

OCL Rethinking I-81 Study
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
University College
February 18, 2009

Present: Joe Ash, Phil Bousquet, Emanuel Carter, Bill Egloff, David Holder, Rebecca Livengood, Steve Kearney, Karen Kitney, Sarah McIlvain, Clyde Ohl, Donna O'Mahoney Rohde, Doug Sutherland, Sandra

Meeting Topics: 1) Review of I-81 Physical Impacts - Basic Facts draft; 2) Presentation by Emanuel Carter of work in progress on I-81/Almond Boulevard corridor land use planning.

1. The committee agreed that "Physical Conditions" would be a more appropriate heading of the Basic Facts section. It was agreed that the section should be edited and shortened, and that subheadings should be inserted. In discussing the significance of the emergency repair costs figure for the Gowanus Expressway, it came to light that I-81 is now under its own separate emergency repair contract, which is an indication of the number of unscheduled repairs jobs necessitated by aging infrastructure. It was agreed that inconvenience and safety considerations were as important as cost considerations in need to have timely decision on rebuild v. constant repair. (Redraft attached to email).

2. Emanuel presented background on urban context of discussion of I-81 corridor land use planning:

- structural change of local economy from industrial to eds and meds;
- signature employers in County located on University Hill need space for development, to 'stay ahead of the curve';
- too much empty space - as in parking lots and underutilized buildings - is bad for the urban core.

Examples of urban development in Philadelphia shown: densification (urbanization) within a context that includes a mix of uses and scales – low, mid, high-rise housing, campus and institutional uses. People who live in the area do not need to drive during the week, taking pressure off street grid.

Emanuel, student Jessi Lyons, and Doug Sutherland are working on drawings showing Almond Blvd from Adams to Erie; land use plan for area bounded by East Adams, Irving Ave, Erie Blvd, State Street. Work thus far shows expansion of campus scale and texture along Almond to Townsend. "Create addresses and attract and create population that will use those addresses", become a desirable place to go. No new streets are created, but some pedestrian "streets" are created through short blocks.

The committee agreed that the corridor plan will help to articulate goals, the reason for doing a boulevard alternative. The key is to help audience understand that there is potential, that this is a plan for 20-30 years out. Committee requested that the drawings be color-coded to show existing, and phase-in plan. It would also be useful to have the value and the tax values of investment projected. Suggested adding dedicated transit lanes, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, etc. to show getting people out of cars, reduced reliance on cars. Also, street-level view of key intersections (esp. East Adams and Almond), development parcels, before and after viaduct would be helpful to visualize impact of boulevard v. viaduct.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, February 25, 3:30 – 5 PM, University College