

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DETROIT DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
BOX 1027
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48231-1027

February 2, 2004

IN REPLY REFER TO

Engineering & Technical Services
Regulatory Office
File No. 93-012-062-1

Abdelmoez Abdalla
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
315 West Allegan Street
Room 207
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Mr. Abdelmoez:

This concerns your request (in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation) for us to become a cooperating agency for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Blue Water Bridge Study, St. Clair County, Michigan.

The proposal, as shown in the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) scoping information package, shows the existing bridge plaza and a proposed plaza expansion. We reviewed the package to determine our possible involvement as a cooperating agency for EA preparation and our jurisdiction and possible authorization that might be required. Under 40 C.F.R. § 1508.6, federal agencies shall be cooperating agencies where an agency has the authority to approve a proposal or a portion of a proposal.

Based on the scoping information package, the Corps may have permit authority over portions of the proposed development under Section 404, if the discharge of fill material cannot be avoided. The scoping document outlines several wetlands, which appear to be jurisdictional wetlands adjacent to the Black River. The two reported wetlands are in Area A (a 39 acre emergent wetland) and in Area C (a 15 Acre forested wetland) both on the west side of the Black River. Any proposed discharge of fill in a jurisdictional wetland and/or structures over the Black River would require your agency to submit an application for a Department of the Army permit. In order to make a permit decision, we would need to generate or adopt an EA as part of our review. We propose to limit our participation as a cooperating agency to areas of our jurisdiction in the proposed plaza changes.

In the interest of early cooperation and in order to avoid redundant review or delay, we are attaching a generic template of our permit evaluation document that incorporates reviews under NEPA, the 404(b)(1) guidelines to the Clean Water Act, and the Corps' public interest review. This document depicts the range of possible impacts that we would review for an applicant to

discharge fill in Area A or Area C wetlands.

Should you wish to prepare an EA that could fulfill our requirement, you may do so, and we could potentially verify and adopt it. Also, if you want a decision on the viability of Area A or C, we would need to begin a public interest review including input from our public notice in our permit review. We could only do this if you submit a permit application to enable us to do a concurrent review. Bear in mind that the 404(b)(1) guidelines prohibit issuance of our permit if there is a less damaging, practicable alternative.

Following the criteria listed in your letter, we can provide cooperation in different areas. We can supply input on issues involved that relate to potential actions where we would have potential jurisdiction. We would be happy to participate in coordination meetings and joint field reviews, but would propose to limit participation to areas and proposed actions that would involve Corps' interests/jurisdiction. We also would review and comment on the pre-draft or pre-final environmental documents with concerns of our agency and regulatory action in mind.

Should you have any questions, please contact Thomas M. Freitag at the above address or telephone (313) 226-6706. Please refer to File Number: 93-012-062-1.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Gary R. Mannesto
Chief, Regulatory Office
Engineering and Technical Services

Copy furnished:

Michigan Department
of Transportation
MDEQ

BLUE WATER BRIDGE AUTHORITY
FORMAL COMMENTS

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA STUDY
UPDATED ALTERNATIVES
PUBLIC MEETING

File Copy

Date: _____

JUNE 1, 2004

Prepared for:

*Dan Elash
The Blue Water Bridge Authority
Bridge Street
Point Edward, Ontario
Canada N7V 4J5*



Prepared by:

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*Civil Engineering, Surveying and
Environmental Consulting*

Toledo ♦ Dearborn ♦ Detroit ♦ Lansing ♦ Monroe

Blue Water Bridge Authority
Formal Comments
Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study
Updated Alternatives Public Meeting
June 1, 2004

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Department of Transportation conducted the third public meeting for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study on May 17, 2004. The Blue Water Bridge Authority (BWBA), as a stakeholder in the Plaza Study, offers this document in continued support of the project. These comments, consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), are requested by the BWBA to be entered as part of the public record for this project.

The project alternatives include the following;

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| No Build | Consistent with the NEPA process, a No Build Alternative is provided for a comparable to the build alternatives. |
| Alternative 1 | This alternative expands the elevated plaza. The plaza is retained on a structure above street level. |
| Alternative 2 | This alternative brings the plaza down to grade and expands the plaza area. |
| Alternative 3 | This alternative extends the plaza to a location west of Water Street with most plaza activities occurring at the expanded plaza area to the west. The existing plaza is retained for local passenger car only traffic as well as duty free. |

The BWBA continues to support the Plaza Study as an eminent need to address existing and rapidly growing traffic and increasing border crossing security requirements. The enhancement and enlargement of the U.S. Plaza capacity and operations is necessary to provide a safe and efficient international border crossing. The existing plaza is highly constrained in an urban environment, is operationally inefficient, and cannot meet the future traffic projections, particularly commercial traffic, and furthermore cannot effectively provide the required inspection facilities. Alternative 3 best addresses the concerns of the BWBA as it pertains to having the most favorable impact on the operations of the Canadian Plaza, and traffic flow on Highway 402. Alternatives 1 and 2, while improving the plaza capacity and operations, are not as efficient due to limited size expansion, and have constraints that might result in restricted plaza operations or reduce the design life of the plaza.

In order to support the continued growth in trade and travel as well as the security demands of the border, the BWBA has undergone a comprehensive master planning process. MDOT was included as a major stakeholder in this process as has been the long history of cooperation between each operator. The BWBA will begin implementing elements of this master plan over

the next couple of years. In order to maximize the utility of this investment, it is necessary that both sides of the border have the capacity to handle the growing traffic demand.

Ideally, the plaza should have the ability to process incoming traffic in a manner such that queuing and delays do not occur. In reality, a number of variables including traffic arrival rates, national security issues, staffing levels, inspection processes and other items affect the ideal operations of an international crossing. When operational bottlenecks occur, the plaza needs to have maximum potential to address the queuing conditions resulting from capacity overloads. Thus, the spatial needs require not only reasonable plaza area for inspection procedures and support operations, but also adequate queuing area to accommodate the reasonable certainty of queuing. These queuing areas should minimize conflicts with adjacent highway facilities and minimize impacts to residential areas.

2.0 CONFORMANCE WITH PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The No Build and three Build Alternatives must be weighted against the objectives of the projects purpose and need. These objectives are identified in the *Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study Purpose and Need Statement* published by MDOT and dated October 16, 2003. The No Build Alternative clearly does not address any of the project objectives, however, consistent with the NEPA process is retained as a project comparable. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 meet the objectives of the project purpose and need to varying degrees. The BWBA has identified four of these objectives that most affect and influence the operations of the BWBA Canadian Plaza. Each of these objectives and the ability of each alternative to meet the objective is discussed as follows:

Accommodating Projected 30-year Traffic Growth and Potential Future Plaza Modification

An objective of the Plaza upgrade and expansion is to accommodate projected 30-year traffic growth. With the expanded plaza area and the extended queuing space for the plaza approach, Alternative 3 offers the highest potential to address the plaza requirement as pertains to traffic capacity, queuing, and future modifications or growth of the plaza. The first priority of the plaza is to efficiently and safely process incoming and outgoing traffic. Numerous variables including random traffic arrivals and national security issues, or staffing can result in traffic demands exceeding the possible inspection capabilities. When this occurs, queuing conditions result. This could potentially involve westbound queues at the U.S. Plaza and eastbound queues at the Canadian Plaza. The queuing space between the U.S. and Canadian Plazas is a controlled storage area that should not impede adjacent highway facilities such as I-94/69 and Highway 402. When queues exceed the area between plazas, conflicts with adjacent transportation facilities including I-69/I-94 and Highway 402 occur. Maximizing the queuing area, the area between the two plazas, reduces the potential for queues to interfere with adjacent plazas and highway facilities.

Alternative 3 increases the separation between plazas from approximately 1.5 miles to 3.5 miles. This significantly reduces the probability of westbound traffic at the U.S. Plaza queuing into the Canadian Plaza and possible onto Highway 402. Likewise, the potential for eastbound traffic at the Canadian Plaza queuing through the U.S. Plaza is reduced. Additionally, Alternative 3 reduces the potential westbound queues from both the bridge structure and the urban residential environment thereby improving security and reducing environmental impacts.

Alternatives 1 and 2 are expanded plazas within a constrained area involving dense commercial and residential developments. While these alternatives improve the existing plaza conditions by providing an expanded plaza, these do not have the spatial capacity, flexibility and expansion potential of Alternative 3.

Minimizing Impacts on Highway 402 and I-94/69

An objective of the Plaza upgrade and expansion is to minimize impacts on Highway 402 and I-94/69. To minimize impacts on adjacent highway facilities two conditions must occur. First, operational functions and facilities must be designed to handle the projected traffic volumes and operational demands. The three build alternatives were developed to this effect. Second, the facilities must have adequate queue storage space to address potential variability in operations. The three build alternatives meet this need to varying degrees.

In our opinion, Alternative 3 provides the additional benefit in reducing back ups onto the adjacent highway facilities by significantly increasing the queuing between the plazas from 1.5 miles to over 3 miles. A queuing area of this magnitude would provide for all but the most unexpected traffic conditions and best protect the operation and safety of Highway 402. The queuing space can also be used to effectively accommodate expedited trade and travel programs including FAST/NEXUS and any future operational border operational changes. These programs benefit the most when decision times combined with directional signing are maximized. Increasing the spacing between plaza maximizes the way-finding approaching the plazas thereby reducing congestion and improving driver comfort.

Accommodate the latest inspection technologies and procedures

Another objective of the Plaza upgrade and expansion is to accommodate the latest inspection technologies and procedures. Alternative 3 clearly has the best potential for accommodating spatial needs for any future technologies based on both the larger surface area available within the needed taking area and greater spacing between plazas. The increased spacing between plazas will allow for well spaced directional/instructional signing to maximize the use of pre-processing procedures as well as provide other benefits as discussed above. Alternatives 1 and 2 have limited expansion capabilities due to the dense land uses adjacent to the existing plaza. As a result, expansion potential to accommodate any additional technologies or changes in procedures would have to be either accommodated within the limited space on the plaza or require additional property impacts.

A concern of Alternative 3 is the reduction of westbound lanes from three (3) on the bridge span to two (2) between the bridge and the plaza approach. Three lanes would allow for one of the lanes to be designated for FAST/NEXUS. Provision of the third westbound lane has been identified by MDOT as resulting in additional environmental and cost impacts due to the crossing of the Black River. Understanding that the benefit of the third lane must be weighted against project impacts, the BWBA is requesting the following as pertains to the third westbound lane:

- That the detailed technical analyses carefully consider the benefits of the third lane in respects to processing operations as FAST/NEXUS enrollments and the increase use of this operation in the future,
- That if the third lane for the full length between the bridge span and the new plaza cannot be provided due to potential environmental, right-of-way, or cost impacts associated with the Black River crossing, that the approach to the plaza include three (3) lanes to the maximum

extent possible. This could result in two lanes from the existing Plaza location to west of the Black River and three lanes from west of the Black River to the new Plaza providing queuing space in excess of what is currently provided on the three lane bridge.

- That any project action including analyses and design decisions not preclude the potential of providing the full three (3) lanes if future conditions dictate the need for such.

Reduce Weave Movements on the Bridge, Plaza and I-94/69

Finally, an objective of the Plaza upgrade and expansion is to reduce weave movements on the bridge, plaza and I-94/69. There are three distinct weave issues affecting the alternatives, weaving on the bridge, on the plaza, and on I-69/94. The weave movement on the bridge is of most concern to the BWBA as this weave directly impacts the Canadian plaza operations and the implementation of the BWBA master plan. The bridge weave movement involves a right to left weaving movement of commercial traffic as the right hand lane truck entry from Highway 402 into the right hand plaza toll booths must transition to left side U.S. Commercial Inspection facility. It should be especially noted here that the No-Build alternative could under no circumstances resolve this issue as it is functional and unrelated to capacity.

All three build alternatives provide U.S. Commercial Inspection on the right and thus reduce, if not eliminate, the potential of commercial traffic weaving or lane changing over the span of the bridge. Some lane changing due to intermixing of expedited programs may occur. The elimination of the need for commercial traffic to weave will address a high concern of the BWBA and further permit for the to removal of the temporary constriction barrier that forces traffic to merge into one lane on the exit side of the Canadian westbound toll booths. The increased plaza spacing provided by Alternative 3 provides the most efficient maneuvering between plazas by providing ample signing opportunities and increased travel decision time reducing weaving concerns.

3.0 EVALUATION OF IMPACTS

A number of potential impacts will be evaluated in detail for the three build alternatives as part of the NEPA process. Most of the project impacts involve local issues including residential impacts, ecological or cultural impacts, utility impacts, construction cost and local roadway impacts that do not directly affect the BWBA and the Canadian Plaza operations. These impacts, although important as part of the evaluation of the feasible alternatives, are not within the direct operational concerns of the BWBA. The positive resolution of the project impacts is relevant to the success and timely implementation of the project. An alternative that minimizing overall impacts would lead to a more expedited project thereby best addressing the issues of concern to the BWBA.

The issue of constructability is a project impact that could greatly affect both the BWBA and the entire Michigan-Ontario frontier. Constructability will affect trade, tourism, economics, safety and plaza processing capacity during the period of construction, which could involve a number of years. As detailed in the Canadian-United States-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership Planning Need and Feasibility Study, the other Michigan-Ontario crossings (Detroit - Windsor) do not have the capacity capability to absorb a significant amount of traffic overflow resulting from major traffic restrictions during construction at the Blue Water Bridge crossing. Although a temporary condition, given a multi-year construction timeframe with a project of this magnitude, the public safety and bi-national economics should be given careful consideration.

Alternative 3 can be constructed with minimal disruption to the existing plaza facility due to its location away from the existing plaza and the minimal modifications to the existing plaza structures. The resulting economic and safety impacts would be minimized. Construction staging for Alternatives 1 and 2 would be significantly more complex. These alternatives may require reduced processing facilities and/or temporary facilities as part of the construction staging. Construction would likely require lengthy disruption of the local roadway system and may have significant adverse economic and social impact to the adjacent residents and businesses.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The BWBA continues to support MDOT's efforts to improve capacity, safety and operations at the Blue Water Bridge Plaza. The build alternatives provide three distinct designs to meet all of the elements required for an international border crossing. The BWBA supports Alternative 3 as the alternative that best addresses the needs of the Blue Water Bridge international crossing cooperatively run between two operators. The primary benefits of Alternative 3 over Alternatives 1 and 2 include:

- Providing the better spatial capacity for the required traffic demands and inspection technologies
- Minimizes potential traffic impacts to connecting roadways
- Providing for future flexibility seamless expansions to the plaza should unforeseeable traffic demands or inspection procedures require such
- Increased spacing between the U.S. Plaza and the Canadian Plaza to allow for necessary directional/instructional signage, driver decision time, and reduction of queuing through adjacent plazas
- Minimal construction impacts in comparison to Alternative 1 and 2 which would require significant disruption to border crossing and local traffic
- Significantly fewer impacts to the residential and commercial properties of Port Huron
- Reduced construction costs

Alternative 3 best meets the objectives of the project purpose and needs. The initial alternative screening conducted for all three build alternatives has identified minimal social, ecological, and engineering impacts associated with Alternative 3. The BWBA recognizes that there are some minor design and logistic issues that need further refinement and coordination with appropriate local, state and Federal agencies. Alternative 3 extends the plaza further to the west to maximize plaza spatial and queuing capacity and remove the congested plaza activities away from the dense commercial and residential areas of Port Huron. This alternative should be retained as a feasible and practical alternative and carried to detailed analyses.



Port Huron Area School District

William D. Kimball, Superintendent
1925 Lapeer Ave. • P.O. Box 5013 • Port Huron, MI 48061-5013 • (810) 984-3101

July 8, 2004

Ms. GERALYN AYERS
Environmental Section, Project Planning Division
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Ms. Ayers:

In response to your letter of July 1, 2004 regarding the Blue Water Bridge Alternatives, the District concerns are as follows:

- Disruption of student transportation during the school year in particular. Summer programs are also a concern.
- Emergency access to schools by EMS, police, fire, parents and District staff is a critical concern also.

Other concerns are as follows:

- Vehicle gridlock on alternative roads such as 7th, 10th and Military Street bridges and Wadhams Road as traffic is diverted from the Black River I-69 / I-94 corridor. This is a major concern because of the raising for boats and increase car and truck traffic.
- Closeness of expressway expansion to Chippewa Middle School, which could cause noise abatement problems.
- Environmental concerns are possible because of Stocks Creek running under the I-69 / I-94 corridor and the related wet and marsh land.

I know of no negative impact on food banks, senior citizens or racial ethnic groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and if you have additional requests, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Beedon, Executive Director for
Board & Curriculum Services

RCB/jss

c: W. Kimball H. Livingston
T. Miller



United States Department of the Interior

FILE COPY

Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Law Enforcement
P. O. Box 45
Fort Snelling, MN 55121-0045

Morris Hall
Operations Manager
Michigan Department of Transportation
Blue Water Bridge
1410 Elmwood Street
Port Huron, MI 48060

AUG - 6 2004

Dear Mr. Hall:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me earlier this summer. As we discussed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement is looking to establish an office in Port Huron.

We are now proceeding with plans to hire a Wildlife Inspector to cover Port Huron. During our meeting, you indicated you may have a small office (~188 sqft) available soon. We are very interested in hearing whether that space or any other suitable space is likely to come available soon in any of your facilities.

Would you or someone from your staff contact either myself or Judy O'Donnell from my office to discuss this matter? We can be reached at (612) 713-5320, between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm central time.

Thanks you for your assistance and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

MARY JANE E. LAVIN
Special Agent in Charge



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES
LANSING

JENNIFER GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR

August 16, 2004

LLOYD BALDWIN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
425 WEST OTTAWA
PO BOX 30050
LANSING MI 48909

RE: ER-930512 Historic Structures Inventory for the Proposed Improvements to the Blue Water Bridge Plaza, Port Huron, St. Clair County (FHWA)

Dear Mr. Baldwin:

We have reviewed the revised report, *A Report of a Historic Structures Inventory for the Proposed Improvements to the Blue Water Bridge Plaza*, prepared for MDOT by Wilbur Smith Associates. We concur with the reports conclusions, with the following exception:

We disagree with the report's conclusion that the house at 2316 17th appears a to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Although, as the report states, it the American Foursquare house style is not common in the relatively small study area, the form is typical in southern Michigan, and indeed it is not unusual even within the city of Port Huron. Furthermore, no associations with important individuals or events connected with this house have been documented.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is not the office of record for this **undertaking**. You are therefore asked to maintain a copy of this letter with your environmental review record for this undertaking. If the scope of work changes in any way, or if artifacts or bones are discovered, please notify this office immediately.

If you have any questions, please contact Martha MacFarlane Faes, Environmental Review Coordinator, at (517) 335-2721 or by email at ER@michigan.gov. **Please reference our project number in all communication with this office regarding this undertaking.** Thank you for this opportunity to review and comment, and for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

MMF:ROC:bgg



City of Port Huron 100 McMorran Boulevard Port Huron, Michigan 48060

Office of the Fire Chief

Phone: (810) 984-9750 • Fax: (810) 982-0282
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August 23, 2004

Ms. GERALYN AYERS
Environmental Section
Project Planning Division
Michigan Dept. of Transportation
Murray D. Van Wagoner Building
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study

Dear Ms. Ayers:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the four proposed Blue Water Bridge Plaza expansion alternatives. Each alternative offers a unique challenge to emergency response services. I believe that it is critical that any plan include careful study of emergency preparedness to ensure safety to the community, plaza staff and the traveling public.

Presently, the Port Huron Fire Department provides the following level of services to the plaza: full fire suppression response, fire code inspection, HAZ-MAT Technician, Medical First Responder, High Angle Rope Rescue, confined space, auto extrication and joint training with MDOT employees. Responses to incidents at the Blue Water Bridges are a major factor in our daily activities as well as in our short and long term planning.

When considering the four alternatives, it is also important to remember that the Blue Water Bridges are the number one point of entry to Michigan and the number two point of entry in the United States for hazardous materials. The City of Port Huron's Emergency Management office considers the Blue Water Bridges as our number one critical asset in terms of homeland security concerns and ongoing consideration in our All Hazard planning.

In reviewing plans for emergency response risk analysis, the three primary factors for evaluation are:

1. A statistical summary of the infrastructure itself, including building use, occupancy type and water distribution for fire flow.
2. Analysis of current services provided to the structure, which would include fire suppression, EMS first response, HAZ-MAT technician response, rope rescue,

prevention activities, joint training activities and other services that we have historically provided.

3. Analysis employing possible response scenarios.

Based on this conceptual phase of the planning process, it is somewhat difficult to address all the impacts to emergency responders. Many concerns can be addressed during project design.

The NO ACTION/NO BUILD alternative would have no obvious effect to emergency responders to our current level of provided services. We would continue to work on our daily response duties, along with our short and long term planning activities for this infrastructure. It is important to note that the current plaza configuration has existing concerns for emergency planners and responders. These concerns include: temporary storage of hazardous materials being transported within our neighborhoods, the on-going traffic congestion on city streets due to high traffic volumes on the plaza, the less than optimal design in particular the east bound Water Street ON ramp has a history of serious traffic accidents at that location.

Alternative #1 would require little or no change to our emergency action planning, with the exception of required access to facilitate ease of emergency vehicle deployment. It would be difficult to predict the increased number of incidents based on a larger plaza population and vehicle traffic. Any changes would invariably produce more business for our first responders.

Alternative #2, like Alternative #1, would increase the population on the plaza, which would increase response demands. Emergency vehicle access would again be critical to the ability to respond to the plaza. It must include openings that will readily accommodate emergency apparatus. Keep in mind that in every emergency, time is critical. Delays in access will have a negative effect. Alternative #2 also disrupts Port Huron's north and southbound traffic flows on surface streets. It is necessary to have redundancy in our north and southbound roadways to accommodate emergency response. Therefore, reduction of those options will have a negative result.

Alternative #3 which involves the relocating of major plaza activities to an off-site location, may pose challenges for emergency responders. The location of this large structure in two jurisdictions would require a review of our agencies' roles. Currently, the City of Port Huron is the sole provider at the plaza for all emergency services including police, fire and EMS.

Page 3

August 23, 2004

The two bridge spans and all of the bridge structure is located in the City of Port Huron, which has the required emergency vehicle access. Alternative #3 would require the same access from Pine Grove Avenue. As stated earlier, during an emergency, response time (along with adequate equipment and manpower), is one of the most critical elements of any operation. The type of emergencies on the bridges would remain the same as our current situation.

Moving west away from the bridge structure into the security walled corridor would pose unique challenges. Ingress and egress will need careful consideration during the design phase. The requirement for emergency vehicle access into the secured walled corridor will play an integral part in any emergency agency's ability to respond. Experience has shown that traffic congestion upstream, or prior to an emergency incident, is at times, difficult to overcome. Careful consideration to the response of hazardous material cargo incidents must be taken into account. Lastly, adequate water supply along the corridor will be essential.

It is feasible that these and other obstacles could be overcome; however, it is imperative that careful design and planning take place. I strongly recommend the establishment of an emergency responder committee for design input to help overcome the short and long term impact for those providing emergency services. I am glad to offer any assistance in this endeavor.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important project. If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Eick
Fire Chief/Emergency Management
Coordinator

RWE/cm



City of Port Huron 100 McMorran Boulevard Port Huron, Michigan 48060

Port Huron Police Department
(810) 984-9710 Phone ** (810) 987-9860 Fax
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August 23, 2004

Ms. GERALYN AYERS
Environmental Section
Project Planning Division
Michigan Dept. of Transportation
Murray D. VanWagoner Building
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study, Potential Emergency Services Impact

Dear Ms. Ayers:

We are in receipt of your letter of July 12, 2004 wherein you requested assistance in assessing the potential police emergency services impact on the four (4) alternatives under consideration for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza study. In the letter you stated, "The MDOT Study Team is aware that any changes in local access may impact emergency services." We agree with your assessment and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input for this major project of mutual concern.

The history of our providing emergency services to the Blue Water Bridges and Plaza dates back to 1993. At that time, the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Port Huron entered into a contract for providing police, fire, ambulance and other related emergency services for the existing and proposed addition to the Blue Water Bridge and related facilities for carrying Highway I-94 over the St. Clair River including the toll, administration, maintenance, customs and immigration facilities hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Blue Water Bridge Plaza," *within the corporate limits of the City.*

Under the terms of the contract, MDOT reimburses the City of Port Huron for providing police, fire ambulance and other emergency services for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza. Since the City, within its ability, has provided services and cleanup which has included the following services at the Blue Water Bridge Plaza:

Police, fire ambulance, other related emergency services and assisting MDOT in cleaning up cargo spills.

The services and cleanup are provided for the Michigan portion of the Blue Water Bridge, the Blue Water Bridge Plaza and those portions of Highway I-94/I-69 and I-94BL/I-69BL (Pine Grove Avenue) that enter or exit the Plaza.

Maritime Capital of the Great Lakes

Following are the Port Huron Police Department's major concerns regarding the four alternatives currently under consideration:

- No Action/No Build Alternative - No updates to the existing roadway system beyond what is already scheduled for construction.
 - No roads would be closed with this alternative.

The existing plaza in its present configuration presents traffic flow problems for us on our major north-south streets, especially Pine Grove traffic. We also experience major traffic jams on Hancock during inclement weather, major holidays in Canada and the U.S., and heavy traffic volumes. The existing I-94 freeway from the Lapeer connector to Hancock is congested and hinders freeway traffic flow from the southwest area of Port Huron to the northeast area. The Water Street interchange has a long history of serious accidents as passenger vehicles enter the northbound freeway and attempt to weave between slow moving and stopped semi-trucks to proceed north to Hancock and Pine Grove.

- Alternative #1 - Expansion of the existing elevated plaza.
 - Mansfield Street, which would close west of Pine Grove Avenue.
 - Elmwood Street and Harker Street west of 10th Avenue would close.
 - Close 11th and 12th Avenues north of Scott.

The existing elevated Blue Water Bridge Plaza is 470 feet wide. The elevated plaza over Pine Grove Avenue under this proposal would be 1,080 feet wide, or a 130% increase. Potential "tunnel effects" of an expanded elevated plaza necessitate an in-depth evaluation of traffic flow volumes, cargo spills and accidents.

Traffic flow volumes, accidents and massive traffic jams during the construction of the first Blue Water Bridge Plaza were well documented, and were a continuing and serious problem for the Port Huron Police Department (PHPD). On many occasions, the traffic flows necessitated point control direction which cost City overtime expenditures. Endeavoring to maintain day to day plaza operations and traffic flow during any future construction and expansion will again create a significant resource and response problem for the PHPD.

Proposed additional lanes on I-96/I-69 for the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program for pre-approved commercial border crossings may require reconstruction of the Water Street interchange, an extra freeway lane between the plaza and the I-94/I-69 interchange and a 3-lane on-ramp to the plaza. The PHPD has serious concerns about our ability to quickly access the proposed secured lanes within our jurisdiction during emergencies and serious accidents which occur during inclement weather, American and Canadian holidays, and heavy traffic.

Alternative #2 - Expansion mostly at-grade; only ramps elevated

- Pine Grove Avenue relocated between Scott Avenue and Hancock Street and joined with 10th Avenue to allow space for the expanded at-grade plaza.
- Elmwood Street, Harker Street, and Mansfield Street closed west of the new combined segment.
- 11th Avenue and 12th Avenue closed north of Scott Avenue.
- Church Street terminated east of Pine Grove Avenue with a cul-de-sac.

Port Huron is a long and narrow City. If the Plaza is enlarged under Alternative #1 or #2, it will create a significant constriction of traffic at the narrowest part of the City. Alternative #2 would cause the most traffic congestion because it would reduce our three major north-south major corridors to two at the narrowest area of the City and would significantly increase traffic in contiguous residential neighborhoods. It would also lower the plaza activity to ground level. Under Alternatives 1 & 2, as traffic volumes expand, we envision that more passenger vehicles and trucks will be stopping for secondary inspection. The complaints to the Port Huron Police Department will increase because of the noise, exhaust fumes and the increased presence of hazardous and radioactive materials. It will be extremely difficult to operate the plaza during construction. As a result, the Police Department is concerned that a significant amount of traffic to and from the bridge will travel and be routed through residential neighborhoods during a prolonged construction period.

Again, increased traffic flow volumes, accidents and massive traffic jams on our City streets during the construction of the first Blue Water Bridge Plaza were well documented. They constituted a continuing, serious and costly problem for the Port Huron Police Department (PHPD). On many occasions, the traffic jams necessitated point control direction which caused significant overtime expenditures. Endeavoring to maintain plaza operations and traffic flow during any future construction will create significant resource and response problems for the Port Huron Police Department.

Proposed additional lanes on I-96/I-69 for the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program for pre-approved commercial border crossings may require reconstruction of the Water Street interchange, an extra freeway lane between the plaza and the I-94/I-69 interchange and a 3-lane on-ramp to the plaza. The PHPD has serious concerns about our ability to quickly access secured lanes within our jurisdiction during emergencies and serious accidents which occur during inclement weather, American and Canadian holidays, and heavy traffic. From a police response perspective, the no action/no build alternative and Alternatives #1 and #2 will continue to present a variety of access, traffic flow and hazard problems.

Alternative #3 - Relocation of major plaza functions to an off-site plaza (located in the County out of our police jurisdiction) west of the Lapeer Connector exit.

- Harker Street closed west of Pine Grove Avenue.
- 11th Avenue and 12th Avenue closed north of Mansfield Avenue.
- New intersection at the Lapeer/I-94/I-69 interchange.
- Secure lanes to the relocated plaza on the existing I-94/I-69 alignment. Barrier walls would be provided to ensure security. Twelve-foot (12') shoulders are proposed along the same route.

From an emergency police response perspective, a significant concern regarding Alternative #3 is "secure lanes to the relocated plaza — with barrier walls." In locations where there are high vertical barrier walls (I-696 and M-59), flammable and hazardous substances are prohibited. Hazardous and radioactive material regularly travel the expressway to and from the Blue Water Bridge Plaza and the Bridges on a daily basis. Endeavoring to provide immediate emergency response (within our police jurisdiction) under Alternative #3 during inclement weather, American and Canadian holidays and heavy traffic could present serious challenges.

Given the volume and variety of calls for service the Port Huron Police Department presently responds to at the existing Bridge Plaza, calls for police emergency service at an off-site plaza will not diminish. Outside our police jurisdiction, police resources are not as concentrated or as quickly and

readily available as within City limits. Under St. Clair County Mutual Aid, the Port Huron Police Department will still be requested and will to respond to assist the St. Clair County Sheriff Department during serious emergencies.

As previously stated, we have concerns with Alternative #3 which has "secure lanes to the relocated Plaza – with barrier walls." We would like to request that during the design phase of alternative #3, consideration be given to the following:

1. Accessible ingress and egress locations for emergency vehicles.
2. Accessible ingress and egress locations for vehicle drivers and passengers who may have to abandon their vehicles because of a fire or hazardous material emergency.

If the above listed concerns are addressed, Alternative #3 would be the least disruptive and problematic for Port Huron Police Department delivery of emergency response.

Finally, we must address the Homeland Security aspects of all three suggested alternatives. On May 13 and 14, 2004, Homeland Security experts and City of Port Huron first responders conducted buffer zone planning to assess the vulnerability of the Blue Water Bridges and Plaza. We considered the criticality, accessibility, and vulnerability of the bridges, plaza and connecting roadways. We physically viewed those critical assets, evaluated interior and exterior security measures and conducted in-depth interviews with "first responders" and "first preventers."

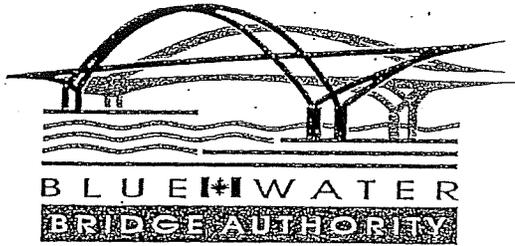
We identified specific threats and vulnerabilities within the buffer zone and defined a buffer zone outside the security perimeter of the Blue Water Bridges and the Plaza. The security measures which we jointly identified provided us with information to devalue the target. The Homeland Security experts were extremely knowledgeable about analysis and infrastructure protection. They provided extremely valuable information on how to better detect aggressors and how to better defend against them and hazardous devices or equipment.

It was obvious from our lengthy discussions with them that our law enforcement protection duties to the above Bridges and the Plaza are significantly expanded because of our Homeland Security responsibilities. As Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge stated before a Senate Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing on February 9, 2004, "*Port Huron was an extraordinary example where we had a small community that had critical infrastructure around it and in it. And yet, I don't believe they qualified, either place, for any additional (grant) dollars.*"

We have carefully evaluated the alternatives you have proposed. Based on our day to day experience, we have outlined the potential major impacts on our police response services. I would like to reiterate that we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to evaluate all the alternatives and to provide our input. Please be assured that we will assist you in any way that we can in future discussions, evaluations or studies. We look forward to reviewing future detailed design alternatives which address the concerns we have outlined. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely,


Chief William J. Corbett



September 2, 2004

Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 W. Ottawa
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI
48909

Attention: Ms. Gloria Jeff, Director

Re: Blue Water Bridge U.S. Plaza Study

As a stakeholder in the Blue Water Bridge Gateway U.S. Plaza Study, the Blue Water Bridge Authority (BWBA) offers this letter of continued support for the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) efforts to address the transportation needs of this important border crossing.

MDOT's study to provide an expansion of the U.S. Plaza is vital to the sustainability of the regional transportation network at this international gateway. Improving the U.S. Plaza will enhance the safety of the general public, efficiency of transportation travel time, fuel efficiency, and regional economic connectivity at this border crossing. Additionally, the improvements to the Blue Water Bridge Gateway U.S. Plaza envisioned by MDOT are consistent with the regionally stated goals in the *Canadian-United States-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership Study* and can be viewed as an essential short term step in enhancing border crossing capacity on the Ontario/Michigan frontier.

Following the third U.S. Plaza Study public meeting, the BWBA offered to MDOT, as part of the public record, a detailed report identifying the Authority's pertinent issues pertaining to the three alternative plaza designs outlined at the June 2004 meeting. In this record, the BWBA identified Alternative 3, which is the extension of the Plaza to a location westerly of the existing plaza, as the alternative that best addresses the Authority's needs and concerns. The extension of the Plaza moves the border activities to a location that allows for the area necessary to address inspection facility and traffic queuing needs. Alternatives 1 and 2 also provide for vital plaza expansions at the location of the existing plaza. These two alternatives, however, do not provide the same level of effectiveness as Alternative 3.

DOUG KEDDY
Chairman
Président du conseil

JIMMY PHAIR
Vice-Chairman
Vice-président du conseil

LIZ KENNY
Commissioner/Secretary
Commissaire/Adjointe administratif

DON MacNEILL, Bsc., D.D.S.
Commissioner
Commissaire

DAN M. ELASH, P.Eng., C.I.M.
President & CEO
Président - directeur général

The No Build Alternative, which is carried forward as part of the U.S. environmental impact study protocol, does not address the study's project purpose and need on a number of levels, including addressing future traffic volumes, queuing conditions, and inspection requirements. The Authority believes that the No Build alternative is not an option given the public safety and congestion issues that exist today at the gateway.

Specifically, the Authority believes Alternative 3 offers the following advantages as pertains to addressing the needs of the BWBA:

Best capability to address immediate traffic demands and projected traffic increases

- by providing the largest plaza area of the three build alternatives;
- by providing traffic management for designated primary processing for FAST/NEXUS and potential for future priority processing initiatives;
- by providing future expansion capabilities in a location removed from dense residential and commercial developments.

Best vehicular queuing capacity

- by providing increased spacing between the two Plazas (Canadian and U.S.) from 1.5 miles to 3 miles to allow for driver decision, FAST/NEXUS;
- by providing a larger plaza area and plaza approach area necessary to adequately queue, store, segregate, and process traffic through primary and secondary inspections.

Best potential for eliminating traffic back ups on Canadian Highway 402

- by increasing the westbound vehicular queuing length between the U.S. Plaza and the Canadian plaza from 1.5 miles to 3.0 miles;
- by providing a larger plaza area and plaza approach necessary to queue, store, and process primary and secondary inspection needs of in-bound Canadian traffic to the United States;
- by providing improved accessibility for expedited vehicles to access the FAST/NEXUS dedicated primary processing lanes.

Least disruptive during construction

- by allowing for the full construction of the new plaza with minimal disruption of overall border traffic flow during the construction operations.

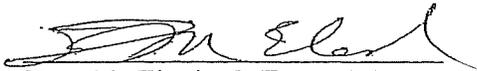
Alternatives 1 and 2 also provide many of the above border crossing improvements, but not as effectively, however, as Alternative 3 from the viewpoint of the Authority. Most noteworthy is the increased spacing between the U.S. Plaza and the Canadian Plaza that increases substantially with Alternative 3. Alternatives 1 and 2 provide no increase in spacing, and subsequent queuing area between the two border facilities. The increase in plaza spatial area including vehicular queuing capabilities and increased accessibility to FAST/NEXUS lanes further increases the potential efficiency and effectiveness of Alternative 3 over the other build alternatives.

Not specifically connected to the immediate concerns or operations of BWBA, but certainly important to the feasibility and practicality of Alternative 3, are several additional issues related to community planning and engineering impacts. Alternatives 1 and 2 involve expansions and modifications of the existing plaza located in a densely developed area of Port Huron. The commercial and residential impacts of Alternatives 1 and 2 are expected to be substantial. Alternative 3 is located on land that is currently undeveloped. Consequently, Alternative 3 has significantly fewer community impacts.

Additionally, preliminary construction cost estimates have identified that the Alternative 3 plaza design, built at-grade on a new site would have subsequently lower construction costs than Alternatives 1 and 2. The cost factor certainly has some real world relevance in the evaluation of the most reasonable alternative to be undertaken by MDOT.

The Authority understands that the U.S. Plaza Study is currently advancing through engineering and environmental analyses with a goal of a final alternative selection later this year. Pertinent to the completion of the environmental documentation is the identification of the preferred build alternative. We trust that the support and documentation we provide herein clearly identifies the BWBA's position in favor of Alternative 3. We thank you for the opportunity to be part of the planning process for the U.S. Plaza Study and look forward to continued progress on this important project.

Yours truly,



Dan M. Elash, P.Eng., C.I.M.
President/CEO

DME:sh

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

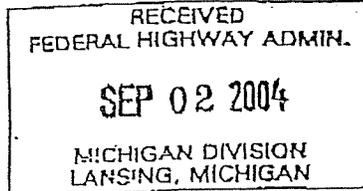
United States
Coast Guard



Commander (obr)
Ninth Coast Guard District
1240 E. Ninth Street, Room 2019
Cleveland, OH 44199-2060

Phone: (216) 902-8084
FAX: (216) 902-6088

16590
B-087/rwb
30 August 2004



Mr. Abdelmoez A. Abdalla
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration
Michigan Division
Room 201
315 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Mr. Abdalla:

This refers to your letter of 16 August 2004 concerning the Proposed Blue Water Bridge Study, St. Clair County, Michigan.

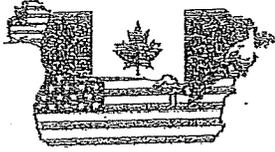
As initially proposed, the project was to address expansion only of the service plaza for the Blue Water Bridge and accordingly would not have required our involvement. However, now that the study includes the addition of traffic lanes to the Military Street Bridge across the Black River, we definitely will have an interest in the project since the proposal will require a permit from the Coast Guard. Accordingly, the Coast Guard definitely will be a cooperating agency for the study and any subsequent actions.

Our involvement during the process will be to address navigation as relates to the required clearances to minimize impacts upon vessel movements and we will do so in a timely manner. We will attend coordination meetings as necessary to assist in the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Bloom, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

ROBERT W. BLOOM, JR.
Chief, Bridge Branch
By direction of Commander,
Ninth Coast Guard District



Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance

P. O. Box 929 Lewiston, New York 14092 Tel./Fax (716) 754-8824 Email: canambta@aol.com
Website: www.canambta.org

James D. Phillips
President & CEO

September 8, 2004

Mr. Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Kris,

We applaud Michigan DOT taking the initiative, as a priority, to optimize the traffic pattern, safety and efficiency of the U.S. Plaza of the Blue Water Bridge.

The Bridge Authority and its partners had the foresight to undertake the twinning of the bridge in the proper time frame to now be able to have on line the capability to facilitate the implementation of a number of cutting edge initiatives being rolled out and planned under the Canada/U.S. Smart Border Declaration and Plan. The U.S. Plaza reconfiguration is an essential remaining need and you are acting to provide the solution.

The reality of the current serious negative ramifications of the present U.S. Plaza make the rejection of the required consideration of the no build option an absolute necessity.

Of the 3 build options under consideration, Alternative 3 clearly reflects the achievement of your objectives with the least disruption during construction, has the lowest preliminary cost estimates and most importantly results in the most effective and efficient end product well into the future.

We urge your selection of Alternative 3 to be the design of the new U.S. Plaza for the Blue Water Bridge to insure its enhanced contribution to the economic vitality of the Canadian and United States economies.

Sincerely,

September 23, 2004

Mr. Z. Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan
48909

Dear Mr. Wisniewski:

RE: BLUE WATER BRIDGE U.S. PLAZA STUDY

On behalf of the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, I am writing to endorse the current Michigan Department of Transport's (MDOT) study for expansion of the Blue Water Bridge-U.S. Plaza.

The planned expansion is of paramount importance in alleviating the increasing congestion of commercial traffic at this strategic border crossing.

For your information, the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership is a public-private partnership with the mandate to provide direction and leadership to economic development in the Sarnia-Lambton region. In fulfilling this mandate, we work with our community partners to improve local infrastructure with the objective of creating regional competitive advantages that facilitate economic growth.

Alleviation of congestion at the Blue Water Bridge Gateway will eliminate a significant impediment to current and future economic growth, not only for our community but also for the entire Great Lakes Region.

With respect to the alternatives under consideration, our organization feels Alternative 3 – extension of the current plaza and construction of a new plaza west of the current location with access via a secure corridor – is the preferred course of action. It is my understanding that MDOT's initial analysis has identified this alternative as having minimal social, ecological and engineering impacts of the three under consideration.

If you have any questions with respect to this endorsement, please feel free to give me a call.

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership strongly supports this significant infrastructure project.

Yours truly,



Mike Ireland
Senior Development Consultant

Copy – Dan M. Elash, President/CEO, Blue Water Bridge Authority

Mike Bradley
Mayor
City of Sarnia



255 N. Christina Street
Sarnia, Ontario, Canada N7T 7N2
Tel: (519) 332-0330 Ext. 312
Fax: (519) 332- 3995
mayor@city.sarnia.on.ca

September 24th, 2004

Mr. Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
LANSING, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Kris Wisniewski:

I am pleased to offer my support as Mayor of the City of Sarnia for the position taken by the Blue Water Bridge Authority and their support for Alternative 3 as a preferred option.

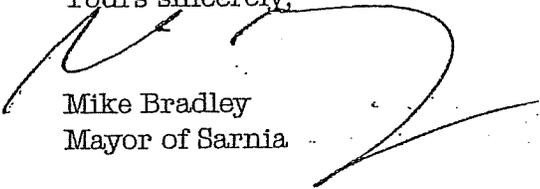
I have served as Mayor of the City of Sarnia since 1988 and have been extremely active in organizing Canadian border city Mayors in a number of issues related to funding, trade, tourism, etc., and have a deep interest in a solution on the U.S. side of the border in Port Huron that would be of mutual benefit to both communities and countries.

Alternative 3 offers the most efficient design for upgrading the plaza the safest and would be mutually beneficial to both countries.

I will not reiterate the merits of the alternative as I am sure you have received many representations including the Blue Water Bridge Authority. I simply want to add my strong support for Alternative 3 to complement the Blue Water Bridge Authority's position.

Thanking you in advance.

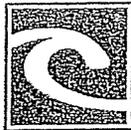
Yours sincerely,



Mike Bradley
Mayor of Sarnia

:jmoore

Copy: Mayor Dick Kirkland, Village of Point Edward
Mr. Dan Elash, President & CEO, Blue Water Bridge Authority



The Great Lakes Trade Corridor Association

PO Box 81111, Rochester, MI 48308-1111 • Voice Mail: (888) 796-4913 • Fax: (248) 928-0892 • www.gltca.org

September 24, 2004

Mr. Z. Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Blue Water Bridge U.S. Plaza Study

Dear Kris,

The Great Lakes Trade Corridor Association has, during the last three years, actively supported improved infrastructure along the Michigan frontier. One of the key elements of the Association's mission is to see more infrastructure dollars at the federal and state level be spent on the transportation links that tie the economies of Canada and the upper Midwest. The Blue Water Bridge Gateway is a critical link in this regional transportation network. The effort of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to expand the capacity of the U.S. Plaza is an essential investment in the economies of both nations.

The MDOT American Plaza study, designed to examine the potential effectiveness of an expanded U.S. Plaza, is vital to the sustainability of the regional transportation network at this international gateway. Improvement to the U.S. Plaza will enhance the safety of the general public, efficiency of transportation travel time, fuel efficiency, and regional economic connectivity at this border crossing. Additionally, the improvements to the Blue Water Bridge Gateway U.S. Plaza envisioned by MDOT are consistent with the stated goals in the *Canadian-United States-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Partnership Study* and can be viewed as an essential short term step in enhancing border crossing capacity on the Ontario/Michigan frontier. Expansion of the Blue Water Bridge Gateway capacity in no way removes the need for an additional crossing in the Detroit area.

The "No Build Alternative", which is carried forward as part of the U.S. environmental impact study protocol, does not address the purpose of the American Plaza study project on a number of levels, including the addressing of future traffic volumes,

Mr. Z. Kris Wisniewski
September 24, 2004
Page 2 of 2

queuing conditions, and inspection requirements. The GLTCA believes that the "No Build Alternative" is not an option given the public safety and congestion issues that exist today at the Blue Water Bridge gateway.

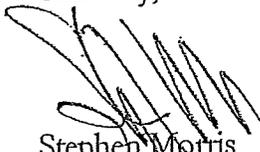
The GLTCA has had an opportunity to review the three alternatives presently under the consideration of MDOT. We would like to thank the State of Michigan and Wilbur Smith Consulting for providing us with this information. After reviewing these three alternatives, the GLTCA would like to go on record as supporting Alternative Three. We believe that Alternative Three provides the best combination of solutions to enhance the efficiency of the Blue Water Bridge gateway. The GLTCA is concerned about Alternatives One and Two because of the complications arising from the construction schedules of these alternatives and the resulting impact on trade.

Alternative Three reflects an innovative new approach to securing the U.S. borders without unduly restricting trade, making it unique among all options. Many of the unique design components reflected in alternative Three to meet the needs of U.S. inspection services cannot be incorporated into Alternatives One and Two because of footprint restrictions placed on these alternatives.

The GLTCA believes that the clock cannot be turned back when trying to evaluate these three alternatives. An apples-to-apples comparison cannot be done. The Association also believes that building an elevated plaza with a limited footprint builds in a degree of obsolesces that cannot be adjusted over time. We would encourage the State of Michigan to move forward in selecting Alternative Three as the preferred alternative.

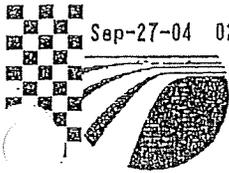
Thank you for your attention to this sentiment.

Sincerely,



Stephen Morris
Executive Director

cc: D. Elash



Sep-27-04 02:13pm From-ONTARIO TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

+4162456152

T-255 P.01/01 F-720

Ontario
Trucking
Association

Toronto, Ontario
M9W 1H8
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Fax (416) 245-6152
Email Address: info@ontruck.org
Internet Address: www.ontruck.org

Sent by Fax: 1 (517) 373-9255

September 27, 2004

Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist, Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa Street, P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: Support for Alternative 3 of U.S. Plaza Study

Dear Mr. Wisniewski:

The Blue Water Gateway is fastest growing cross border freight route. Recently, growth in commercial traffic at the Blue Water Bridge has outpaced all other major Ontario-U.S. crossings – a situation that is not expected to change anytime soon. In the next two decades the economic viability of both Michigan and Ontario will be heavily impacted by the ability to efficiently move goods across the border. OTA has carefully reviewed all three build proposals for upgrades and plaza reconstruction at the Blue Water Bridge and we would like to indicate to you our support for Alternative 3 -- extension of the plaza and construction of a new plaza that is accessible via a secure corridor, west of the current location. We support Alternative 3 for the following reasons:

- Enhances the Free and Secure Trade Program (FAST) by segregating pre-approved commercial traffic and ensuring unrestricted passage across the Blue Water Gateway.
- Provides significant expansion of plaza facilities which will increase processing capabilities and accommodate increases in commercial traffic volumes.
- Aids law enforcement agencies in making approach highways safer for all road users.
- Construction plan and schedule will have minimal impact to commercial traffic and trade flows.
- Eliminates current intermingling of commercial and passenger traffic on the bridge in order to reach primary inspection lanes.

OTA cannot emphasize enough the importance of significant infrastructure development at key Ontario-Michigan Border Crossings. Thank you for your efforts to make the Bluewater Gateway work more efficiently. Should you wish to discuss this matter further or any other border infrastructure issues please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

David H. Bradley
President

HB/km

C: Dan Elash, Blue Water Bridge Authority 1 (519) 336-7622



Village of
Point Edward

135 Kendall Street, Point Edward, Ontario N7V 4G6
Phone (519) 337-3021 • Fax (519) 337-5963

Celebrating 125 Years

September 27, 2004

Mr. Z. Kris Wisniewski
Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa Street
P. O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan
48909

Dear Mr. Wisniewski:

Re: Blue Water Bridge U. S. Plaza Study

The Village of Point Edward Council has now had the opportunity to review the four alternatives for the U. S. Plaza Study that were publicly unveiled by the Michigan Department of Transportation in June of 2004. The residents of the Village of Point Edward have been impacted directly from the increased traffic at the Blue Water Bridge, which has resulted in substantial traffic back-ups on Canadian Highway 402. The safety concerns include the difficulty in accessing Highway 402 because of the back-ups, the substantial increase in truck traffic and accidents as well as the environmental concerns resulting from the truck fumes.

The truck traffic has continued to increase during this year and there is no indication that there will be any reductions in the future -- in fact, it is our understanding that there are projected increases. Therefore, the Village of Point Edward strongly believes that a No Build alternative is not an option. The public safety and continued congestion that exists at this time require attention at the earliest possible date.

In reviewing the other three alternatives, the Village of Point Edward Council believes that Alternative 3 of your study would provide the quickest and most efficient resolution to the continued problems at the least cost. At the same time, it would have the least community impact and the least amount of additional disruption to the traffic during construction.

Cont'd.....

Specifically, Alternative 3 will deal with many of the ongoing concerns that the Village has regarding the present situation, including:

- It has the most favourable impact on the operations of the Canadian Plaza, which will assist in working towards a proper and acceptable flow of traffic. This will, in turn, reduce the present traffic back-ups that exist;
- As it provides the largest plaza area, there should be greater flexibility to manage the traffic including the processing of the FAST/NEXUS lanes, which will speed up the movement of traffic;
- It allows for future expansion in the event that traffic increases beyond projections;
- By extending the spacing between the Canadian and U.S. Plaza from 1.5 miles to 3 miles, it will allow for the necessary approach area to adequately queue, store, segregate and process traffic through inspections. This will also reduce traffic queuing on Highway 402.

In summary, the Village of Point Edward supports Alternative 3 of the Bridge Study and we feel that it is imperative that immediate action is required to facilitate acceptable and necessary changes for the safety of the public and our residents. We would like to thank you for taking the initiative to move through the engineering and environmental analysis to work towards a solution that will benefit everyone using the Bridge and to be least detrimental to the surrounding communities. Thank you for the opportunity to allow us to provide comments on your study and we hope that ongoing progress and action will continue on this important project.

Yours truly,



Peggy Cramp, B. Comm., AMCT
Chief Administrative Officer

/pc

c.c.: Dan M. Elash, P. Eng., C.I.M., President/CEO, Blue Water Bridge Authority



September 29, 2004

Kris Wisniewski
Federal Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Mi., USA 48909

556 Christina Street N.
Sarnia, ON N7T 5W6
Tel (519) 336-2400
Fax (519) 336-2085
info@sarnialambtonchamber.com
www.sarnialambtonchamber.com

Dear Mr. Wisniewski;

The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce has over 810 business members, employing more than 16,000 people in the Sarnia Lambton community. On behalf of our membership, the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and our Transportation Committee has provided comment and advice to many levels of government and groups concerning transportation issues impacting our community. We would like you to know that concerning the Blue Water Bridge U.S. Plaza Study, Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative of our Chamber.

Considering the information that has been presented to us, we believe that Alternative 3 is the most feasible plaza alternative and best meets the current and future needs of the border crossing shared by our countries for the following reasons.

Alternative 3:

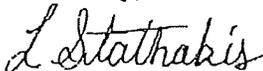
- Removes the truck and automobile weave from the bridge.
- Provides the largest plaza area to best meet the traffic demands and inspection facility needs.
- Provides the greatest future flexibility to accommodate changes in border processes or expansion due to unforeseeable traffic demands.
- Provides increased queuing space between the U.S. Plaza and the Canadian Plaza thus reducing the queuing onto adjacent highways and connecting roadways.
- Minimizes potential traffic impacts to connecting roadways.
- Provides better segregation of traffic into dedicated lanes for expedited processing programs such as FAST and NEXUS by increasing the distance between Plazas.
- Is the mid-range construction cost alternative and with fewer impacts to residential and commercial properties.
- Has minimal construction impact on the overall crossing during the one-and-a-half to two-year construction period.

The expansion of the U.S. Plaza will improve border-crossing efficiency by reducing the capacity constraints of the existing plaza and thus allowing for the increased utilization of the existing capacity potential of the six-lane gateway. Alternatives 1 and 2 provide for an expanded plaza, however, not to the extent provided in Alternative 3. Additionally, the No Build Alternative is not an option given the public safety and congestion issues that exist at the gateway today.

The Chamber of Commerce supports Alternative 3 as best serving the traffic demands and inspection needs of our international gateway thereby meeting the common goal of optimizing the operations of the border between Ontario and Michigan.

Should additional information become available, we would be most pleased to provide additional comment as to how it may affect our Chamber alternative preferences.

Sincerely;



Leo Stathakis
Chairman, Board of Directors



Garry McDonald
President



Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Caroline Di Cocco

MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT FOR
SARNIA-LAMBTON

October 4, 2004

Kris Wisniewski, Federal/Bi-national Policy Specialist
Bureau of Transportation Planning, Michigan Department of Transportation
Van Wagoner Building
425 West Ottawa St, PO Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Kris Wisniewski,

This letter is to offer my support as the Member of Provincial Parliament to your Department's Bluewater Bridge Plaza Study. As the M.P.P. for Sarnia-Lambton I have seen first hand the congestion and problems that have been created by long traffic line-ups at the Bridge. My office has received many inquiries on this subject and that is why I add my support to Alternative 3 for your consideration.

As I understand it Alternative 3 offers the following benefits:

- The most favourable impact on the operations of the Canadian Plaza and traffic flow on highway 402
- Provides the largest plaza area to best meet the traffic demands and inspection facility needs
- Provides the greatest future flexibility to accommodate changes in border processes or expansion due to unforeseeable traffic demands
- Provides increased queuing space between the U.S. Plaza and the Canadian Plaza thru reducing the queuing onto adjacent highways and roadways
- And also provides better segregation of traffic into dedicated lands for expedited processing programs such as FAST and Nexus

It is the opinion of the Bluewater Bridge Authority that this is the best alternative for all involved and I lend my full support to this alternative.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Caroline Di Cocco

Caroline Di Cocco, M.P.P.
Sarnia-Lambton

Constituency Office

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U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Michigan Division

315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, Michigan 48933

December 21, 2004

Mr. Gary Ragatz
International Border Facilities Manager
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
6026 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46268

Dear Mr. Ragatz:

Request to Become a Cooperating Agency
Proposed Blue Water Bridge Study, St. Clair County, Michigan

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is completing an environmental impact statement to study potential improvements to the United States Border Crossing Plaza at the Blue Water Bridge in St. Clair County, Michigan. I have enclosed copies of the Scoping information package, Purpose and Need Statement, and public information meeting brochure. These documents will provide you with more background about the proposed project, its purpose, and the framework of the analysis.

The purpose of this agreement is to establish a cooperative relationship to enhance communication and collaboration between the lead agencies and to obtain commitment for a timely and efficient process regarding key decisions and reviews for the preparation and approval of the environment document for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study. International border crossings are a high priority to the State of Michigan and the Federal Government. An improved and expanded plaza will provide more space for secure inspections and enforcement, will result in more efficient and effective border processing and provide enhanced safety, security, and economic health for the movement of people and goods at the Blue Water Bridge border crossing. The FHWA as the Federal Lead Agency and MDOT as a Joint Lead Agency, are pleased to work with DHS/CBP and GSA to expedite the approval process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to address capacity problems and enhance security at this Port of Entry and allow the progression of the project to design and construction.

With this letter, we request that your agency become a cooperating agency with the Federal Highway Administration in the development of an environmental impact statement for the subject project. As a cooperating agency, this environmental document will meet the needs of CBP, as well as FHWA.



We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project environmental impact statement should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Provide meaningful and early input on issues involved.
2. Participate in coordination meetings and joint field reviews with the Michigan Department of Transportation, our office, and/or other resource agencies as appropriate.
3. Timely review and comment on the pre-draft and/or pre-final environmental documents to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, the anticipated impacts, and needs. We request that the time period for these reviews be 30 days.
4. It is desirable that CBP provide concurrence on the following items for the study within 30 days of receipt of said items:
 - a. Purpose and Need for the proposed action
 - b. Selected Practical Alternatives
 - c. Preferred Alternative
5. A 15-day period for key decisions outside of the above listed concurrence points.
6. Cooperation with the Study Team in performing data collection/validation at the border station as it relates to border computer modeling efforts. The importance of accurate and up-to-date data is crucial in order for the Study Team to effectively model and size the proposed border station.

The Blue Water Bridge is the third busiest commercial land port of entry in the United States with over 1.7 million annual commercial crossings transporting \$32 billion in commercial goods between the U.S. and Canada. In addition, 3.7 million passenger vehicles crossed the bridge in 2003. Long delays of passenger and commercial vehicles are frequent occurrences at the bridge. These delays cause significant economic impacts to the U.S. and Michigan economies. The principle reason for these delays is that the current plaza does not have the space and flexibility to address immediate safety, security, and operational deficiencies. With commercial and passenger traffic expected to grow 150% and 70% respectively by 2030, capacity and security deficiencies need to be addressed in a timely fashion to meet our common goal to "enhance the security of our shared border while facilitating the legitimate flow of people and goods" as identified by the U.S.-Canada Smart Border Action Plan.

As part of this cooperating agency agreement, MDOT's area of responsibility, as the agent for the FHWA, includes:

1. Ensure that all cooperating agencies concerns and comments are addressed to the satisfaction of the cooperating and/or commenting agency.
2. As part of the document review process, all agency comments received will be shared with CBP to determine level of significance.

Procedures for addressing conflict resolution will follow DOT Order 5611.1A; U.S. Department of Transportation National Procedures for Elevating Highway and Transit Environmental Disputes (attached). The following individuals are identified as those responsible for resolving any dispute or conflict as a result of this project and will strive for a decision that will meet the common goal to enhance the security of our shared border while facilitating the legitimate flow of people and goods:

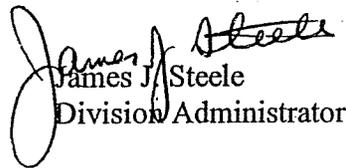
CBP Representative: Gary Ragatz, International Border Facilities Manager
FHWA Representative: James Steele, Michigan Division Administrator
MDOT Representative: Kirk Steudle, Chief Deputy Director

The agencies will notify the other representatives in writing should their representative be replaced or unable to participate in the resolution of the dispute.

Please inform us whether or not your agency agrees to become a cooperating agency on the proposed project. Your response should also indicate whether or not you agree with the above concepts of your involvement or any constraints, which your agency may have in participating as a cooperating agency.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support of this project.

Sincerely,


James J. Steele
Division Administrator

Enclosures

cc: Kevin Weeks, CBP
Robert Prause, CBP
Mary Walsh, GSA
Don Melcher, GSA
Kris Wisniewski, MDOT (B340)
Paul McAllister, MDOT (B340)
Todd Davis, Wilbur Smith, Lansing
A. Abdalla, FHWA