Urban Design & Global Aesthetics in Bridge Type Selection – Workshop & Bridge Tour – Meeting Minutes

Project: Central Viaduct  
Date: June 28, 2006  
Subject: Innerbelt Bridge Subcommittee  
Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm  
By: DJB/DAB/JWB  
Place: NOACA

Attendees:

(ODOT – D12)
Craig Hebebrand – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
Joseph Seif – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
Lora Hummer – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
Keri Welch – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
John Motl – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
Natalie Conley – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12
Dave Coyle – Ohio Department of Transportation – District 12

(ODOT – C.O.)
Scott Phinney – Ohio Department of Transportation – Central Office
Jeff Crace – Ohio Department of Transportation – Central Office
Kelly Brooker Scocco – Ohio Department of Transportation – Central Office
Tim Keller – Ohio Department of Transportation – Central Office

(City of Cleveland)
Bob Brown – City of Cleveland Planning Commission
Scott Frantz – City of Cleveland Planning Commission
Debbie Berry – City of Cleveland Planning Commission
Lillian Kuri – City of Cleveland Planning Commission

(Cuyahoga County)
Brendan Finn – Cuyahoga County Engineers Office
Paul Aisenas – Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

(Other Organizations)
Bill Beckenbach – Quadrangle
Thomas Starinsky – Historic Gateway and Warehouse District
Howard Maier – Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
Ron Eckner – Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
Richard Enty – Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
Terri Schwarz – Urban Design Center – Kent State
Hunter Morrison – Cuyahoga Community College
Joe Marinucci – Downtown Cleveland Alliance
Joy Johnson – Burten Bell Carr Development
Urban Design & Global Aesthetics in Bridge Type Selection – Workshop & Bridge Tour
Tim Tramble – Burten Bell Carr Development
Ed Hauser - Citizen

(*Michael Baker Jr., Inc. - Design Team*)
Bob Parker – Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
John Dietrick – Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
Laura Toole – Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
Daniel Baxter – Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

AGENDA
Welcome, Introductions & Today’s Goal……………………………8:00am – 9:30am

Bridge Tour*……………………………………………………………9:30am – 12:00pm

Working Lunch…………………………………………………………12:00pm – 1:00pm

Workshop………………………………………………………………1:00pm – 4:00pm

MORNING SESSION – TOUR ITINERARY

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<tr>
<td>NOACA</td>
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<td>Depart 9:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tremont Walking Tour</td>
<td>Scott Rosenstein &amp;</td>
<td>Arrive 9:45</td>
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<td>Michelle Davis</td>
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<td>Western Reserve Fire</td>
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<td>Museum</td>
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<td>Flats Walking Tour</td>
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<td>Jacob’s Field</td>
<td>Tom Starinsky / Jim Folk</td>
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AFTERNOON SESSION – MEETING MINUTES

- John Dietrick (*Michael Baker Jr., Inc.*) introduced the afternoon session:
  - We want to spend some time trying to come up with design guidelines.
  - The goal is to have some big picture guidelines by the end of the day.
  - Guidelines will make it easier to evaluate and come up with concepts.
  - The session should be as interactive as possible.

- Skip Smallridge (*Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge*) began the first facilitated discussion by noting that many people had told him that they had seen things during...
the morning bus tour of the project site that they had not noticed before. He asked for
general observations people had about the project.

- Lillian Kuri (City of Cleveland – Planning Commission) noted that three bridges will
  converge at Jacob’s Field, [the existing Central Viaduct, the new proposed bridge,
  and the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge]. She said that this presents an interesting opportunity
  if it is designed properly.

- Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that a one tower cable-stayed bridge
  with the pylon at the present location of the cold storage warehouse would appear
  skewed from Jacob’s Field. He said that another issue is the appearance of all of the
  columns of the approaches. The piers need to not look like a wall.

- A participant noted that the current alignment comes within 50-feet of the Norfolk
  Southern lift bridge towers, and that this will complicate the design.

- Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that it is true that the lift bridge tower
  will be close to the road, and that this can be modeled in dynamic drivers perspective
  drive-through renderings of the new bridge.

- Natalie Conley (Ohio Department of Transportation) asked what the out to out width
  of the proposed bridge was.

- John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) replied that the out to out width was 91-feet.

- Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that renderings from Canal Road of the
  new bridge are needed.

- Paul Alesenus (Cuyahoga County – Planning Commission) noted that there are very
  complicated viewshed issues:
  - We didn’t see the site of the new bridge from the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge
    during the bus tour. This is an important view.
  - There will be many other perspectives as well from which the new
    structure is seen.
  - We need a very sophisticated sense of how the structure will appear from
    many different perspectives.

- Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that renderings are being produced that
  will show the new bridge from different areas of Tremont. He indicated that Baker is
  in the process of producing lots of renderings showing massing. He suggested that the
  participants should mark rendering views that we should have on the aerial maps
  provided on each table.
• A participant suggested that interpretive plaques be placed at important views. The participant also noted that the lighting under the bridge is probably as important as the lighting on top of the bridge.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that there is a lot of support for under-bridge lighting.

• A participant asked if there would be superelevation on the bridge. The participant also remarked that he had not previously noticed that portions of the existing Central Viaduct Bridge were curved.

• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) replied that the curve on the bridge has a very large radius, so very little superelevation will be required on the new bridge.

• A participant noted that we’ve been concentrating on the portion of the bridge over the river, but that so much of what we see will be the portions of the bridge other than those over the river.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that there are many different possibilities for the approaches, such as constant depth box girders or haunched girders.

• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) noted that the high cost of a signature river crossing dictates that we need to be economical with the approaches. He also noted that we need consistent structure types for the main spans and approaches.

• A participant noted that lots of light currently is able to pass through the trusses of the existing Central Viaduct. New bridge piers that are not lined up with the existing bridge may block much of the light, and using deep girders for the approaches will also block light.

• Lillian Kuri (City of Cleveland – Planning Commission) stated that it will be very important to treat the existing Central Viaduct as part of this project:
  o The existing bridge should be cleaned up and painted.
  o The hodge-podge of additional elements that have been added to the existing bridge since its construction should be removed.
  o Integrated thinking that incorporates both the new and existing bridges needs to happen. This should be one design problem, and result in one design concept.
  o The existing bridge can serve as a frame for the new bridge.
• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) suggested that the construction of the new bridge together with the rehabilitation of the existing bridge may be an opportunity to show that Cleveland “does new” really well, but also “maintains its old” really well, and respects its history.

• Craig Hebebrand (Ohio Department of Transportation) noted that we can certainly think about options for the old bridge as part of the discussions for the design of the new bridge.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) said that these comments suggest a design principle: the old bridge needs to be brought up to the same level of quality as the new bridge, both as seen from Tremont and from underneath.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) also noted that he was hearing that the design should allow light under the approaches. The approaches should be clean, simple, and open.

• A participant stated that the cold storage building site provides a great opportunity for parks and open space.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) added that a viewshed from Tremont under the existing bridge will be opened up by the removal of the cold storage building.

• A participant noted that we need to carefully think through the future of the places at the approaches to the bridge, both at University Avenue and the Fire Museum:
  o The Towpath Trail will have a view near the University Inn restaurant.
  o We need to consider what the connection of Tremont will be with the Towpath Trail.
  o Using the new bridge project to knit together the Towpath Trail, Tremont, and pedestrian access to downtown across the existing bridge in an elegant way is as important a consideration as the design of the bridge pylon.

• A participant noted that there could be a use of the new structure to connect the towpath to Gateway and for pedestrians and bicyclists. Why not use the bridge to allow the city to make a connection that would be transformational for these neighborhoods?

• A participant stated that we need to make sure pedestrian access across the old bridge is part of the project plan.

• Ed Hauser (Citizen) stated that the committee needs to consider the future eastbound bridge as well:
• We need to consider how the future eastbound bridge will fit in with the proposed westbound structure.
• The costs, alignment, and looks of the future eastbound bridge should be considered.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that the design of the future eastbound bridge is not our charge, but that we can consider how to accommodate its construction as part of the design of the new westbound bridge.

• Ed Hauser (Citizen) stated that we need to know what the second bridge will look like.

• Craig Hebebrand (Ohio Department of Transportation) replied that we don’t need to know what the second bridge will look like. The future eastbound bridge will be constructed 50 years from now, and decisions about its appearance will be made by the next generation. Costs will likely be similar to the proposed westbound bridge, but they can’t be predicted that far in advance.

• Ed Hauser (Citizen) replied that we need to look at the feasibility of an eastbound bridge, and a new bridge for both directions of traffic.

• Tom Starinsky (Historic Gateway Neighborhood) replied that 50 years from now, people may come up with something very different from the design we will propose for the westbound bridge. He added that the alignments from the new westbound bridge already accommodate the addition of the future eastbound bridge.

• Tim Keller (Ohio Department of Transportation) added that a bridge for two-way traffic would be 200-feet wide. A bridge that wide is impractical, so it would be built as two parallel bridges, and the costs would be about double what they are for constructing the new westbound bridge.

• Laura Toole (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) suggested that we need to focus on design principles for the current alignment.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) added that it’s unknown what technology 50 years from now will be, so we can’t predict how the future eastbound bridge will be designed.

• A participant stated that we should not talk any more about alignment issues, and get back to discussing the design of the proposed westbound bridge.
• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked if the participants had any other comments.

• A participant replied that we need take the underside of the bridge at Abbey Road into consideration:
  o Many pedestrians use Abbey Road to access Ohio City.
  o The underside of the bridge needs to be lit well for safety.
  o The existing bridge together with the new bridge will create a long enclosed area for pedestrians to cross under, which will make pedestrians feel ill at ease if the bridge is not lighted properly.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that we’ll want open and clear sightlines for the bridge near Abbey Road, and that these considerations will impact pier placement.

• A participant noted that many pedestrians walk from Tremont along Abbey Road to Dave’s Supermarket in Ohio City.

• Lillian Kuri (City of Cleveland – Planning Commission) noted that the abutments and columns from the old Central Viaduct Bridge are cool, and made suggestions for preserving these structures:
  o Something cool could be done with the columns along the towpath trail.
  o The subcommittee, or Cleveland Public Art, should start thinking about what to do with the remnants of the old Central Viaduct Bridge.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked the participants if we want the approaches not to conflict with the other bridges. He asked if the approaches should be kept simple, and not constrained to mimic the existing bridges in their design.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked the participants why there were not more interpretive devices in the vicinity of the project site that explain the history of the valley.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked the participants to discuss the question of whether the bridge should be iconic, or reflective of a theme related to Cleveland.

• Laura Toole (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) added that both opinions, that the bridge should either be contemporary and not reflect Cleveland’s past, or that the bridge should make reference to Cleveland’s history in some way were voiced at the public meeting.

• A participant asked what some of the defining themes of Cleveland are.
Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that every city wrestles with this question, and that it is an abstract idea. He reiterated the question of how a bridge can encapsulate the fundamental characteristics of Cleveland.

A participant noted that the Lorain Carnegie Guardians of Traffic pylons capture the spirit of the city:
- Both Jacob’s Field and the Lorain Carnegie pylons are unique and symbolic.
- Jacob’s Field and the Lorain Carnegie pylons are reflective of the moment in time in which they were constructed.
- The Lorain Carnegie pylons show that Cleveland cared about design and aesthetics when they were conceived and constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Another participant remarked that the bridge design is an opportunity to add local character to the area:
- The bridge should be a reflection of Cleveland’s history and culture.
- The bridge should be distinguished from other structures on the Interstate system and appear unique.

Kelly Brooker Scocco (Ohio Department of Transportation) remarked that her favorite parts of Cleveland are the remnants of the city-beautiful movement near city hall.

Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) suggested that public investments in public spaces, and public structures have historically been seen as more important in Cleveland than in other cities.

A participant stated that the process of defining the bridge’s appearance should be about respecting the history of the area, while also thinking about what the dominant theme of Cleveland is today. The bridge should not be nostalgic, but should respect the past.

Another participant noted that the Zakim Bridge could be located anywhere, based on its appearance. The new bridge should be quintessentially Cleveland, and should not have a generic appearance.

Another participant remarked that we want a beautiful bridge. The design should look good when seen by motorists coming into town.
• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) added that motorists will only see the new bridge briefly from the distance when they are driving into town.

• Laura Toole (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) suggested that the experience entering Cleveland on the existing bridge should be as important as the experience leaving Cleveland on the new bridge.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) added that the views entering and leaving Cleveland will include the spires of churches in Tremont.

• A participant suggested that the bridge does not need to have a common theme and appearance from end to end. There could be up to three different themes: downtown, the valley, and Tremont.

• Natalie Conley (Ohio Department of Transportation) noted that details like railings and lighting will help set the bridge apart.

• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) asked the participants if they want people coming into Cleveland to say “wow” when looking at the bridge, and noted that this is an important question.

• A participant asked if the pylon will be as tall as the water tower at the top of the cold storage building.

• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) replied that the pylon could possibly be higher than the top of the water tower.

• A participant observed that incoming motorists will be focused on the structure, followed by downtown.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that the Zakim Bridge has become a phenomenon, but that there is nothing truly unique about it. He added that the dynamic experience of driving through it is more impressive than looking at it statically.

• A participant stated that one of the truly unique things about Cleveland is the valley. The bridge should not interfere with the view of the valley.

• Another participant said that the industrial valley is not attractive, and looks like a scar when seen from planes approaching Hopkins airport.
The participant added that deciding on a theme for the bridge will be difficult because:
  o Cleveland has a very traditional, manufacturing past.
  o Manufacturing is declining, so the character of the area will have to change.
  o We don’t really know yet where we’re going, and in what direction the character of the area is headed.

Paul Alusenus (*Cuyahoga County – Planning Commission*) remarked that the appearance of the bridge will be a community statement, and that in deciding on a statement, we should consider:
  o What are the megatrends that Cleveland will say it us being part of through this bridge?
  o What are we emerging as?
  o Bridges in Malaysia have a distinct identity, so what should a bridge in the Midwestern United States look like?
  o How can the bridge be placed in a local context?

Skip (*Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge*) discussed Daniel Burnham’s city planning concepts and ideas.

A participant discussed how the architecture of Jacob’s Field made use of context sensitive design:
  o Exposed steel, brick, and masonry are direct references to Tower City.
  o Engineering is expressed through technology, for example, by using steel coating techniques that were developed in Cleveland.
  o Bricks are a similar color as the bricks used in the Westside Market
  o As a result, Jacob’s Field is unique to Cleveland.

The participant added that the bridge should, like Jacob’s Field, reflect Cleveland:
  o Cleveland has a history of bridge engineering expressed in different ways throughout time.
  o The bridge should tell a story of this place.
  o The bridge should not be ungrounded in practical, engineering aesthetics.
  o The challenge is to use the engineering of our time to achieve these goals.

The participant gave some additional examples of recent designs in downtown Cleveland:
  o The new addition to the downtown public library speaks to the future.
  o The new library addition is a contemporary building, but has references to the past.
  o The addition to the Federal Reserve is consistent with the original building.
• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked if there was a consensus about whether the bridge should make reference to the past. [There did not seem to be a consensus among the participants].

• A participant observed that whether the bridge references the past or looks completely contemporary, the scale of the bridge is the important thing.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) replied that this raises two important questions: the scale of the bridge and its proximity to Tremont and the valley. The walls formed by the bridges and the sides of the valley will be punctuated by this new thing.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) discussed datum limes. He noted that the viaduct structure from Ontario to the river is a datum line, but across the river is where the signature portion of the structure likely will be, and that there are lots of different places to put towers.

• A participant noted that themes can be added later, and do not need to be part of a global decision about structure types.

• Another participant replied that questions of the structure’s footprint do impact the structure type.

• A participant remarked that the Old Central Viaduct remnants should be preserved.

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked the participants to consider an above deck structure versus a below deck structure. He asked if anyone in the group wanted to argue for keeping all of the structure below the deck. [No one in the group replied that they did want to keep all of the structure below the deck].

• Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) added that he gathered from the participant’s comments that the approaches should be as simple as possible, not mimic the neighboring bridges, let in light, and not obstruct light or views.

• A participant stated that the bridge should frame the views of the valley, and not obstruct them.

• John Dietrick (Michael Baker Jr., Inc.) noted that Dr. Menn thinks that any structural elements that stick up should be moved to the side of the valley.
Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) noted that moving structural elements closer to the side of the valley moves the signature portion of the span closer to Tremont, so there are tradeoffs.

A participant asked if the arches of the Detroit-Superior Bridge can be incorporated into something more modern and new.

A participant noted that we should look at the underside of the Detroit-Superior Bridge. It was designed from the ground up. It is delightful to experience up close or from far away.

Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) observed that bridge design is greatly about reduction.

A participant said that he is not suggesting we do the same thing as the Detroit-Superior Bridge today, but that we need to think about the underbelly of this bridge.

Ed Hauser (Citizen) stated that there needs to be a “wow” factor for the new bridge. He added that the bridge should also be economically sound.

A participant noted that the group appeared to be strongly in favor of the “wow” factor. [No one in the group disagreed with this statement].

Ed Hauser (Citizen) mentioned that the design should be environmentally friendly and incorporate solar and wind power. He added that the underside of the bridge also needs to be world-class.

Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) concluded by stating that the design team will write notes of the meeting and send the notes to the participants soon. He added that there will be another subcommittee meeting held on July 20.

Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) asked if there was anything more that people wanted to say. [There were no replies].

Skip (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge) reminded the participants to mark rendering views of the new structure that they would like to see on the aerial maps provided on each table.

MEETING ADJOURNED