

DETROIT INTERMODAL FREIGHT TERMINAL PROJECT
Draft Public Meeting Notes
March 29, 2004
Michigan State Fairgrounds
1120 West State Fair Avenue
Ferndale/Detroit: CN/Moterm Terminal Area

Purpose: To brief the public, during both public forum and presentation-question/answer sessions, on the progress made on the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project in the areas of: terminal layout/size; preliminary traffic analysis results; social/cultural effects evaluation process; economic impacts; and, air quality.

Attendance: See attachment.

Discussion:

Following the open forum session (which lasted from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), Bob Parsons of MDOT welcomed everyone to the meeting. He indicated that the presentation-question/answer session would last from 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. He noted that the presentation would take about 45 minutes with the remaining time left to the public for its questions and comments.

Bob Parsons noted that both Arabic and Spanish translators were available. Each translator asked those in attendance that if they needed special assistance. No assistance was requested.

Bob Parsons indicated that following the presentation, those who wished to speak should complete a form and submit it to him so he could call each person in the order forms were received.

Bob Parsons introduced Mohammed Alghurabi, MDOT's project manager on the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project. He then introduced Joe Corradino, the consultant project manager on the DIFT Project. Joe Corradino made a presentation using slides of many of the graphics that were posted on the walls in the meeting room. He covered the following issues:

- 1) What is intermodal;
- 2) The purpose and goal of the DIFT Project;
- 3) The location/size of each terminal;
- 4) The alternatives being considered;
- 5) The social/cultural data available and a request for input from any member of the audience;
- 6) The preliminary traffic analysis results;

- 7) The preliminary air quality analysis results;
- 8) The preliminary economic impact analysis results;
- 9) A description of Alternative 4: The Composite Option; and,
- 10) The updated project schedule accounting for the introduction of Alternative 4.

Questions and Comments

Following the presentation, Bob Parsons reminded those in attendance that a card should be completed if they wish to speak. Speakers were then called to ask questions/make comments.

C: The speaker indicated the group that she represents, the Southeast Homeowners Association, is against any expansion of any terminals anywhere. Her group wants a park at the State Fairgrounds. Her group's selection is Alternative No. 1: No Action. This complements the stable neighborhood with new housing investment.

C: This proposed intermodal terminal expansion into the Fairgrounds will cause asthma for children to increase. The speaker prefers that a park be built and that the Michigan State Fairgrounds, which hosts the oldest state fair in the nation, be protected.

C: A member of the DIFT Local Advisory Council (Chuck Goedert) made a statement that is attached to these notes.

C: The speaker lives across the street from the Fairgrounds on State Fair Avenue. She noted she has seen the current movement of tractor-trailers into and out of the CN/Moterm terminal. A park is what is needed for the Fairgrounds property, not an expanded intermodal terminal. The speaker indicated that she did not receive a mailing nor did her neighbors. She concluded by stating the information provided by the MDOT DIFT Project Team is not to be trusted; she believes that trucks will use State Fair Avenue instead of 8-Mile Road.

C: The speaker advised the audience to not rely on the notetakers at the meeting but, instead, fill-out comment forms in writing so their remarks are not distorted.

C: The area of Detroit in which intermodal is operating is the "capital of asthma." Additionally, other factors associated with the operation of an intermodal terminal include lights

which will cause a problem. The speaker urged that comment forms be completed and delivered to MDOT. The speaker concluded with an indication that the speaker walked door-to-door to deliver notices of this meeting.

C: The terminal area is no longer owned by Grand Trunk Western but by a Canadian railroad. Canadians ship their trash to Michigan. The Fairgrounds should be a park and not handed to an agent of the Canadian government.

C: The speaker was there on behalf of her father who lives in the area but did not get a mailer. The speaker believes the trucks will hurt the community and that there will be no benefit to the residents of the area. The fumes can already be smelled. With 700 trucks a day, toxic fumes will be evident. The expansion of intermodal in the area will hurt children, like the speaker's daughter who goes to the Grayling Elementary School. The speaker indicated that the mailers did not get to people and, if they did, there would be 100 or 200 more people at the meeting than those in attendance. The speaker concluded by asking the MDOT Project Team: "Why not build this terminal in your area?"

C: The speaker is the manager of the City of Ferndale. He indicated that, while he appreciates new jobs, intermodal terminal expansion is not the way to create jobs. He indicated the historic nature of Woodward Avenue and that the Woodward Heritage Association has a plan to create a magnet that will create "tens of thousands of jobs" from tourism and convention-related activities.

The speaker indicated the Fairgrounds is located in the middle of an area of 4.8 million people. A 1953 plan called for maintaining in perpetuity the area as a State Fairgrounds/park. The Fairgrounds should not be downsized. The proposed expansion of the intermodal terminal would convert a park-like area into an industrial area. The speaker stressed that the City of Ferndale is supportive of converting the Fairgrounds into a Huron Metro Park. And, it supports placing a world-class mass transit system on Woodward Avenue.

C: The speaker indicated that he is skilled at developing statistical charts. The speaker commented that the data that were shown by the MDOT DIFT Project Team illustrated "nothing" to him. The speaker criticized the meeting place as being hard to find and that the

invitation lacked a map to locate it. He indicated to those in attendance that he will donate his time to develop a Web site in opposition to the expansion of the CN/Moterm terminal.

C: The speaker indicated that he was 62 years old and a lifelong resident of the area. He noted that the area was meant only to be a fairgrounds and that the Hudsons and Palmers who inspired the Fairgrounds development would “roll over in their graves” if they knew the proposals for intermodal terminal expansion in the area.

C: The speaker indicated that he is a resident of the Green Acres area. He stated that the expansion of the CN/Moterm terminal into the Fairgrounds is a “terrible idea.” He noted that terminal expansion would kill the concept of a park. He indicated that the goal of the state should be to look at recreation needs and not a “billion dollars for business.”

C: The commenter indicated that this is the second meeting which the speaker has attended. She noted that a better job must be done in getting mailers out. She indicated that schools would be affected by the expansion of the CN/Moterm terminal. The speaker stressed that the Ferndale area’s development is consistent with the Governor’s “Cool Cities Initiative” but that expansion of the CN/Moterm terminal will make Ferndale “uncool.” She urged those in attendance to contact the Governor about the Cool Cities Initiative and indicate the proposed expansion of CN/Moterm terminal’s inconsistency with it.

C: The speaker indicated that this is the third meeting on the DIFT that she has attended. Nevertheless, she criticized the MDOT DIFT Project Team for not getting the word out. She criticized the Frequently Asked Questions pamphlet and indicated that more information is needed. She indicated that the FAQ paper plays on the vulnerability of the unemployed. She further indicated that assertions in the FAQ pamphlet that “the DIFT Project will make neighborhoods better” is not true. She criticized the entire evening as a “dog and pony show.”

C: The speaker agreed with the one immediately before her. She indicated that the DIFT Project is at odds with the Governor’s Cool Cities Initiative. She indicated that the DIFT is unwanted in her neighborhood. She also stated that the City of Detroit is against this project. She asserted the entire project smacks of “environmental racism.” She concluded by indicating that a park is wanted at the Fairgrounds, not expansion of the intermodal terminal.

C: The speaker indicated that she is against the DIFT proposal for her area. She indicated that more information was needed before any meeting like the one in process. She indicated that this current meeting does not provide more information than what was available at meetings last fall on the DIFT. The speaker demanded that another meeting be held before the public hearing. She indicated that poverty levels are not being considered in the analysis, and stressed that poverty is the key issue in the environmental justice area. She requested information on the project study costs and the consultant's fees.

C: The commenter noted this project involves the use of Michigan taxpayer money to help a foreign corporation that, in turn, will "harm us" by developing the intermodal terminal. She indicated that there is land along railroad tracks outside of urban areas which is already zoned industrial and the project should be located there. She stressed that an intermodal terminal project does not belong in an urban area. The speaker concluded by indicating that the meeting is only being held because MDOT is legally required to do so.

C: The speaker indicated that she is a long-time activist dedicated to the good of the southeastern Michigan region. She criticized the MDOT DIFT Project Team for failing to conduct a proper outreach effort. She criticized the adequacy of the 800 telephone line and indicated that the Web site is not working properly. She stated that no information is available on the Web to indicate the project's impact on the Fairgrounds.

The speaker indicated that she does not see a need for the DIFT Project. She asked why intermodal expansion is not being done in Port Huron instead of in Ferndale. She stressed that the Fairgrounds property was given to Michigan for a specific purpose which is not the conduct of intermodal activity. She indicated that she supports the development of the Metro Park at the Fairgrounds.

The speaker continued that a report done two years ago indicated that Canadian National will "pull out of Ferndale because it is an inefficient yard." Expanding the terminal into the Fairgrounds would threaten the oldest State Fair; would cripple the north-central area of Detroit; and, will have significant negative impacts. She indicated that the residents should have the right to approve this project, as it is going to create a nuisance.

The speaker indicated that only 200 jobs will be created over a 25-year period with the investment in the DIFT. She talked about an \$80 million government grant to the Chaldean community to improve the area. This investment will spur the economy with new jobs, new houses in the area. She indicated that a shopping development on the southeast corner of the Woodward/8-Mile intersection is jeopardized because of the proposed expansion of the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project.

The speaker stressed that: the area's developers need to be brought into the DIFT discussions; streets need to be walked in order to inform people about the DIFT meetings; more information in mailers is needed to explain fully what is going to happen at the Fairgrounds, if the DIFT Project goes forward; and, more information is needed on the Web site.

C: The speaker is a Green Acres resident, a Detroiter, and asked why is the project needed?

R: Forecasts produced for the year 2025 show that the existing terminals cannot handle the demand for intermodal activity. If these terminals are not expanded, the intermodal activity will likely be shifted outside of the Detroit/southeastern Michigan region and, in many instances, the State of Michigan. Today there are 300,000+ "lifts" being moved; the future will see anywhere from 700,000 to over 1.1 million lifts being moved. These levels of demand require improvement/expansion of the intermodal facilities.

C: The speaker, in reply, indicates that it is "dangerous to predict."

R: The railroads have said repeatedly and publicly that the fastest growing segment of their business is in the intermodal sector. Because of increased congestion on roadways, the railroads are continually picking up increased intermodal activity because of various cost advantages. The forecasts that are being used on the DIFT Project have been reviewed by the representatives of two different railroads. They indicated that the forecasts are reasonably optimistic in light of the 25-year horizon within which the plan is being conducted.

C: The speaker indicated that she is a Green Acres resident. She noted that a railroad representative is not at the meeting. She indicated she has started a grass-roots petition against

expanding the CN/Moterm terminal. She further noted that she supports the area for a Metro Park. She commented, however, that the park cannot move forward without a \$15 million investment to bring the Fairgrounds infrastructure up to code. She indicated that she wants private corporations to provide the money to do this.

The speaker then indicated that the mapping provided at this meeting is no different from that which was provided in September 2003.

R: It was noted that every map of a terminal's size/layout that was presented in September has been changed. Additionally, the data provided at this current meeting on jobs, air quality, and traffic are new.

Q: What is in the containers?

R: The manifest of what is being shipped is not public record. Nevertheless, the use of a database called Reebie indicates that most of the product shipped in and out of southeast Detroit intermodal terminals is made of auto products and consumer products. Less than one percent of the material shipped by intermodal in southeast Michigan is labeled hazardous materials. Often, that material is paint or similar product used by various industries. However, the container carrying such products is required to be labeled "hazardous."

C: The speaker indicates that there will be a loss in property values because of intermodal development at the CN/Moterm terminal.

R: An analysis of recent housing sales around each of the intermodal terminals indicates that sales are strong in terms of the time that a property remains on the market and the rate of increase in prices.

C: More houses are now for sale in the area since the announcement of the DIFT intermodal terminal expansion. The speaker also indicated that the merchants in the Chaldean community weren't informed of this project.

C: The speaker indicated that he is a resident of Hazel Park. He indicated that the use of overhead slides is a poor way of doing the presentation. He stressed that the overheads were not readable. He urged use of PowerPoint.

The speaker indicated that in the 1950s, the Hazel Park population was 25,000. After I-75 was constructed, the population declined so that today it is only 18,000. When that happened, MDOT did not compensate Hazel Park for its losses. He commented further that when the state widened 8-Mile Road, a lot of businesses were lost as retail left the area. He noted again that Highland Park and Detroit weren't reimbursed for these losses by the state.

The speaker indicated that there will be more vehicles using the roads if the DIFT intermodal proposals are approved. He questioned whether the cities that will experience the increased truck traffic, and associated issues, would be reimbursed by the state. He rhetorically responded that this is not likely to occur and only the citizens will pay for the cost. He concluded by noting that Hazel Park recently voted for an increase in the millage for improving its schools. Because of the DIFT Project, both parents and children will move out of the area.

C: The speaker indicated that he "did not like" the presentation. He requested that a copy of all charts and figures be handed out to everyone. He requested detailed information on the lift forecasts, all traffic information, and the number of hours that each of the intermodal terminals operate. He indicated that Canadian National now operates from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. On Sundays the terminal is closed. So, the terminal is only open 82 hours of the week. He stressed that, if there is really more intermodal demand, the terminals can be opened longer rather than be expanded.

The speaker cited a situation where Pepsi wanted a tax abatement and it guaranteed employment in exchange. Nevertheless, after Pepsi received the tax abatement, it used a clause that allowed it to get out of keeping the pledge to guarantee employment.

The speaker indicated that if a new border crossing is built in the Buffalo area, that intermodal traffic will go there. He indicated that \$70 million in new housing is going up around the Ferndale terminal and that expansion of the terminal would make the neighborhood vulnerable and be an assault on low- and middle-income residents of the area.

C: The speaker indicated that he is a 20-year resident of the Green Acres area. He noted that he twice fought against racetrack development at the Fairgrounds. He is against this project of intermodal terminal expansion. He urged that the project be put in the neighborhood of the MDOT Project Team members.

C: The speaker indicated that she is a resident of Ferndale and against any intermodal terminal expansion. She stressed that the neighborhoods don't need it and that it would impact on the quality-of-life. She noted she is not interested in how the project will affect a seven-county region but interested in how it will affect her. She noted that there are cracks on the wall at her house because of truck activity and, with 1,000 trucks per day, this problem will only increase as will air pollution. She stated that she believes that people are not being told of the meetings time after time. Nevertheless, the meetings are boring; she reads a book as the presentations are being made. She asserted that the tax dollars are being used to create a "shell game." The speaker concluded by indicating her preference of a park at the Fairgrounds.

C: The speaker indicated that he is a resident of southwest Detroit but feels sympathy for the residents of the area around the CN/Moterm terminal. He indicated that in southwest Detroit, people have lined up "out the door" at DIFT meetings to complain about the project. He noted that southwest Detroit, like the Ferndale area, does not want intermodal activity. The speaker indicated that he can feel the ground shake at his home in southwest Detroit because of intermodal truck activity.

The speaker concluded that MDOT comes to the local neighborhoods to upset the people with these meetings. The organization that he is involved in has sent 2,000 postal cards to Governor Granholm indicating intermodal freight terminal development is not consistent with her "Cool Cities" initiative.

C: The speaker indicated that he lived in southwest Detroit 40 years ago. The area had stockyards, intermodal traffic, and pollution. He moved from the area to Sherwood Forest because of that. Sherwood Forest is a clean area and must remain that way. Southwest Detroit is an area of vacant and burned-up homes because of the pollution caused by industry, including intermodal.

C: The speaker lives on Jewell Street. He noted that there is a lot of dirt in the air. He proposed that the terminal expansion should go on a second level, not at the ground level. He also recommended that the project go to a rural area – “develop it somewhere else.” He urged that the Moterm terminal be converted to some other use. He stressed that trucks must be kept out of the neighborhoods.

C: The speaker indicated that the railroads should be left to spend their own money, not state money. He noted that people will leave the area, if the terminal is expanded. He also indicated that housing prices will be hurt, if the terminal is expanded. A business like CN’s intermodal terminal should grow at its own pace and not be pushed by state government. He indicated that just because someone forecasts that the traffic will increase in the future, it will not necessarily happen. He indicated that intermodal traffic has been flat since 1998.

R: The project is addressing the long-range intermodal needs to the year 2025. Many business activities have been relatively flat over the last several years because of the state of the economy. However, just like the stock market, there are ups and downs but, in the long haul, the intermodal trends are up. That is the situation with intermodal activity in the region and it is expected to continue to increase through 2025.

With that comment, the formal Q/A session ended at 9:30 p.m. Bob Parsons thanked everyone for attending and indicated the MDOT DIFT Project Team would remain for additional, informal conversation.

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Attendance

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