reopen to traffic by December 2009. The last phase of the project will be ongoing until 2010 which will construct the Pedestrian Bridge aprons, install public art and complete the project landscaping. The project highlights will include:

- ◆ Two and A Half Miles of Freeway
- ◆ Twenty Three Ramps and Interchanges
- ◆ Eighteen Bridges
- ◆ Three Miles of Retaining Walls and an 875 Foot-long Noise Wall
- ◆ Utility Relocations
- ◆ Aesthetic Improvements
- ◆ Architecturally Integrated Lighting
- ◆ Signature Pedestrian Bridge at Bagley Avenue
 - A cable-stayed pedestrian bridge is the first of its kind built in Michigan.
 - Most dramatic and noticeable element of the project
 - Will span I-75 and I-96 connecting East and West Mexicantown.
 - Will serve as the pedestrian gateway to the new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado and businesses and entertainment venues in Mexicantown, southwest Detroit and throughout the City.



Artistic Rendering of the Pedestrian Bridge at Bagley Avenue

PROJECT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Project Steering Committee

The purpose of MDOT's public participation initiatives is to solicit input, provide information and answer questions about upcoming and ongoing construction projects. The public participation process for the MDOT Gateway Project began in 1995 during the study phase. That year MDOT convened a Project Steering Committee to seek input and provide direction from key project partners and the public. The committee included representatives from the MDOT, SEMCOG, the city of Detroit, the Detroit International Bridge Company, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Custom and Border Protection and U.S. General Services Administration. Community organizations such as the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation, St. Anne's Church, local businesses and others stakeholders were also invited to participate in the Steering Committee meetings. At the same time, a strategic communications plan was drafted to keep the public informed of the study's progress. The Steering Committee continued to meet throughout all phases of the project with the latest gathering held on January 15, 2008.

Community Meetings

Community meetings accord residents living and/or working within a given project area the opportunity to provide input and express their concerns directly to MDOT staff. Of equal importance, they provide MDOT with occasions to present project design ideas and later, implementation plans to the public. Since the MDOT Gateway Project is centered in Mexicantown, MDOT has held meetings and worked in partnership with the neighborhood since 1995. Meetings occurred at critical points throughout the design and study phases of the project. Upcoming construction has been discussed at two meetings, the first in August 2007 and the most recent in February 2008.