

OCL *Rethinking I-81* Study
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
University College
May 28, 2008

Present: Joseph Ash, Phil Bousquet, Chris Capella-Peters, Emmanuel Carter, Megan Costa, Carol Dwyer, Bill Egloff, Linda Henley, Steve Kearney, Karen Kitney, Rich Landerkin, Rebecca Livengood, Tony Malavenda, Sarah McIlvain, Donna O'Mahoney Rohde, Van Robinson, Doug Sutherland, Sandra Barrett, Rachel Pollack

Discussion:

"Journey to Work" Census tract data displayed to show "the commute" of those who work downtown and on the Hill. Data can help us answer the question "Do we know where employees live? How they arrive at work?"

Presentation of Draft/Table of Contents by Emmanuel Carter (To be used for Fall 2008 Project/Class). The Table of Contents document follows with added notations, meeting commentary in bullet style and alternate type. (Comments by Emmanuel Carter are in bold type, all in italics comments by other committee members.)

- **Document set up in a standard manner for this type of project: dealing with precedents, analyses, deciding on what the issues, opportunities and constraints are; moving on to development of goals and objectives and what criteria they will be held to; design, and conclusions. Part One can be partially done over the summer.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS, with comments:

ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE
Interstate 81 Design Alternatives Study
Fall, 2008 LSA 470/670 Thematic Studio in Urban Design
Draft Table of Contents for the Final Product

PART ONE: Precedents & Best Practices – Case Studies in Highway Demolition and Community Redevelopment (in terms of: length and type of highway dismantled; location of dismantled highway; quality of impacted area before and after highway demolition; implications for Syracuse, NY) – Graphics & Commentary

Milwaukee, WI
Denver, CO
Portland, OR
Cleveland, OH
Niagara Fall, NY
Montreal, QUE
Other Communities???

- **In terms of chosen case studies, primarily other "rustbelt, frostbelt" communities have been selected. (Sunbelt cities are not as useful examples.) Implications for Syracuse are of course speculative.**
- *In Seattle Mobility Plan, case studies included information about how each case*

- study/situation was similar and how each was different than Seattle.*

• *Suggested additional case studies might include San Francisco's Central Freeway, Vancouver, to show examples of cities where highways end at the city limits and traffic feeds into the city grid. Rather than bottlenecked traffic at freeway exits, traffic disperses on multiple city streets.*

PART TWO: Analysis of Interstate 81 Corridor's Physical Impact in Onondaga County (in terms of transportation roles, land use, land value, environmental quality, aesthetics, quality of life, community development, etc.) – Graphics & Commentary, Perhaps on a Mile by Mile Basis

North/South Impact Gradients (Rural-Suburban-Urban)

Detailed Urban Analysis (Neighborhood by Neighborhood)

Issues, Opportunities & Constraints

- **Suggestion of mile by mile analysis may be too comprehensive, but it is worth trying to look at the analysis on a gradient showing rural, suburban and urban surroundings in corridor.**
- **Graphics might include maps, photographs, photographs with overlays, perhaps maps showing how different parts of the corridor might be impacted. Other graphics can't be predicted, but will be those that make concepts understandable, and will be supplemented by what techniques are known to students working on the projects.**
- *High Impact photography through suggested use of local.live.com (similar to Google Earth, with more and better views)*

PART THREE: Development of Goals, Objectives & Criteria regarding any alteration of the Interstate 81 Corridor within the City of Syracuse Including, but not Limited to, the Following (commentary):

Goals (Objectives to be determined on a per goal basis): (1) Improvement of air quality; (2) Improvement of property values; (3) Re-knitting and improvement of urban neighborhood and district fabric; (4) Improvement of neighborhood and district quality of life; (5) Improved economic development and investment opportunities; (6) Increased desirability of the City and the County as a place to live; (7) More efficient and more beautiful urban and metropolitan structure; (8) Improved multi-modal, integrated circulation systems (including public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, parking and park/ride)

Criteria: (1) Environmental quality in terms of air, soil, water and biodiversity; (2) Economic quality in terms of property values, space for new development, opportunities for adaptive reuse, attractiveness to investors; (3) Social quality in terms of pride in community and place, spaces for public interaction; (4) Aesthetic quality in terms of beautiful components such as landscapes, buildings and streets; (5) Population equilibrium – end of population loss and beginning of population gain; (6) Diversity of opportunities in housing, education, employment, etc.; (7) Efficiency of circulation in terms of speed, ease of movement, parking, for all modes; (8) Sustainability in terms of efficient systems managed within acceptable levels of energy, materials, natural

resources, etc.; (8) Flexibility in terms of the ability of the system to change to meet foreseen and unforeseen needs ; (9) Impacts on access to Downtown, University Hill and Lakefront districts and the ability of those districts to flourish.

- **The meeting of goals is determined by how various criteria are met. E.g. It may not be enough to increase or reduce traffic in certain scenarios if in making it happen air quality is significantly reduced. (Some of criteria quantifiable, some subjective.)**
- *If air quality is being considered, re a change in roadway, perhaps what is happening to Onondaga Creek should be included. (Water pollution.)*
- *Is air quality consideration region-wide or at site?*

PART FOUR: Design & Routing Options

Option One: Rebuild Interstate 81 as an Elevated Highway on the Existing Corridor

Option Two: Rebuild Interstate 81 as a Ground-Level Arterial on the Existing Corridor

Option Three: Rebuild Interstate 81 as a Depressed Highway on the Existing Corridor

Option Four: Rebuild Interstate 81 as a Tunnel under the Existing Corridor

Option Five: Re-Route Interstate 81 on the I-481 Corridor and Redesign both Corridors to best Advantage

Each option would be illustrated with: (1) a County-scale location map; (2) a City-scale location map; (3) existing conditions graphics, and; (4) proposed conditions graphics. In addition there will be commentary on how each option meets the goals, objectives and criteria listed above, and what the implications are in terms of costs, strategies, results, etc.

- **Options 1-4 are meant to keep traffic on the corridor, just in a different configuration. Option 2, Erie Boulevard type of scenario.** *The roadway could be done as a ground level arterial and remain an interstate if access were controlled (for instance, no driveways.)*
- *Is option 2 viable? If the mission is to educate, it is acceptable to take the interstate to ground level and show what happens to the footprint.*
- *A high-traffic scenario similar to what is proposed in Option 2: A good example might be changes currently being made to Route 17 between Elmira and Corning. The roadway is being altered to be come an interstate.*
- *Suggestion of an altered interchange option such as work done on the Marquette Interchange Project. (Redesigned on and off ramps to take up less space.)*
- **Depressed Highway runs through a groove with short bridges across the top. (Philadelphia's Vine Street Extension.)**
- *Sewer lines, utility lines must be considered. (Infrastructure would have to be rerouted.) Sewer map must be obtained.*
- *Problem of grades to a depressed highway: you cannot exceed certain changes of elevation within a certain distance on an interstate.*
- *Need to show graphics of economic development opportunities along redesigned 81.*
- **Option 5 could include more than one version. It could show a version with high density zoning, maximization of revenue-bearing potential. Another version might**

show conversion to park space.

- *Need to show path of entry to city for suburbanites, reactivated grid being utilized by cars taking many different routes...*

Additional discussion:

- Scheduling of teleconference with Peter Park, city planner in Milwaukee at time of the tearing down of the Park East Freeway. (He is currently in Denver.) There will be an attempt to schedule the conference within the next few weeks. A group consisting of Sarah McIlvain, Doug Sutherland, Chris Capella-Peters and Emmanuel Carter, Rebecca Livengood will meet to develop questions for teleconference.
- Teleconference could be taped and put up on the web. It may be possible to find an editor for the material.
- Suggested use of video materials, Tom Brennan's presentation as well, for creating a presentation for the public.
- When deck was replaced on Liverpool interchange near Carousel Mall, and traffic was down to 30 mph, even though there were alternative routes, people stayed on 81. This may reflect a discomfort with travel on unknown roadways but may also reflect confusing routes on north side of City.
- With increased population and sprawl, is the assumption that there will be 40,000 less cars (estimated thru traffic) a fair one?
- Do we want to address the bigger picture in terms of transportation changes, should we look at rising cost of gasoline and its effect on transit?
- Should we document rising costs of commuting in some fashion?