

OCL *Rethinking I-81* Study
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
University College
October 29, 2008

Present: Phil Bousquet, Chris Capella-Peters, Emanuel Carter, Carol Dwyer, Steve Kearney, Rebecca Livengood, Clyde Ohi, Donna O'Mahoney Rohde, Steve Schroeder, Doug Sutherland, Ben Walsh, Sandra Barrett, Rachel Pollack

Sandra reported that Greg Munno of the Post Standard checked newspaper archives for articles regarding traffic issues during 1988-89 shutdown of I-81 (articles for April 11, day of shutdown, April 12th, gridlock) No reporting on traffic issues after that until October of that year. Sandra will research the topic.

Emanuel Carter discussed the studio project.

- Committee members seemed positively impressed with a particular graphic: One which simply showed existing conditions without the overlay of the highway. It showed how complete the grid appears.
- Discovery that the Highway could function in part from the North down to Center City, from the South up to as far as Brighton Avenue. Also noted changes that would need to be made to 690.
- First (presentation) view was diagrammatic. Second presentation view is figurative. This will be the final opportunity for input, looking at the road system, block arrangements, relocations of exits, and some assumption about how to get to University Hill, possibility of South Campus access. Four students working on projects.

Discussion:

Capacity, speed limits.

Did students look at Townsend Street, which is an anomaly to the grid? (Superblocks created there.)

South Campus: 3,000 parking spaces.

Roadway access to Skytop is limited, discussion of how South Campus might be accessed by 481, need for upgraded transit system.

University just completed South Campus master plan and part of that deals with South Campus becoming the entrance to University Hill.

Will students talk about land use patterns for each of the four alternatives and gross mass space? (Yes, the point is to show what is opened up and what is gained. with highways removed downtown works as one The farther north the greater the sense of potential linkage. There are some large swaths of land that could be connected.(for instance housing sandwiched between Salina and the Interstate (?the east side of Salina and State), short blocks there that are stable neighborhoods)

The Warehouse – OCL Presentation Recap:

Fairly successful presentation covered much ground. Greg Munno and others at the newspaper are very interested. Possible press coming out of OCL report.

Questions that did come up: If this will be a city street how are we going to maintain it? Issues such as health, environment, air quality, some of audience questioned whether these might be disregarded in decision-making process?

Discussion of Table of Contents

Executive Summary: Must enumerate issues that will be raised but not addressed within the study (not within our capability to assess all the issues.)

Physical Impacts of I-81: must look at plus or minus two blocks either side of the viaduct, quality of that environment poor, etc. Gathering this information might occur through a conversation among members with invitations to key people. (Could be addressed through committee session with developers; developers might also be invited to Studio presentation to gain their input.) (Could be an existing conditions drawing as part of Emanuel's Studio project.)

Structure Physical Impacts section: Looking at corridor, neighborhoods, regional area in section.

What's missing in terms of information? What should be done in committee and what should be done as outside research?

Suggestion for session on transportation funding. Phil Bousquet will organize a session.

Possibility of major employment generator as a huge public works initiative; this needs to be part of our discussion.

Conversely, if we present the study and don't consider the financial ramifications, people will say you have failed to consider this issue in a time of huge deficits and an devastated federal budget.

Two points: understanding the costs of the alternatives that will laid out is a completely different inquiry than understanding where the money will come from.

One piece that we need to look at: Under current law and under the current funding structure this is where money comes from; we need to state this many change as a result of the election or as a result of the fiscal condition of the country.

For cost, we might look at other case studies, comparing the costs in orders of magnitude of elevated construction and boulevard construction. (can be drawn from Seattle, cost of maintaining deteriorating viaduct vs reconstruction costs, etc.) questions regarding salvage costs, gaining access to cost analysis of alternatives in Seattle, other cities. Will the numbers provide accurate comparisons?; might be better to speak in terms of orders of magnitude.

Transportation funding should be addressed in first section of report.

Physical Impacts, should we have a DPW representative talk to the group?

Is Almond Street a city street? No, it is a state street, city does not control lights but does do plowing, maintenance. State one of primary landowners along sides of I-81 (not much land will be gained for development) but quality of land adjacent to viaduct is greatly improved.

Who will be included in developers session? Do we also at that same session examine the physical character of the land adjacent to the viaduct?

There has been no redevelopment of historic buildings along Townsend street. They have suffered from the physical impacts of the viaduct; conditions in and under the highway.

NEXT STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING: Wednesday, November 12, 3:30 – 5 PM, 307 UC

