

**Appendix M-6**  
**Public Hearing Transcripts**

**Part 1**

8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing

NEW YORK STATE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: August 17, 2021

TIME: 5:01 P.m. to 6:40 p.m.

LOCATION: ZOOM/C&S COMPANIES

449 Col. Eileen Collins Blvd.

Syracuse, NY 13212

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing

2 APPEARANCES:

3 BRODY SMITH, Moderator

4 AILEEN MAGUIRE, Host

5 DAMRIS SANTIAGO

6 MARK FRECHETTE

7 RICK MARQUIS

8 JARED GROSS

9 BEN WALSH

10 KEVIN MCCORMICK

11 KERRY MANNION

12 MARK TUCKER

13 LANESSA CHAPLIN

14 CYNTHIA BRIGHT

15 KEVIN TUCKER

16 DR. NATHAN RAYBECK

17 CHRIS SHENTON

18 PETER KING

19 MICHAEL STANTON

20 SCOTT MACFARLANE

21 GLORIA SAGE

22 CHRISTOPHER COLEBROOK

23 MICHAEL GALLAGHER

24 JACQUELINE LASONDE

25 ROBERT HALEY

DONALD DOERR

KATHLEEN KINSLAW

DEVON KINSMAN

CARMEN EMMI

LAURA MILLER

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2 MS. MAGUIRE: Good afternoon, and  
3 thank you for attending the I-81 Viaduct Project  
4 Public Hearing. This is Aileen Maguire, and I will  
5 be serving as the host for the virtual hearing.  
6 Prior to the presentation, I will go over some  
7 general information on how to participate in the  
8 virtual hearing. Today's event will be conducted in  
9 English. Interpretation is available for anyone who  
10 wishes to hear the event in Spanish.

11 To listen to interpretation on a  
12 computer, locate the globe icon along the bottom row  
13 of your Zoom screen, and select your language. If  
14 you are joining via the Zoom app on a mobile device,  
15 click 'More' on the three dots in the corner of your  
16 screen, select 'Language interpretation', and then  
17 choose your language and click 'Done'. These  
18 instructions will now be read in Spanish.

19 The hearing moderator will be  
20 facilitating the hearing. A formal presentation will  
21 be followed by oral testimony. Comments will be  
22 limited to three minutes, and speakers will be muted  
23 if they use inappropriate language. Substantive  
24 comments will be responded to in the final  
25 environmental impact statement.

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2 This hearing is being live streamed  
3 and recorded, and the official transcript of the  
4 hearing will become part of the project record. If  
5 you are watching the live stream and would like to  
6 comment, visit the project website at  
7 [www.i81.dot.newyork.gov](http://www.i81.dot.newyork.gov) to register and receive a  
8 link to join the hearing. I will now review the  
9 instructions on how to participate in the hearing.  
10 This is also available on the project website, and  
11 will be reviewed again at the start of the comment  
12 period. If you have questions about the webinar  
13 technology, use the chat box to send a message to the  
14 host and receive a written response. Do not send  
15 comments through the chat. They will not be included  
16 in the project record.

17 If you would like to comment, please  
18 use the raise hand function, or press star nine on  
19 your phone to alert the host that you would like to  
20 comment. On mobile devices, you may need to click  
21 the three dots to access more features. When you are  
22 called on to speak, the host will give you permission  
23 to unmute yourself so all participants can hear you.  
24 If you log in by computer or the Zoom app, you will  
25 receive a notification to unmute.

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2 Speaker icons are located in the top-  
3 left of Android and iOS devices. If you are dialing  
4 in by phone, when the moderator calls on you to  
5 speak, press star six to unmute. Press star six  
6 again to mute when you are done speaking. I will now  
7 turn over today's event to the hearing moderator,  
8 Brody Smith.

9 MR. SMITH: Good evening. On behalf  
10 of Marie Therese Dominguez, the Commissioner of the  
11 New York State Department of Transportation, and Rick  
12 Marquis, the Administrator for the Federal Highway  
13 Administration's New York Division, I welcome you to  
14 this I-81 Viaduct Project Public Hearing.

15 My name is Brody Smith, and I am  
16 serving as the moderator for this public hearing. A  
17 stenographer will record the proceedings of this  
18 meeting, and a verbatim written transcript will be  
19 prepared. I'm going to read an opening statement,  
20 which will be followed by a brief prerecorded  
21 presentation. When the presentation is finished, I  
22 will begin the moderated oral comment session. If  
23 you are watching the live stream and would like to  
24 provide a verbal comment, visit the project website  
25 at [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov) to register and receive a link

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2 to join the hearing.

3 The New York State Department of  
4 Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal  
5 Highway Administration, published a draft design  
6 report/draft environmental impact statement/draft  
7 section 4(f) evaluation for the I-81 Viaduct Project,  
8 on July 16, 2021. The project has been advanced in  
9 accordance with the requirements of the National  
10 Environmental Policy Act -- NEPA -- codified at 40  
11 C.F.R. parts 1500 through 1508, the F.H.W.A.  
12 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures final  
13 rule at 23 CFR part 771, and the New York State  
14 D.O.T. Procedures for Implementation of the State  
15 Environmental Quality Review Act, at 17 New York  
16 Codes Rules and Regulations, part fifteen, and in  
17 accordance with the provisions of Article Two of the  
18 New York State Eminent Domain Procedure Law.

19 The publication of the D.D.R.  
20 /D.E.I.S. began with the public comment period on the  
21 document, which will be extended until five p.m.  
22 Eastern Daylight Time, on September 14, 2021. This  
23 public hearing is being conducted to obtain comments  
24 on the project's D.D.R. and D.E.I.S., and the right-  
25 of-way acquisition process. The D.D.R. /D.E.I.S. is

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2 available for review at this hearing, on the  
3 project's website, at  
4 [www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities](http://www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities), and at libraries and  
5 other public facilities throughout Greater Syracuse.

6 The D.D.R. /D.E.I.S. describes the  
7 project, the consideration of social, economic and  
8 environmental effects that would result from the  
9 implementation of the project, and measures to  
10 mitigate adverse effects. The hearing provides the  
11 public an opportunity to make formal statements and  
12 positions before any project decisions are made.

13 The agencies will review and consider  
14 public comments submitted during the established  
15 sixty-day public comment period. Responses to the  
16 substantive comments will be included in the  
17 project's final design report/final environmental  
18 impact statement, or the F.D.R/F.E.I.S., which is  
19 anticipated to be published by the end of 2021.

20 MS. MAGUIRE: I'm just asking the  
21 moderator to pause for a moment while we work on some  
22 technical issues with the live stream. We will begin  
23 momentarily. I apologize for the delay. For those  
24 of you who are just logging in, we are just working  
25 on the live stream, and will start again momentarily.



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2 Again, we apologize for the delay while we work on  
3 the technical issues.

4 Again, we apologize for the delay as  
5 we work on the live stream. We will begin  
6 momentarily. We most likely will be continuing on  
7 while the live stream is being fixed, and we  
8 apologize to anyone that's participating in the live  
9 stream. It will be available as a recording  
10 following the hearing.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you for bearing with  
12 us. I'd now like to go over the additional ways that  
13 you can comment. In addition to comments made at the  
14 public hearing, comments will be accepted in the  
15 following ways. First, written comments sent via  
16 U.S. Mail to Mark Frechette, P.E., Project Director,  
17 New York State Department of Transportation, Region  
18 Three, 333 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New  
19 York, 13202, or Rick Marquis, Division Administrator,  
20 Federal Highway Administration, at the Leo W. O'Brien  
21 Federal Building, 11A Clinton Avenue, Suite 719,  
22 Albany, New York, 12207.

23 You can also comment through the use  
24 of the electronic comment form, via the project  
25 website, at [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov). You may also email

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2 comments to i81opportunities@dot.ny.gov, and finally  
3 you can provide comments through a telephone  
4 voicemail system, through the project hotline, at 1-  
5 855-I81-TALK. That's 855-481-8255.

6 Information on how to submit written  
7 comments is also outlined on the project website.  
8 You can elect to submit comments both orally, and in  
9 writing. Written statements will be given the same  
10 weight and consideration as oral statements made at  
11 the meeting. Again, New York State D.O.T. and the  
12 Federal Highway Administration will accept public  
13 comments until five p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, on  
14 September 14, 2021.

15 Before we begin accepting oral  
16 comments from participants, we will play a  
17 prerecorded presentation on the project. After the  
18 presentation, I will give you some instructions on  
19 how we plan to take your oral comments.

20 (Presentation playing)

21 MR. SMITH: I will now introduce  
22 representatives of the New York State D.O.T. and the  
23 Federal Highway Administration, who are in attendance  
24 for today's hearing. Mark Frechette, Project  
25 Director, New York State Department of

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2 Transportation, Rick Martee, Division -- I'm sorry,  
3 Rick Marquis, Division Administrator, Federal Highway  
4 Administration, Damaris Santiago, Deputy Director,  
5 New York Division, Federal Highway Administration,  
6 and Jared Gross, Area Engineer with Federal Highway  
7 Administration.

8 The panelists, hearing officer and  
9 A.S.L. interpreter will be visible on screen during  
10 the oral testimony. Although you may not see all the  
11 panelists on screen at one time, all the panelists  
12 will be listening to the testimony. My role as the  
13 hearing moderator is to provide members of the public  
14 an opportunity to provide comments in an organized,  
15 fair and professional manner.

16 The testimony is being recorded by a  
17 stenographer, so please state and spell your name,  
18 and identify any organization that you represent. To  
19 ensure all are heard, comments will be limited to  
20 three minutes after the introduction. There'll be a  
21 countdown clock on the screen, and I will provide a  
22 verbal warning when thirty seconds remain.

23 Agency representatives will not be  
24 answering questions or responding to comments during  
25 the hearing. Responses to substantive comments will

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 be included in the final design report/final  
3 environmental impact statement. If you are watching  
4 the live stream and would like to comment, visit the  
5 project website at [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov) to register and  
6 receive a link to join the hearing.

7 Before we begin the comment period,  
8 I'd like to recognize elected officials, or their  
9 representatives, who are in attendance. Those include  
10 Ben Walsh, the Mayor of the City of Syracuse, Rachel  
11 May, New York State Senator for District 53, Carnie  
12 David, Town of Salina Fourth Ward Councilor, Kevin  
13 McCormack, Town of Skaneateles Councilor, Kerry  
14 Mannion, Town of DeWitt Deputy Supervisor, Mark  
15 Tucker, Town of Skaneateles Councilor, and Courtney  
16 Alexander, Councilor for the Town of Skaneateles.

17 At this time, we would hear from those  
18 who wish to make oral statements. I remind you that  
19 if you would like to comment, please use the raise  
20 your hand function, or press star nine if  
21 participating by phone. In accordance with agency  
22 policy, elected and appointed officials will be given  
23 the first opportunity to speak. Others will be  
24 called to make their statements in the order they are  
25 listed in the queue.

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2 I will call two names at a time, so  
3 you are prepared when it is your turn to speak. I  
4 apologize in advance if I mispronounce any names.  
5 Our first speaker, or I should say our first two  
6 speakers, would be Lanessa Chaplin and Cynthia  
7 Bright.

8 MS. CHAPLIN: Hi, good afternoon.  
9 Very nice to see you. I apologize in advance. There  
10 is a thunderstorm going on, so I could be in and out  
11 of my service. First, I just want to thank Mark  
12 Frechette, and all of the hard work the New York  
13 State Department of Transportation has done on this  
14 plan. I think it's a great plan, and I really  
15 appreciate you guys ... My name is Lanessa Chaplin.  
16 I am the project councilor for the New York Civil  
17 Liberties Union, the A.C.L.U. I just have two  
18 comments at this time. I plan to make written  
19 comments in the near future.

20 My first comment would be, I would ask  
21 to expand the public comment period. I think because  
22 of the complexity of the pre-D.E.I.S., and in this  
23 current D.E.I.S., it takes a lot of time to kind of  
24 sift through those reports to see the substantial  
25 differences in the plans. And so I think it may

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2 require more than a few days, so I'd request an  
3 extension on that comment period.

4 And then my second point that I would  
5 like to highlight is the placement of the roundabout.  
6 While I generally agree that a roundabout does a  
7 great job calming traffic, in general I think the  
8 particular placement of the roundabout is an area of  
9 concern for our organization, considering the  
10 E.P.A -- the Environmental Protection Agency -- and  
11 the C.D.C. have all kind of put out guidelines on how  
12 in proximity to a school, since Dr. King School  
13 obviously is very close the roundabout.

14 So we would like to see one of two  
15 things. Either the roundabout be moved a safe  
16 distance, which is six hundred feet, and/or the  
17 school be mitigated, meaning that it's outfitted with  
18 the adequate ... systems to make sure that the air  
19 pollution is not impacting the children's ability to  
20 learn and function in school, and then also generally  
21 just safety issues of how close the roundabout will  
22 be. To my understanding, ... thirty-six thousand  
23 cars that travel through that roundabout each week,  
24 so it just meets that requirement of a major roadway.  
25 And at that time ...

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2 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Chaplin.

3 The next speaker will be Cynthia Bright. Following  
4 Cynthia Bright, will be Kevin Tucker.

5 MS. BRIGHT: Hi, my name is Cynthia  
6 Bright. I'm a resident of Skaneateles, and I want to  
7 thank you for this presentation and all the work that  
8 has gone into this project. Well, there's so many  
9 people. I guess my biggest concern, I feel that the  
10 plan -- this may be an error, but I've heard that the  
11 plan is for the many trucks that are trying to go  
12 west, that they will be diverted to westward  
13 locations, including Buffalo, Rochester, Seneca  
14 Falls -- that they would be encouraged to go east on  
15 the old 481, renamed 81, and get to the New York  
16 State Thruway. And I'm not so sure that that is  
17 going -- I don't have confidence that that's going to  
18 happen.

19 We already have an inordinate amount  
20 of trucks that pass through Route 20, coming either  
21 from Lafayette or Cortland. So I guess my concern is  
22 that that would be the intent, and I feel that it's  
23 not going to happen. And it's going to create even  
24 more problems than we already have, with so many  
25 trucks trying to go west, trying to travel through

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2 this small village along Route 20. That's what I  
3 have.

4 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Bright.  
5 The next speaker will be Nathan Raybeck, followed by  
6 Chris Shenton. I'd like to remind everyone to spell  
7 your name before you begin speaking, for the benefit  
8 of the stenographer.

9 DR. RAYBECK: Hi. I hope everybody  
10 can hear me. My name is Dr. Nathan Raybeck -- name  
11 is spelled N-A-T-H-A-N, R-A-Y-B-E-C-K - and I'm a  
12 resident of Syracuse. I thank the D.O.T. for this  
13 hearing, and for all its work to get the voices of  
14 the community to make this project the best it can  
15 be.

16 At the outset, I wish to make a  
17 comment on the focus of this project. This project  
18 should be about improving the lives of the people of  
19 Syracuse, specifically those who live in the  
20 footprint of the viaduct, and whose lives have been  
21 adversely impacted by the viaduct as it currently  
22 stands. The community grid is by far the best option  
23 for this, and this plan, and this plan alone,  
24 provides for immense improvement to our region.

25 That being said though, I think we can



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2 make it better. As others have said, we should work  
3 to narrow and sluice down the viaduct replacement,  
4 whether you call it Business Loop 81 or Almond  
5 Street. We should also look at moving the point at  
6 which the highway comes to ... further south, to  
7 better connect our city, allowing more residents the  
8 benefit of highway removal, and dispersing traffic  
9 away from the STEAM at Dr. King Elementary School.

10 In addition, the community should be  
11 given alternatives to the roundabout near the Dr.  
12 King and STEAM school, and have a specific process in  
13 which they can make comments on their preferred  
14 option. Further, I hope D.O.T. is looking at all the  
15 ways they can fund ancillary transportation movements  
16 that, at their heart, are intimately connected with  
17 this project, changing how folks get around the  
18 region, and improving the lives of people near the  
19 current viaduct. Specifically, I'm talking about the  
20 Bus Rapid Transit Project that has been proposed, and  
21 is a wonderful idea. However, other forms of  
22 multimodal transportation funding should be explored  
23 as well.

24 Finally, and it saddens me to have to  
25 say this, but I must make a comment on what some

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2 others have asked for today, in delaying the process  
3 here. As I watched the first part of the hearing, I  
4 could not help but notice that some of the largest  
5 financial interests in our region are claiming their  
6 voices are going unheard, and asking for an even  
7 further delay. The fact is, those interests have  
8 already delayed the process for years, mainly in  
9 pushing for and receiving yet another useless,  
10 publicly-funded ... telling us the tunnel option was  
11 unfeasible, which we already knew.

12 I find it the most grotesque form of  
13 hubris that what appears to be a currently failing  
14 mall, with its entourage of highly-paid lobbyists,  
15 and after years of exclusive access to public  
16 officials, believe that they can demand complete  
17 domination of this process, and issue the final say  
18 in a public decision, at the expense of the community  
19 of people who actually live here. I urge the D.O.T.  
20 to ignore these disingenuous attempts, like yet  
21 another disastrously unfeasible sky bridge idea. As  
22 you continue on the --

23 MR. SMITH: Mr. Raybeck, your time has  
24 expired. I'd ask you to finish your thought, please.  
25 Thank you, sir. Apologies for interrupting. The

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2 next speaker I have on my list is Chris Shenton. I  
3 would remind everyone, if you wish to speak, please  
4 use the raise your hand function on Zoom. Or if  
5 you're participating by phone, please press star  
6 nine. The next speaker is Chris Shenton.

7 MR. SHENTON: Hi, my name is Chris  
8 Shenton. It's spelled C-H-R-I-S, S-H-E-N-T-O-N. I'm  
9 a recent graduate of New York University School of  
10 Law. I've worked on community advocacy surrounding  
11 the I-81 Project during my time at the law school  
12 there. I want to call attention today to a larger  
13 framework in which we interpret the project. To call  
14 upon the State Department of Transportation and the  
15 Federal Highway Administration, make addressing the  
16 I-81's history of racial exclusion a central  
17 component of the project in redeveloping the I-81  
18 Viaduct.

19 The original I-81 Project was  
20 emblematic of a long nationwide campaign to displace  
21 and destroy minority neighborhoods through urban  
22 highway redevelopment, for the purpose of  
23 restructuring towns and communities for the benefit  
24 of their white residents, and potentially isolating  
25 and excluding residents of color whose homes are

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2 being destroyed in that process. This history is  
3 explicit, and its effects are ongoing, and that is  
4 just as true with I-81 in Syracuse today.

5 I-81's original construction was  
6 precisely calibrated for the destruction of black  
7 neighborhoods in Syracuse, with local, state and  
8 federal government officials working explicitly  
9 towards the goal of segregation. Syracuse  
10 stakeholders wanted to bring a highway project to the  
11 city's central business district, which would hark in  
12 new economic benefits for the area. But the city was  
13 having trouble funding the contribution under the  
14 matching federal grant program -- a tale as old as  
15 time.

16 Unfortunately, enter into this  
17 equation urban renewal. The City Planning Commission  
18 proposed using urban renewal to solve the, quote-  
19 unquote, ... problem of funding the highway project.  
20 By using urban renewal grants, the city would be able  
21 to obtain deep discounts on the city's share of the  
22 project expense. Yet far from worrying about  
23 appearances or substantive outcomes for Syracuse  
24 black residents, Syracuse leaders used urban renewal  
25 as a way to deliver their desired project, on their

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2 desired budget.

3 The Syracuse Common Council, a  
4 succession of mayors, the City Planning Commission  
5 and the federal government, all explicitly endorsed  
6 using the highway project for what they referred to  
7 as slum clearance and ... removal. This language was  
8 well understood at the time as racist, yet the  
9 project barreled forward. None of the parties  
10 involved in the construction made an effort to hide  
11 what they were doing.

12 This history is not disputing the  
13 overarching goal was to remove black residents while  
14 enabling an economic development of the Central  
15 Business District, leveraging available funding  
16 streams without regard for the consequences on  
17 Syracuse's black community. If that resulted in  
18 increased displacement of residential segregation,  
19 well, that was just fine. I know that everyone here  
20 is well-aware of this, but I can only wonder where  
21 those facts are present in the draft E.I.S.

22 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

23 MR. SHENTON: The D.E.I.S. does not  
24 make more than a cursory attempt to reckon with this  
25 history of discrimination, a history that has

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2 continued all the way up to the present day, and  
3 continues to make its presence felt. The project, as  
4 constituted, does not take this history into account  
5 nearly enough, and by failing to fully consider the  
6 risk of displacement and environmental impacts on  
7 neighborhood residents, would perpetuate I-81's  
8 original sin.

9 The ultimate concern I wish to  
10 highlight in this hearing today, is the extent to  
11 which the redevelopment project fails to reckon with  
12 this history of racial exclusion, and I call on the  
13 State Department of Transportation and the Federal  
14 Highway Administration to do more to address this as  
15 the project moves forward. Thank you for your time.

16 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Shenton.  
17 At this time, we've completed the list of speakers  
18 that have signed up to speak during this session.  
19 And I'd like to pause for a few minutes to give  
20 anybody else a chance, who wishes to speak, to call  
21 in, or raise your hand using the Zoom function.

22 We'll pause for a few minutes to give  
23 anybody else who wants to, the opportunity to speak.  
24 I see two more people. No, pardon me. We're still  
25 waiting for more people to sign up. We've had a

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2 couple more people sign up to speak. Next will be  
3 Peter King. Following Peter King, will be Michael  
4 Stanton. Mr. King, can you hear me?

5 MR. KING: Can you hear me now?

6 MR. SMITH: I can hear you.

7 MR. KING: Okay. I can hear a bit of  
8 an echo, but I'll continue. I spoke this morning,  
9 representing two different groups, or speaking from  
10 my experience in two different groups in these  
11 comments. Well, this morning I outlined some  
12 possibly novel perspectives on public health  
13 concerns, like air quality, which other people are  
14 mentioning, and traffic safety. In this comment, I  
15 am suggesting a positive overarching vision for  
16 public health on the 81 Project, in ways which craft  
17 positive economic implications for Syracuse  
18 residents.

19 So far, there are many interesting  
20 initiatives suggested and created by community  
21 members, about improving air quality and urban  
22 quality on one hand, and then job potentials from the  
23 project on the other. But what so far seems an  
24 unstated potential is combining these concerns  
25 holistically. For example, D.O.T. is already

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2 proposing some design measures with beneficial  
3 impacts on public health. D.O.T.'s proposed  
4 improvements on walking, bicycling, wheeling, and  
5 other non-vehicular transport modes, would also  
6 improve public health outcomes, especially in the  
7 city.

8 Existing data supports taking that  
9 approach here, and D.O.T.'s current design, it does  
10 include some new innovative features. But as other  
11 people are asking, I suggest D.O.T. incorporate  
12 public transit in a serious way, which would also  
13 promote reducing personal vehicular traffic when not  
14 necessary, and would improve -- if extended through  
15 the entire region, would improve health and safety  
16 for all.

17 However, one of the large challenges  
18 for a city so impacted by environmental justices, is  
19 balancing some needed improvements from the harms  
20 inflicted on one hand, by infrastructure, with the  
21 potential harms from making these improvements on the  
22 other. Let me explain this. When you introduce any  
23 amenity, like green trees, walking trails, new  
24 enhanced public spaces, and even new bus lines, these  
25 can all have an unintended deleterious effect by



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2 gentrifying neighborhoods, which is sometimes called  
3 green gentrification.

4 One way for resolving some of these  
5 green gentrification issues is by -- and generating  
6 new local jobs, is by educating, training and hiring  
7 city residents in new jobs, in these new realms like  
8 driving better buses, planting trees, new green  
9 infrastructure, and so on. And furthermore, I  
10 suggest that the public health plan needs to --

11 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

12 MR. KING: -- D.O.T.'s land use  
13 working group process, which would place the planning  
14 into the city's hands after the project. So I think  
15 that these combined could make just another way of  
16 looking at the whole public health question. Thank  
17 you very much.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. King. Next  
19 up to speak is Michael Stanton. Please state and  
20 spell your name, prior to giving your comments.

21 MR. STANTON: My name is Mike Stanton,  
22 S-T-A-N-T-O-N. I live in the city, near Syracuse  
23 University. I strongly support the community grid  
24 option. I-81 never should have been routed through  
25 the city. The community grid option will finally

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2 remove this negative influence. I do have a few  
3 recommendations, however. I suggest that speeds on  
4 Almond Street be lowered to city speed. Well below  
5 Martin Luther King Boulevard, perhaps a second  
6 roundabout a block or two south of Martin Luther  
7 King, that would reduce traffic speed at that point.

8 I suggest that Almond Street through  
9 the city be revised from a highway design to one more  
10 like a city street. That means narrowing lanes from  
11 twelve feet down to ten or eleven feet, and also it  
12 means reducing the turning radius at Almond Street  
13 intersections. Almond Street now looks more like a  
14 highway than a city street. This would make it safer  
15 for pedestrians, and for cyclists.

16 I'd also suggest that the parameter of  
17 Almond Street, including landscaping, be adjusted to  
18 maximize the amount of land that can be returned for  
19 development. This would offer an opportunity to  
20 start rebuilding the wasteland that is the center of  
21 the city ... by the interstate. Finally, let's not  
22 delay this project any further. Time to move  
23 forward. Thank you for your time.

24 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Stanton. I  
25 have next up to speak, Scott MacFarlane. Before Mr.

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2 MacFarlane speaks, I'd like to remind anyone who  
3 wishes to speak, to please use the raise your hand  
4 function in Zoom, or press star nine if you're  
5 participating by phone. The floor is yours, Mr.  
6 MacFarlane.

7 MR. MACFARLANE: Hi, I am Scott  
8 MacFarlane, M-A-C-F-A-R-L-A-N-E, Scott, and I thank  
9 you for the opportunity to speak, and I also thank  
10 you for the great work that's been done by D.O.T. I  
11 just had a view comments. First, I would like to  
12 reiterate the suggestion that I-81 -- the Business 81  
13 on the southern side be returned to grade further  
14 south from Martin Luther King Boulevard, perhaps  
15 putting the initial traffic circle in Colvin, or even  
16 as far south as Brighton.

17 If we're going to convert the southern  
18 portion of 81 into a street -- a city street-- we  
19 should do it wholeheartedly, instead of half -- not  
20 wholeheartedly. And that also gives the possibility  
21 of having a full bike lane going all the way from  
22 south of 481's ... the Almond Street Business 81,  
23 going into the heart of the city.

24 I also agree with those who are asking  
25 to not fund another -- publicly fund another delay by

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2 those that are arguing that their voices aren't  
3 heard. It has been years and years. It's been  
4 terrible for the city, and those people's voices have  
5 been heard. They're just not the only voices in the  
6 room this time. Back when I-81 was first built,  
7 those voices were the only ones that were heard, and  
8 now they're not very happy about the fact that others  
9 are being listened to. I would also reinforce the  
10 idea of narrowing the Business 81, the Almond Street  
11 section, to slow traffic and reduce its footprint, so  
12 it doesn't become a huge boulevard that's difficult  
13 to cross.

14 And finally, I am very much in support  
15 of redressing racial inequities that were caused by  
16 the original project, by committing to hire local  
17 residents, especially those living in the footprint,  
18 in the I-81 quarter, and especially t those non-white  
19 residents there who were most impacted by the  
20 original building. Thank you very much for the  
21 opportunity to speak, and spread the good word.

22 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. MacFarlane.  
23 We've worked through the number of people who have  
24 asked to speak, up to this point. I would encourage  
25 anyone who wishes to speak, to press star nine if

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2 you're participating by phone, or use the raise your  
3 hand function on Zoom. Oh, we have another speaker.  
4 The next person is Gloria Sage. Ms. Sage, can you  
5 hear us?

6 MS. SAGE: Okay. My name is Gloria  
7 Sage, S-A-G-E, and I live in the Outer Comstock  
8 neighborhood, and I have been -- I am on the board of  
9 the Neighborhood Association, and for fifteen years I  
10 was president of the Neighborhood Association, and I  
11 thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. The  
12 plans for the community grid will allow a lot of  
13 people to get off the highway at Brighton Avenue, or  
14 East Colvin Street.

15 In both cases, they will disrupt our  
16 neighborhood. If they get off at Brighton, they will  
17 take Ainsley Drive into Jamesville Avenue, come up  
18 through Comstock, and go through the university onto  
19 the hospitals of Comstock. Now, the neighborhood  
20 there -- Ainsley Drive, Jamesville Avenue, Thurber  
21 Street -- are unapproved streets with no sidewalks.  
22 It is dangerous. There's also a school in the  
23 neighborhood -- Hughes School -- which is now  
24 Syracuse Latin. And it's very close to -- it's on  
25 Jamesville Avenue, and it's very close to East Colvin

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2 Street.

3 The other thing is, if people go  
4 off -- get off at the new exit, on East Colvin  
5 Street, what they will do will be to go up to  
6 Comstock, and go down. That's where most of the  
7 traffic will go. There are a lot of little streets  
8 that abut onto East Colvin Street, and you won't be  
9 able to get out by Jamesville Avenue, and stuff like  
10 that, not at most times of the day.

11 The only thing that they would have to  
12 do would be to go around and get onto Comstock where  
13 there's a light. And so nobody has spoken about the  
14 impact to the Outer Comstock neighborhood, and to  
15 Hughes School and to the people, where you have this  
16 area with unapproved streets, and not even striping  
17 on the side of the street. It's dangerous. Thank  
18 you.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Sage. We  
20 appreciate your comments. At this time we're going  
21 to pause for a few moments to see if more people want  
22 to sign up to speak. If you wish to speak, please  
23 use the raise your hand function on the Zoom app, or  
24 press star nine if you're participating by phone. We  
25 have another person who's ready to

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2 speak -- Christopher Colebrook.

3 MR. COLEBROOK: Yes, hi.

4 MR. SMITH: Hello. We can hear you,  
5 Mr. Colebrook.

6 MR. COLEBROOK: My name is Christophe,  
7 C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E, Colebrook, C-O-L-E-B-R-O-O-K.

8 Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'm a  
9 member of the Greater Strathmore Neighborhood  
10 Association, and I'd just like to say that we support  
11 the business loop converting the elevated highway  
12 into the community grid alternative. We support the  
13 increase of pedestrian and bicycle improvements that  
14 would be part of that plan, as well as access to  
15 downtown local businesses. Thank you for bringing us  
16 this opportunity in Syracuse.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Colebrook.  
18 The next speaker is Michael Gallagher. Please state  
19 and spell your name for the stenographer, Michael  
20 Gallagher.

21 MR. GALLAGHER: Okay, I had to unmute  
22 myself. Sorry. So my name is Michael Gallagher. I  
23 live in Cortland, New York. Can you hear me, guys?

24 MR. SMITH: Yes. Yeah, I can hear  
25 you.

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2 MR. GALLAGHER: Great. My name is  
3 Gallagher. Last name is spelled G-A-L-L-A-G-H-E-R.  
4 I live in Cortland, but I drive up to Syracuse  
5 frequently, mainly to visit the mall. I also have a  
6 destination on East Genesee Street, and I have a  
7 friend up in North Syracuse. One of the things I  
8 noted, driving through Syracuse, is how many people  
9 will get on at one exit, and then get off at the next  
10 one. It probably accounts for a lot of the traffic.  
11 And one habit I developed is getting on North Clinton  
12 Street, and getting off ... the mall, and obviously  
13 you skip traffic lights. And one thing I noticed in  
14 the D.E.I.S. is I've looked at the maps a hundred  
15 times, and I'm not really sure.

16 It doesn't look as if you can get on  
17 at Wes Street, and then get off immediately at the  
18 next exit. So I think that's something -- that's a  
19 minor thing, compared to what everyone else has  
20 mentioned. I think that has to be taken into  
21 account, maybe a services road, maybe another  
22 different design, I don't know.

23 Also, I would like to point out to the  
24 speakers who have suggested moving the roundabout  
25 south, if you move it too far south, then you add to



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2 the travel time for people who are coming from the  
3 south of Syracuse to points beyond 690, like Destiny  
4 or Liverpool. So that's all I have to say. Thank  
5 you for this opportunity.

6 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Gallagher.  
7 The next speaker is Jacqueline Lasonde.

8 MS. LASONDE: Hello there. Thank you  
9 so much for taking my call. I have spoken earlier  
10 today, but it is incumbent on me, hearing the  
11 statements, to speak again, and to remind all that in  
12 fact we have a problem. And if that community grid  
13 is going to be the solution we are in full support  
14 of, here on the Southside, then that must be what it  
15 is.

16 The roundabout is not our issue. It  
17 needs to be away from that M.L.K. School. I'll say  
18 it again. I travel a lot myself, and I rarely ever  
19 see a roundabout in front of, or near a school, where  
20 small children just should be busy about the day of  
21 playing and leaving school and going home, or  
22 whatever they're doing, in front of that school. So  
23 I would ask the D.O.T. do a better job in reaching  
24 out to the community at large because if we don't get  
25 ... so that the community can give their comments,

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2 then we need to do a better job at getting  
3 information out because people have heard about it  
4 for so long, and now it's finally come to the point  
5 that they can do something about it.

6 Those are the things that need to be  
7 driven home, much like the political times that we  
8 have, and we always are inundated with the  
9 politicians who want to reach out and suddenly  
10 communicate with the public at large. We should have  
11 the same energy -- or D.O.T., I would ask, have the  
12 same energy -- when it comes to getting in touch and  
13 reaching, whether it's mail-outs, public service  
14 announcements, or the like. Thank you for your time.

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Lasonde.  
16 If you'd like to speak, you may indicate your  
17 intention to do so by raising your hand using the  
18 Zoom app, or pressing star nine if you're  
19 participating by phone. We'll pause for a moment to  
20 give more people the opportunity to sign up to speak.

21  
22 **[End of Audio]**

23  
24 **210817a1B1 Anelda Kellerman AK/ FTR**

25 MR. SMITH: Robert Haley. Robert

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2 Haley will be our next speaker. Please state and  
3 spell your name for the stenographer.

4 MR. HALEY: H-A-L-E-Y. I hope you can  
5 hear me. It sounds like you can. So thank you for  
6 this hearing, and thank you for the comments for the  
7 public session. I have lived in the Central New York  
8 area all of my life, and that's quite a few years  
9 now, mostly in the city and in the suburbs, and then  
10 back into the city for the past nearly fifty years.  
11 I'm an architect and a planner, so I've been working  
12 with the city's functions and business commerce for  
13 all of those years.

14 First of all, we have to really  
15 support the tremendous success of the D.O.T.  
16 project -- this project, even though it's taken  
17 forever, quote-unquote, but a long time. But this  
18 team and design team has in fact done something quite  
19 revolutionary. They proposed the community grid  
20 option, an innovative option for a D.O.T. It is  
21 reconnecting the city streets, and really an  
22 extensively large project. We're very fortunate to  
23 be where we are. A lot of skilled people who are on  
24 the edge, really are being almost the first in the  
25 nation to demonstrate some of these concepts

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2 nationwide.

3 With that being said, we have been  
4 involved- I'm representing the Moving People  
5 Transportation Coalition today, a community-based  
6 organization that has been successful in networking  
7 with many different community-based organizations.  
8 We are championing, and I would like to speak to the  
9 support of the Southside neighborhoods, in my  
10 particular comments. Essentially, ninety percent of  
11 the project is being done completely successfully,  
12 and obviously there's minor issues almost everywhere.  
13 But essentially the high-speed highway trucks and  
14 traffic lanes for the I-81, the 481 and the  
15 690 -sections - in other words, the high-  
16 speed -sections - are using standard that are  
17 appropriate for the commuting and the commerce and  
18 the visitors- to this area.

19 However, ten percent of the  
20 project -- only ten percent of the project, which is  
21 the distance between the ... center of the city, down  
22 to the current intersection of 481 near Loretto,  
23 still can be improved before this project.

24 Essentially, the term 'business loop'  
25 is in question, and so is 'qualifying highway'. I

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2 would like to ask for both of those terms to be  
3 defined in terms of truck size and truck speed, and  
4 lane width. We have not found confirming evidence  
5 that they are required. If so, we need to change the  
6 term 'business loop' to an appropriate street or  
7 highway --

8 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

9 MR. HALEY: -- through the city, that  
10 is safe and residential in business neighborhoods.  
11 It includes the downtown and the Southside  
12 residential areas, and essentially that's where we  
13 can add more to this project, in terms of skills of  
14 urban design. And community input is asked for this  
15 as well, so we look forward to working with the  
16 D.O.T. in adding this to this currently quite  
17 successful venture that we look forward to getting on  
18 with.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your  
20 comments, Mr. Haley. At this time we'll pause, to  
21 give more people the opportunity to sign up to speak.  
22 If you wish to speak, you can press star nine if  
23 you're participating by phone, or use the raise your  
24 hand function in the Zoom app.

25 MS. MAGUIRE: If you are watching the

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2 live stream and would like to comment, you may also  
3 visit the project website, [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov), to  
4 register and receive a link to join the hearing and  
5 provide comments.

6 MR. SMITH: Donald Doerr will be our  
7 next speaker.

8 MR. DOERR: I wasn't going to speak,  
9 but I feel compelled to speak -- I spoke earlier  
10 today -- especially since the Federal Highway is  
11 involved now, and I don't think you'd been involved.  
12 But this project, from the beginning, D.O.T. has been  
13 pushing and plugging the community grid. And this is  
14 supposed to be listening sessions, and I don't think  
15 that you're really listening to all the people.  
16 You're listening to the people that want the  
17 community grid.

18 This is biased towards the community  
19 grid. All your details -- and for those people that  
20 say you don't need an extension, there's thirty-seven  
21 thousand pages. And guess what, just the weight of  
22 pages, and by handing stuff doesn't make it right,  
23 okay. The other thing is, what are you connecting?  
24 What communities are you connecting? You have the  
25 cemetery, you have the hospitals, you have the

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2 university, and you're basically -- everything that's  
3 there, you're just bringing it down to street level.  
4 The width of it, in some places it's fifty yards. Do  
5 you know how long it takes to walk across the street,  
6 for fifty yards? It is, like I said earlier, like  
7 crossing Erie Boulevard. That's not safe. And, you  
8 know, just -- it doesn't connect -- roads don't  
9 connect communities.

10 You just have to look as far as the  
11 connective corridor that Chancellor Cantor had  
12 brought up with D.O.T., and worked on. But millions  
13 of dollars was spent on that. Guess what? It's in  
14 disrepair. The lights are broken. The sidewalks are  
15 cracked. The people that were supposed to take care  
16 of it, aren't taking care of it. So roads don't  
17 fix -- the roads don't bring communities back  
18 together again.

19 I just implore you, you have -- you  
20 know, people now are on board with community grid,  
21 but by putting some skyway, or some kind of method so  
22 that you keep the traffic -- a high means of getting  
23 between the south and the north. That's what we're  
24 asking you to do. We're asking you to listen and  
25 look at this, and make this the best project that it

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2 can be. You have the opportunity to do it right now.  
3 You've waited. We've gone through this for ten  
4 years. Open your eyes and please, please listen to  
5 the people.

6 There was something on Dan Cummings  
7 the other day. I hope you listened to that. Former  
8 police commissioner Frank Fallon was on. He said  
9 that the people on the Southside are not being  
10 listened to. They're not. And then, you know, you  
11 have the economic indicators that you're using, and  
12 the data you're using. It was mentioned before that  
13 it's out of date. Use real numbers. Do a study  
14 that's recent, not ten years old. A lot of things  
15 have changed in this community, and I'm afraid that,  
16 you know -- and the last thing I'm going to say is on  
17 marketing, and coming through --

18 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds.

19 MR. DOERR: I know a lot of people,  
20 you know, want to go around the city. But you're  
21 basically not letting anyone see the City of  
22 Syracuse. You have an opportunity to put a sky  
23 bridge in with neon lights and L.E.D. lights, et  
24 cetera, and make it a centerpiece of Syracuse.

25 You get to see the university on your



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2 right. You get to see the hospitals. You get to see  
3 a real downtown. Now what you're doing is just  
4 pushing it all the way around. No one is going to  
5 see Syracuse. So I implore you to listen. This is a  
6 listening session, and I hope you're really  
7 listening, especially the federal authorities, and  
8 the State D.O.T. Thank you.

9 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Doerr. If  
10 anyone else would like to speak, please press star  
11 nine if you're participating by phone, or use the  
12 raise your hand function on the Zoom app. We'll  
13 pause and wait a few minutes to see if anyone else  
14 would like to speak. The next speaker will be  
15 Kathleen Kinslow. Ms. Kinslow, please state and  
16 spell your name for the record. Ms. Kinslow, please  
17 unmute yourself, if you can. If you're on the phone,  
18 use star six.

19 MS. KINSLOW: Okay. Can you hear me  
20 now?

21 MR. SMITH: I can. Thank you, Ms.  
22 Kinslow.

23 MS. KINSLOW: Yes?

24 MR. SMITH: Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. KINSLOW: Okay. So K-I-N-S-L-O-W

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2 is my -- I hadn't intended to speak, but I do want to  
3 thank you, first of all, for the brochure you sent  
4 out with the summary because there has been an awful  
5 lot of work, and I feel that you've done so much with  
6 the aesthetics, to the point where you're probably  
7 doing better than if we had never had a viaduct in  
8 the first place. I just want to mention one thing,  
9 and that would be that I was interested in the  
10 entryway or access to the historic Oakwood Cemetery.

11 The reason that I think that it's  
12 worthwhile considering, I understand it would slow  
13 down traffic if we were to move the entranceway a  
14 little bit further back towards Colvin, but I do have  
15 to say this. I live on the two busiest corners or  
16 streets in Baldwinsville, and we have a very large  
17 property. And just since the COVID, I have to say  
18 the people walking -- parents, grandparents -- with  
19 strollers, people walking dogs, riding bikes,  
20 running, is just so much more increased than it's  
21 been -- it's maintained and continued -- and so my  
22 interest is really more in opening up that access,  
23 just to have access for the Southside, an entryway to  
24 a park-like area.

25 My neighbor and I often walk in the

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2 Riverview Cemetery here in Baldwinsville in the  
3 winter. When you really don't think to pick up and  
4 go to a park somewhere, that's where we walk. And so  
5 that to me is such a valued green space that I  
6 understand people want to be able to hurry through  
7 the business loop, but I feel that for the community  
8 and the people who are being affected the most by the  
9 change in the traffic pattern, I believe that it's  
10 very important to be able to have just better access  
11 to the Oakwood Cemetery area. And one of the  
12 professors came from the school -- oh, I'm sorry.  
13 Oh, I just heard somebody. Am I done?

14 MR. SMITH: No, ma'am.

15 MS. KINSLOW: I was just going to  
16 say --

17 MR. SMITH: You've got another minute  
18 left.

19 MS. KINSLOW: Okay. I was going to  
20 point out that one of the professors who had spoken,  
21 just from Environmental School of Forestry, mentioned  
22 about the great loss of the canopy around Syracuse  
23 with the storms -- the Labor Day storm. And I know  
24 that the city is planning to plant a lot of trees,  
25 but one of the garden or park-like areas that I think

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2 is really important to focus on here, is if it's  
3 possible to restore access to that, which we lost  
4 with the I-81 Viaduct, I believe that that would be a  
5 very valuable aesthetic to be able to include in the  
6 plan.

7 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Kinslow.  
8 We appreciate your comments. At this point, we're  
9 going to pause for five minutes. If anyone else  
10 would like to speak, please sign up. If no  
11 additional speakers sign up, then that will conclude  
12 the public hearing for today. There'll be additional  
13 time to give comments in person tomorrow at two  
14 hearings, at four and at six. So we encourage anyone  
15 else who wishes to speak in this forum to sign up by  
16 using the raise your hand function in the Zoom app,  
17 or by pressing star nine if you're participating by  
18 phone. We'll pause for about five minutes to see if  
19 anybody else would like to speak today and, if not,  
20 we'll close the hearing. The next speaker will be  
21 Devon Kinsman. Devon Kinsman

22 MS. KINSMAN: Hi, I'm Devon Kinsman.  
23 That is D-E-V-O-N, K-I-N-S-M-A-N. I'll be submitting  
24 more comments via written, but there's one particular  
25 concern that hasn't been spoken about that. I'm

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2 looking at the onramp to 690 westbound, from Almond  
3 Street, and there's what looks like it's going to be  
4 a large cross merge of people going from 690  
5 westbound to 81 northbound, will have to cross merge  
6 with the oncoming traffic.

7 This reminds me greatly of the  
8 interchange in Rochester that was recently redone  
9 between the 490 westbound traffic, and the 390  
10 northbound traffic. That was one of the highest  
11 accident-rate interchanges in Rochester, and recently  
12 we did that. And this reminds me greatly of that,  
13 and I'm concerned about the accident rate that would  
14 occur there. Thank you. I hope that gets ...

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your  
16 comments, Ms. Kinsman. At this time I don't see any  
17 additional speakers. We'll pause for a few minutes  
18 to see if anyone else would like to speak. The next  
19 speaker will be Carmen Emmi.

20 MR. EMMI: Can you hear me?

21 MR. SMITH: Yes, we can hear you.

22 MR. EMMI: Okay. Thank you for your  
23 time. I appreciate it. Mark, we've met several  
24 times. I'm in the hotel business, on 7<sup>th</sup> North and  
25 Exit 25 on 81. I'm actually not going to -- you know

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2 my concerns. They've been well-documented. I'm  
3 going to use my three minutes today to talk about the  
4 concerns that my team members have brought to my  
5 attention, regarding the grid-only option that's  
6 being considered.

7 We have over two hundred employees on  
8 7<sup>th</sup> North Street. Fifty percent of them live in the  
9 City of Syracuse. They commute daily. They live  
10 there, and they commute daily from there, for work.  
11 I'm going to start by reading your mission statement  
12 that I found online. It is the mission of the New  
13 York State D.O.T. to ensure our customers -- those  
14 who live, work and travel in New York State -- have a  
15 safe, efficient, balanced and environmentally sound  
16 transportation system.

17 With that said, ninety thousand  
18 vehicles per day use the current viaduct, which makes  
19 sense because you're traveling to and from the most  
20 densely-populated employment area in the  
21 region -- the hospitals ... et cetera. Over seventy  
22 thousand people work in that area. Where do these  
23 ninety thousand vehicles per day go, under the grid-  
24 only plan? They go under the city streets and in the  
25 neighborhoods.

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2 How is that a safe, efficient,  
3 balanced and environmentally sound transportation  
4 system solution? It's not, and my team members are  
5 extremely concerned about that. They live there,  
6 they play there, they have children that play in the  
7 streets. The same government agency that tore apart  
8 the fifteenth ward fifty years ago, when it was  
9 built, is going to spill thousands of cars on the  
10 city streets and into the neighborhood. We're going  
11 to make the same mistakes again, just in a different  
12 format, under this grid plan.

13 Health and safety, as per your mission  
14 statement, should be a priority for the Southside  
15 community. How does dumping ninety thousand vehicles  
16 a day on city streets make the Southside safer?  
17 We've also had fifty-five years to correct the issues  
18 that the current viaduct created. Why haven't we?  
19 D.O.T.'s answer now is to put ninety thousand  
20 vehicles per day on city streets in a roundabout at  
21 the STEAM school, and at Dr. King. This is not a  
22 solution. We can do better, and we must. Tonight  
23 I'm formally requesting a six-month extension to find  
24 a better solution. A safe, balanced --

25 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds.

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2 MR. EMMI: -- and environmentally  
3 sound transportation system that works for all.  
4 Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Emmi. We  
6 appreciate your comments. At this time we'll pause  
7 to see if there's anyone else who wants to speak.

8 MS. MAGUIRE: Just a reminder, if you  
9 would like to speak, to please use the raise hand  
10 function, or press star nine.

11 MR. SMITH: it looks as though there  
12 may be no additional speakers. We'll give just a few  
13 more minutes, if anybody else would like to sign up.  
14 It looks like we may have someone -- I don't have a  
15 name, who is participating by phone. Can you please  
16 state and spell your name for the record?

17 MS. MILLER: Hi, my name is Laura  
18 Miller -- L-A-U-R-A, Miller -- and I'm calling to  
19 second the notion that we need more time to study an  
20 overall plan for our region's transportation network.  
21 I think it's irresponsible -- as we enter a decision-  
22 making process towards the end, it's irresponsible to  
23 not consider new evidence and changing positions.

24 I work in manufacturing, and there is  
25 a whole lot of activity out here, in the



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2 manufacturing field. We pull people and vendors and  
3 salespeople and employees from all over the region  
4 back and forth all day long, and our voices really  
5 have not been heard. The activity is palpable. If  
6 you come out here ... you will see as much traffic as  
7 when ... So I think we need to pause and really look  
8 at the evidence, and start counting cars and trucks,  
9 and really understand how traffic is changing in  
10 light of all the growth that's happening.

11 It's really encouraging growth. That  
12 growth can help all of us strive. We have nineteen  
13 thousand ... jobs added in the last year. We're  
14 above average, compared to other regional regions our  
15 size. We have populations coming our way, and it's  
16 just really, really amazing. So if we can think of a  
17 way to ... consider all these changes, we really  
18 should do that. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Miller. I  
20 appreciate your comments. If you wish to speak, you  
21 still have an opportunity to do so. Please use the  
22 raise your hand function, as part of the Zoom app, or  
23 press star nine if you're participating by phone.  
24 We'll wait a few minutes to see if anyone else would  
25 like to speak.

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2 Okay, we appreciate everybody's  
3 attention, and we appreciate all the comments that  
4 we've received from the public. We're going to close  
5 the hearing today. There will be additional  
6 opportunities to comment tomorrow in person, at four  
7 o'clock and at six o'clock, at The Oncenter. Again,  
8 the representatives of the D.O.T. and the New York  
9 State Highway and the Federal Highway  
10 Administration -- Rick Marquis and Mark  
11 Frechette -- appreciate your comments. They have  
12 been present during this entire hearing, to listen to  
13 what you have to say. Thank you again for taking the  
14 time to provide those, and if you'd like -- again, if  
15 you'd like to speak tomorrow, we'd like to see you.  
16 Take care. Good day.

17 (The proceeding concluded.)  
18  
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20  
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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, ANNETTE LAINSON do hereby certify that the foregoing  
4 was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place,  
5 as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that  
6 the foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of  
7 pages 1 through 49, is a true record of all proceedings  
8 had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
10 subscribed my name, this the 1st day of September, 2021.

11

12 ANNETTE LAINSON, Reporter

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NEW YORK STATE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: August 17, 2021

TIME: 11:01 a.m. to 1:01 p.m.

LOCATION: ZOOM/C&S COMPANIES

449 Col. Eileen Collins Blvd.

Syracuse, NY 13212

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing

2 APPEARANCES:

3 BRODY SMITH, Moderator

4 AILEEN MAGUIRE, Host

5 MARK FRECHETTE

6 RICK MARQUIS

7 MARICI CHAU

8 JARED GROSS

9 BEN WALSH

10 KERRY MANNION

11 FRED WAGNER

12 ELLEN ROLOFF

13 QINGYANG LIU

14 MICHAEL BONE

15 CONSTANCE NYMAN

16 PETER SARVER

17 BARRY GORDON

18 DONALD DOERR

19 DAVID CARNIE

20 JACKSON HURST

21 WILLIAM SANFORD

22 CHARLENE TARVER

23 MARY CUNNINGHAM

24 HOLLAND GREGG

25 DARA HOBBS PETER KING

KEVIN MCCORMICK

WOODRUFF CARROLL

RONALD VANNORSTRAND

PAUL CZAJKOWSKI

MEGAN LEE

JACQUELINE LASONDE

COURTNEY ALEXANDER

MARK TUCKER

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2 (The hearing commenced at 11:01 a.m.)

3 THE REPORTER: We're on the record.

4 MS. MAGUIRE: Good morning. Thank you  
5 for attending the I-81 Viaduct Project Public  
6 Hearing. This is Aileen Maguire, and I will be  
7 serving as the host for this virtual hearing. Prior  
8 to the presentation, I will go over some general  
9 information on how to participate in the virtual  
10 hearing.

11 Today's event will be conducted in  
12 English. Interpretation is available for anyone who  
13 wishes to hear the event in Spanish. To listen to  
14 interpretation on a computer, locate the globe icon  
15 along the bottom row of your Zoom screen, and select  
16 the language.

17 If you are joining via Zoom -- the  
18 Zoom app -- on a mobile device, click 'More', or the  
19 three dots in the corner of your screen, select  
20 'Language interpretation', and then choose your  
21 language, and click 'Done'. These instructions will  
22 now be read in Spanish.

23 The hearing moderator will be  
24 facilitating the hearing. A formal presentation will  
25 be followed by oral testimony. Comments will be

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 limited to three minutes. Speakers will be muted if  
3 they use inappropriate language. Substantive  
4 comments will be responded to in the final  
5 environmental impact statement.

6 This hearing is being live streamed  
7 and recorded. The official transcript of the hearing  
8 will become part of the project record. If you are  
9 watching the live stream and would like to comment,  
10 visit the project website, [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov), to  
11 register and receive a link to join the hearing.

12 I will now review the instructions on  
13 how to participate in the hearing. This is also  
14 available on the project website, and will be  
15 reviewed again at the start of the comment period.  
16 If you have questions about the webinar technology,  
17 use the chat box to send a message to the host and  
18 receive a written response. Do not send comments  
19 through the chat, as they will not be included in the  
20 project record.

21 If you would like to comment, please  
22 use the raised-hand function, or press star nine on  
23 your phone, to alert the host that you would like to  
24 comment. On mobile devices, you may need to click  
25 the three dots to access more features. When you are

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 called on to speak, the host will give you permission  
3 to unmute yourself, so all participants can hear you.  
4 If you log in by computer, or the Zoom app, you will  
5 receive a notification to unmute.

6 Speaker icons are located in the top  
7 left of Android and iOS devices. If you are dialing  
8 in by phone, when the moderator calls on you to  
9 speak, press star six to unmute, and press star six  
10 again to mute when you are done speaking.

11 I will now turn over today's even to  
12 the hearing moderator, Brody Smith.

13 MR. SMITH: Good morning. On behalf  
14 of Marie Therese Dominguez, the Commissioner of the  
15 New York State Department of Transportation, and Rick  
16 Marquis, the Administrator for the Federal Highway  
17 Administration's New York Division, I welcome you to  
18 this I-81 Viaduct Project Public Hearing. My name is  
19 Brody Smith. I am serving as the moderator for this  
20 public hearing. A stenographer will record the  
21 proceedings of this meeting verbatim, and a written  
22 transcript will be prepared. I'm going to read an  
23 opening statement, which will be followed by a brief,  
24 prerecorded presentation. When the presentation is  
25 finished, I will begin the moderated oral comment



1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 session.

3 MS. MAGUIRE: Hold on a second.  
4 Please hold on one moment. We are trying to unmute  
5 the moderator. Sorry for the technical difficulties.  
6 Please give us one moment.

7 MR. SMITH: Can you hear me okay? Is  
8 the sound check okay? Okay, let me try it from my  
9 Zoom. Can you hear me now, if I use this? Okay,  
10 I'll do it from my phone. Are we ready?

11 MS. MAGUIRE: Hold on one more moment.  
12 I am aware that you are hearing double. Hold on.  
13 Start again, please.

14 MR. SMITH: Good morning. On behalf  
15 of Marie Therese Dominguez, the Commissioner of the  
16 New York State Department of Transportation, and Rick  
17 Marquis, the Administrator of the Federal Highway  
18 Administration's New York Division, I welcome you to  
19 this I-81 Viaduct Project Public Hearing.

20 My name is Brody Smith. I am serving  
21 as the moderator for this public hearing. A  
22 stenographer will record the proceedings of this  
23 meeting, and a verbatim written transcript will be  
24 prepared. I'm going to read an opening statement,  
25 which will be followed by a brief, prerecorded

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 presentation. When the presentation is finished, I  
3 will begin the moderated oral comment session. If  
4 you are watching the live stream and would like to  
5 provide a verbal comment, visit the project website  
6 at [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov), to register and receive a link  
7 to join the hearing.

8 The New York State Department of  
9 Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal  
10 Highway Administration, published a draft design  
11 report/draft environmental impact statement/draft  
12 Section 4(f) evaluation, for the I-81 Viaduct  
13 Project, on July 16th, 2021.

14 The project has been advanced, in  
15 accordance with the requirements of the National  
16 Environmental Policy Act -- NEPA -- codified at 40  
17 C.F.R. parts 1500 through 1508, the F.H.W.A.  
18 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures final  
19 rule at 23 CFR part 771, and the New York State  
20 D.O.T. Procedures for Implementation of the State  
21 Environmental Quality Review Act, at 17 New York  
22 Codes Rules and Regulations, part fifteen, and in  
23 accordance with provisions of Article Two of the New  
24 York State Eminent Domain Procedure Law.

25 The publication of the D.D.R.

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2 /D.E.I.S. began the public comment period on the  
3 document, which will extend until five p.m. Eastern  
4 Daylight Time, on September 14, 2021. This public  
5 hearing is being conducted to obtain comments on the  
6 project's D.D.R. /D.E.I.S., and the right-of-way  
7 acquisition process. The D.D.R. /D.E.I.S. is  
8 available for review at this hearing, on the  
9 project's website, [www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities](http://www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities),  
10 and at libraries and other public facilities  
11 throughout Greater Syracuse.

12 The D.D.R. /D.E.I.S. describes the  
13 project a consideration of social, economic and  
14 environmental effects that would result from the  
15 implementation of the project, and measures to  
16 mitigate adverse effects. The hearing provides the  
17 public an opportunity to make formal statements and  
18 positions before any project decisions are made.

19 The agencies will review and consider  
20 public comments submitted during the established  
21 sixty-day public comment period. Responses to  
22 substantive comments will be included in the  
23 project's final design report, final environmental  
24 impact statement, which is F.E.I.S. which is  
25 anticipated to be published by the end of 2021.

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2 In addition to comments made at the  
3 public hearings, comments will be accepted in the  
4 following ways: One, written comments sent via U.S.  
5 Mail to Mark Frechette, P.E., Project Director, New  
6 York State Department of Transportation, Region  
7 Three, 333 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New  
8 York, 13202, or Rick Marquis, Division Administrator,  
9 Federal Highway Administration, Leo W. O'Brien  
10 Federal Building, 11A Clinton Avenue, Suite 719,  
11 Albany, New York, 12207.

12 Electronic comment forms, via the  
13 project website, are available at [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov).  
14 You may email at [i81opportunities@dot.ny.gov](mailto:i81opportunities@dot.ny.gov), or you  
15 may use the telephone voicemail system, through the  
16 project hotline, which can be found at 1-855-I81-  
17 TALK. That's 855-481-8255. Information on how to  
18 submit written comments is also outlined on the  
19 project website. You can elect to submit comments  
20 both orally, and in writing. Written statements will  
21 be given the same weight and consideration as oral  
22 statements made at this meeting. Again, New York  
23 State D.O.T. and the Federal Highway Administration  
24 will accept public comments until five p.m., Eastern  
25 Daylight Time, on September 14, 2021.

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2 Before we begin accepting oral  
3 comments from the participants, we will play a  
4 prerecorded presentation on the project. After the  
5 presentation, I will give you instructions on how we  
6 plan to take your oral comments.

7 (Presentation playing)

8 MS. MAGUIRE: We're about to go live.  
9 I just want to remind everyone, before we continue  
10 with the hearing, that if you have questions about  
11 the webinar technology, to please use the chat box to  
12 send a message. But we will not be responding to  
13 substantive comments about the project through the  
14 chat. That will be done through the F.E.I.S. Thank  
15 you.

16 MR. SMITH: I will now introduce  
17 representatives of the New York State D.O.T. and the  
18 Federal Highway Administration, who are in attendance  
19 for today's hearing -- Mark Frechette, Project  
20 Director, New York State Department of  
21 Transportation, Rick Marquis, Division Administrator,  
22 Federal Highway Administration, Jared Gross, Area  
23 Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Maria Chau,  
24 Senior Planner, Federal Highway Administration.

25 The panelists, hearing officer and

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2 A.S.L. interpreter will be visible on screen during  
3 the oral testimony. Although you may not see all the  
4 panelists on screen at one time, all the panelists  
5 will be listening to the testimony. My role here, as  
6 the hearing moderator, is to provide members of the  
7 public an opportunity to provide comments in an  
8 organized, fair, professional and orderly manner.

9 The testimony is being recorded by a  
10 stenographer, so please state and spell your name,  
11 and identify any organization you represent. To  
12 ensure that all are heard, comments will be limited  
13 to three minutes after the introduction. There will  
14 be a countdown clock on the screen, and I will  
15 provide verbal warnings when only thirty seconds  
16 remain.

17 Agency representatives will not be  
18 answering questions, or responding to comments,  
19 during the hearing. Responses to substantive  
20 comments will be included in the final design  
21 report/final environmental impact statement. If you  
22 are watching the live stream and would like to  
23 comment, visit the project website at  
24 [www.i81.dot.ny.gov](http://www.i81.dot.ny.gov), to register and receive a link to  
25 join the hearing.

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2 Before we begin, I'd like to recognize  
3 elected officials, or their representatives, who are  
4 in attendance. Ben Walsh, the City of Syracuse's  
5 Mayor, Rachel May, New York State Senator, District  
6 53, Carney David, Town of Salina Fourth Ward  
7 Councilor, Kevin McCormack, Town of Skaneateles  
8 Councilor, Kerry Mannion, Town of DeWitt Deputy  
9 Supervisor, and Mark Tucker, Town of Skaneateles  
10 Councilor.

11 At this time, we will hear from those  
12 who wish to make oral statements. I remind you that  
13 if you would like to comment, please use the raise  
14 your hand function, or press star nine if  
15 participating by phone. In accordance with agency  
16 policy, elected and appointed officials will be given  
17 the first opportunity to speak. Others will be  
18 called to make their statements in the order that  
19 they are listed in the queue.

20 I will call two names at a time, so  
21 you are prepared when it is your turn to speak. I  
22 apologize in advance to anyone whose name I  
23 mispronounce. Our first speaker will be Ben Walsh,  
24 Mayor of the City of Syracuse, and our second speaker  
25 will be Kerry Mannion from the Town of DeWitt.

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2 MR. WALSH: Good morning. Can  
3 everyone hear me?

4 MS. MAGUIRE: Yes.

5 MR. WALSH: Great. Good morning.  
6 Thank you for the opportunity. The community grid is  
7 the right alternative for Syracuse, Central Park, and  
8 all of New York State. While there are still  
9 elements of the project that must be improved, that  
10 fact remains clear.

11 I want to thank the D.O.T. for  
12 thoroughly studying the options for this project.  
13 With the community, the D.O.T. is seizing the  
14 transformational moment before us, in creating the  
15 best framework to correct the historical wrongs that  
16 hurt city residents. I also want to thank the D.O.T.  
17 for addressing the comments and concerns it has  
18 received during the process. That work of listening  
19 and responding must continue. My team and I are  
20 reviewing the D.E.I.S. We are talking with key  
21 stakeholders, attending community meetings, and  
22 working with the D.O.T. We will file detailed  
23 written comments as part of this process. Today let  
24 me cover four points.

25 First, my greatest concern has been,



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2 and continues to be, for the people who live closest  
3 to the viaduct. They have borne the biggest burden,  
4 and their neighborhoods must be protected and  
5 invested in. I am concerned about the current design  
6 and position of the roundabout at STEAM, at Dr. King  
7 School. We cannot put our children at risk for  
8 decades to come. I request that you listen to the  
9 concerns on this critical element of the project, and  
10 present alternative solutions in the final  
11 environmental impact statement.

12 The roundabout is one key concern, but  
13 not the only one. The D.O.T. must deliver a  
14 comprehensive approach that addresses pedestrian,  
15 bicycle, public transit and parks amenities.  
16 Mitigating health and construction impacts are  
17 critically important. As I noted earlier, the city  
18 will provide written comments on other areas of  
19 concern regarding the project impact in city  
20 neighborhoods.

21 Second, I appreciate the D.O.T.'s  
22 inclusion of a land-use working group for surplus  
23 land that will become available as a result of this  
24 project. This group must include the city, the  
25 school district, neighborhood representatives,

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2 environmental justice communities, economic  
3 opportunity and development organizations, and other  
4 stakeholders. Land use is a priority concern for the  
5 city and its residents, so there must be local  
6 control of decision-making regarding surplus land.

7 Third, I challenge the State to aim  
8 high on local hiring. The city and D.O.T. has worked  
9 well together in planning to ensure city residents,  
10 especially women, people of color and veterans, get  
11 equitable opportunities for jobs and careers from the  
12 project. The most critical stages are happening now,  
13 and I urge the State to set aggressive goals in its  
14 application to the Federal Highway Administration for  
15 local hiring, and commit to even more aggressive  
16 programs to train and prepare city workers.

17 Fourth, I commend the D.O.T. for  
18 addressing concerns of our suburban neighborhoods,  
19 including through the economic analysis of northern  
20 suburbs, and the proposed improvements to Exit Three  
21 on Interstate 81, and Lyndon Corners to the East. I  
22 urge you to continue to address these concerns,  
23 especially to the north and south of the city where  
24 we have opportunity to reduce traffic problems that  
25 have long concerned those communities.

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2 In closing, we know the pandemic  
3 continues to create uncertainty. The D.O.T. set up a  
4 process to ensure everyone can participate. To my  
5 fellow city residents, and all of Central New York,  
6 please ensure you are heard. Thank you.

7 MR. SMITH: The next speaker will be  
8 Kerry Mannion, from DeWitt. Followed by Kerry  
9 Mannion, will be Jackson Hurst.

10 MR. MANNION: Good morning, D.O.T.  
11 Thank you so much. I still haven't gotten my  
12 comments ready yet, but I just wanted to -- so I  
13 mentioned on there that I was undecided, but I  
14 appreciate you allowing me the opportunity to speak,  
15 but I'll be speaking up later. I'd like to go to the  
16 live meeting tomorrow, to see the effects of the  
17 traffic on Jamesville, DeWitt and East Syracuse, and  
18 how you're handling that. But again, thank you for  
19 allowing me to speak today, and thank you so much for  
20 having so many presentations.

21 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Mannion.  
22 Next up is Jackson Hurst, followed by Qingyang Liu.

23 MS. MAGUIRE: ... perhaps they'll come  
24 back to him.

25 MR. SMITH: Okay. We're going to come

1 8-17-2021 - I-81 Viaduct Project - Virtual Public Hearing  
2 back to them. Let's see. Next up will be Andrew  
3 Schuster.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: Hi, my name is Andrew  
5 Schuster. I'm a principal at Ashley McGraw  
6 Architects in Syracuse, New York, as well as  
7 president-elect of the A.I.A.C.N.Y. Speaking in my  
8 capacity as a principal at Ashley McGraw Architects,  
9 we are a Downtown employer. We've been based in  
10 Downtown Syracuse for over thirty years, and we rely  
11 on the vibrancy of Downtown Syracuse to attract and  
12 retain talent.

13 We're a very specialized architecture  
14 firm. We require the need to hire very specific  
15 skilled workers, and we often relocate them from  
16 other communities. And whether Syracuse -- Downtown  
17 Syracuse -- is healthy, is very important criteria in  
18 hiring those people. We feel that the community grid  
19 is absolutely the best way to ensure that that  
20 vibrancy continues and grows, and maintains the  
21 momentum in Central New York that is currently  
22 occurring. We also support the community grid on the  
23 premise that it will take less time to construct,  
24 which will be positive for all business in all  
25 communities associated with I-81.

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2 We do have a couple of concerns that  
3 we'd like to put on the record. We'd like to  
4 encourage the D.O.T. to design the street as an urban  
5 thoroughfare that allows for a street wall to be  
6 built, with buildings to form a street wall on either  
7 side. And to do that, we would like to see options  
8 with a narrower right of way. The current hundred  
9 and ninety-seven foot right of way seems out of  
10 character for an urban right of way, and we feel that  
11 the same service can be provided in less than one  
12 hundred and twenty feet.

13 We also would like to see more  
14 information on how the land is going to be returned  
15 to the community. I was very encouraged to see that  
16 included in today's presentation. We feel that the  
17 park-like spaces shown in the D.O.T. renderings do  
18 not provide a context that will encourage pedestrian  
19 flow between the central business district and  
20 Upstate University, and that further urban-style  
21 development and urban streetscapes will encourage a  
22 positive connection between the two communities.

23 We also are confident that this will  
24 increase the city's tax base, and the county's tax  
25 base, in a constructive way. So that concludes my

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2 statements at this time, and we'll submit further  
3 written comment.

4 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Schuster.  
5 Next up is Brian Sampson, followed by Michael Bome.

6 MR. SAMPSON: Good morning. My name  
7 is Brian Sampson. I'm president of Associate  
8 Builders and Contractors, Empire State Chapter. We  
9 represent about four hundred contractors across the  
10 State of New York, and well over a hundred right in  
11 the Central New York region. We're commenting today  
12 just to give our support for the I-81 Project. We  
13 think it's long overdue, and will be good for the  
14 Syracuse community to have that.

15 We also support the use of local  
16 hiring. We believe that there are a number of  
17 skilled crafts workers in the region that can work on  
18 that project, and in fact I think D.O.T. probably  
19 realizes that about eighty percent of the work that's  
20 being done in the Central New York region right now,  
21 currently, is being performed by what are considered  
22 open shop contractors -- so those that choose not to  
23 be signatory to a union and collective bargaining  
24 agreement.

25 With the implications of a project

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2 labor agreement, the local hiring requirements are  
3 going to be tough to meet because, as people know,  
4 with P.L.A.s, there are requirements that a certain  
5 percentage of the local workforce has to come from  
6 the local union hall. As a result, open shop  
7 contractors don't typically bid project labor  
8 agreements because they can't put their own workers  
9 on the job.

10 So as D.O.T. looks to advance this  
11 plan, we would strongly ask them to not put the  
12 project labor agreement on this project because it  
13 will decrease your bidding. It will decrease local  
14 hiring, and it will create different challenges.  
15 Further -- this may seem strange for us to take this  
16 position -- project labor agreements are often  
17 justified on the backs of the workers. So there are  
18 savings in there that the workers have to concede, in  
19 order to make these projects go forward. We don't  
20 believe that that's the right approach. Most of the  
21 P.L.A. studies that we see, have false savings, and  
22 false narratives.

23 For example, the study will claim that  
24 there's hundreds of thousands, if not millions of  
25 dollars, to be saved by non-union contractors using

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2 union apprentices. What happens when you have no  
3 non-union contractors bidding that work, they won't  
4 use union apprentices. Therefore, those are false  
5 savings. There's also a management rights section.  
6 If no non-union contractors did the work, there is no  
7 management savings to be had because there are no  
8 work conflicts, no jurisdictional issues to be  
9 resolved. Those tend to be the two biggest cost  
10 savings for a P.L.A. So I would strongly ask you to  
11 not use a P.L.A. on this project.

12 Further, we would ask that if that is  
13 something you are going to consider, ask you to think  
14 about this -- the individual workers on those  
15 projects are making concessions, but the union  
16 business agents and other management are not. That  
17 is not fair to the workers, and is something that  
18 should be strongly discouraged. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Sampson.  
20 Next up is Michael Bome, followed by Minchin Lewis.

21 MS. MAGUIRE: Michael Bome, you should  
22 have access to unmute yourself.

23 MR. SMITH: Okay, we'll try to come  
24 back to Mr. Bome. Next up is Minchin Lewis.

25 MR. LEWIS: Thank you. I now have the



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2 unmute button. So my name is Minchin Lewis. I live  
3 at 205 Rigi Avenue, in the City of Syracuse. I teach  
4 metropolitan government and politics at Syracuse  
5 University's Maxwell School. I also served for nine  
6 years as the elected Syracuse City Auditor.

7 I thank you for the opportunity to  
8 comment on this once in a lifetime decision for the  
9 future of our community. I particularly appreciate  
10 the comments made by both Senator Schumer and  
11 Secretary Buttigieg when they were here in Syracuse.  
12 They both said that the project would undergo  
13 changes, going forward. So I am requesting an  
14 important change. I am requesting that the D.O.T.  
15 extend the comment period for an additional six  
16 months. I have several reasons for this request.

17 First, the length of the  
18 D.E.I.S. -- twenty-eight thousand pages, with  
19 thousands of details. It requires many, many hours  
20 of study just to understand the elements. Second,  
21 the D.E.I.S. contains new features that were not  
22 included in the preliminary D.E.I.S. They require  
23 analysis and community input, for instance, the  
24 roundabout at Dr. King Elementary School, the new  
25 exits at Colvin, and the extended

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2 entrance -- exit -- at Glen Avenue. The changes to  
3 481 that may impact the environment, and there are  
4 untold details, like the changes in alternative E-4,  
5 the exit from northbound 81 to eastbound 690, from a  
6 right-hand to a left-hand exit.

7 Third, there are many changes in the  
8 community. The traffic has changed significantly  
9 with the recent two Amazon facilities, and additional  
10 prospective development. The community needs more  
11 time to determine how these changes will impact the  
12 D.E.I.S. The social economic impacts on the  
13 community, for the neighborhood and for the community  
14 in general, need to be evaluated. Then there are  
15 several groups that are exploring alternatives that  
16 could achieve all of the goals of the community grid  
17 that you've outlined, and maintain the economic  
18 vitality of the region, bringing a true consensus to  
19 support this major public project.

20 Fourth, there are external changes  
21 also. Leadership in Albany is changing. It's in  
22 transition. We are still in the middle of a very  
23 serious global pandemic. And finally, the new world  
24 of technology is changing, and it requires time to  
25 adjust to those changes, just as we saw at the

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2 beginning of this webinar, with the startup technical  
3 difficulties. For all of these reasons, all of this  
4 requires more time, and I urge D.O.T. to extend the  
5 comment period for at least six months. Thank you.

6 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Lewis.  
7 Next up to speak is Fred Wagner, followed by Ellyn  
8 Geller Roloff.

9 MR. WAGNER: Good morning. Can I be  
10 heard well?

11 MR. SMITH: We can hear you.

12 MR. WAGNER: Thank you so much, and  
13 good afternoon. I'm Fred Wagner -- W-A-G-N-E-R. I'm  
14 a former chief counsel of the Federal Highway  
15 Administration, and I have the honor of representing  
16 Carousel Center company, Destiny USA. To begin, we  
17 reiterate and support comments like we just heard,  
18 requesting an extension of the comment period. The  
19 sheer volume and complexity of the materials released  
20 by NYSDOT has not made the current comment period  
21 fair or reasonable. If the agency wants a true  
22 dialogue with all stakeholders, more time is simply  
23 needed.

24 To the merits, its apparent that the  
25 agency is intent on advancing the so-called community

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2 grid concept without a fair consideration of other  
3 options. If the heart of NEPA is a fair analysis of  
4 a full range of reasonable alternatives, this  
5 document fails at that legal obligation. There had  
6 been many and persistent calls for an alternative  
7 that could both preserve safe, high-speed mobility,  
8 and reconnect communities. That option deserves a  
9 fair review, yet public statements by the agency have  
10 discounted that option without adequate  
11 consideration.

12 Without an analysis of full, and a  
13 reasonable range of feasible alternatives, the NYSDOT  
14 draft E.I.S. is arbitrary and capricious. Even based  
15 on the very limited time we've had so far to review  
16 the enormous amount of information in the document,  
17 NYSDOT's analysis is flawed and erroneous. First of  
18 all, the traffic study is based on stale and outdated  
19 data. There's no sense of how the grid will impact  
20 key intersections, outside the very narrow study area  
21 established by the agency, as your graphics earlier  
22 demonstrated.

23 The analysis presumes a growth rate  
24 that is completely inconsistent with recent data, and  
25 dramatically understates the mobility performance of

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the grid option. It fails to address that only six percent of existing trips based on the old data are through trips that do not stop within the city or nearby destinations. It makes no sense to presume that a large portion of the ninety thousand average daily trips will drive sixteen miles out of the way on 481. In addition, it fails to account for recent developments, like the creation of the Amazon distribution center.

We will be providing in our written comments a more formal critique of this traffic data, but it's enough to say now that the proposed action does not meet the main purpose of the project, to improve mobility. In addition, the economic impact analysis is inadequate. Nobody from the State, nobody from F.H.W.A., consulted with my client -- a large regional employment and commerce center -- nor, as far as we know, with any other major businesses in and around the area.

How can that create a fair economic impact assessment, and how can the conclusion that there would only be minor disruptions be supported, as was stated earlier? From an air quality and greenhouse emissions, the E.I.S. is flawed. The

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2 traffic analysis I mentioned before --

3 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Wagner.  
4 That is three minutes.

5 MR. WAGNER: No, it's not. The timing  
6 did not -- that's incorrect.

7 MR. SMITH: Next up scheduled to speak  
8 is Ellyn Geller Roloff, and Qingyang Liu.

9 MS. ROLOFF: Good morning. Thank you  
10 for providing the opportunity to speak to you today.  
11 My name is Ellyn Roloff, and I'm a member of Temple  
12 Concord on the corner of University and Madison  
13 Street, in Syracuse. As Jews, we are commanded by  
14 God to perform acts of tikkun olam, loosely  
15 interpreted as healing the world. That is why I am  
16 speaking with you today. I have some concerns about  
17 the Route 81 community grid, some of which have been  
18 mentioned earlier this morning.

19 One, there is potential for negative  
20 environmental impacts on people who live, work and  
21 study near the construction area. Therefore, clear  
22 steps should be taken to ensure reduction of dust,  
23 water, air and noise pollution. In addition,  
24 conducting a community health needs assessment before  
25 construction begins, as well as a study to determine

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2 if the community grid will remain a major roadway,  
3 would be desirable. Also, I'd like to see a plan to  
4 move the proposed access ramp to at least six hundred  
5 feet from the STEAM school at Dr. King Elementary.

6 Two, I'm hoping that real economic  
7 benefits will be there for local residents, and will  
8 be generated by this project. This would be achieved  
9 by requiring contractors to hire thirty percent  
10 people of color, and thirty percent local residents,  
11 first from areas around the viaduct, then folks from  
12 the rest of the city.

13 Three, I'd like to see minimal  
14 displacement of lower-income residents, by providing  
15 relocation assistance, support and funding, and  
16 recognition of a right to return. This would include  
17 providing market-rate buyouts for existing  
18 homeowners, and funding for reasonable moving costs.  
19 Also, designating an eight to ten-acre parcel of  
20 land, just east of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
21 Boulevard, for development, under the direction of a  
22 community land trust run by local communities of  
23 color, would help to mitigate this disruption and  
24 dislocation. Thank you so much for your time.

25 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Geller

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2 Roloff. Next up to speak is Qingyang Liu, and  
3 Michael Bome. I would remind everyone to state and  
4 spell your name before you begin speaking.

5 MS. LIU: Good morning. I want to  
6 make sure, can everyone hear me correctly?

7 MR. SMITH: We can hear you fine.

8 MS. LIU: Hi, everyone. My name is  
9 Qingyang Liu. I'm currently a graduate student at  
10 Syracuse University. I'm living in Madison Towers,  
11 which is just next to the I-81 Highway. Thank you  
12 all for the comment and ... I wanted to raise my  
13 concern about this I-81 Project.

14 First, I am concerned about the noise,  
15 air quality, and then the air pollution during the  
16 construction time, which can bring a lot of damage to  
17 the residential area nearby the I-81, such as to  
18 Madison Towers, Jefferson Tower, and also the Upstate  
19 dormitory. I do not see any current  
20 presentation -- I do not see any of this being  
21 mentioned in the presentation. I would want to see  
22 how your government agency can acknowledge those  
23 potential negative effects to those residential  
24 areas.

25 Secondly, I'm concerned about the



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2 traffic change during the ... The potential removing  
3 of the current I-81 next to Madison Towers could be  
4 causing the traffic jam nearby the area, such as  
5 through as Elm Street, and also going down to the  
6 Syracuse University. All of this has not been  
7 examined during the presentation.

8 Third, I'm concerned about the current  
9 pandemic situation. I do not know how this  
10 uncertainty can be leading to the continuity of the  
11 project. Would the project even go through as  
12 planned, or with the project being halted due to the  
13 pandemic situation? And that will be all of my  
14 concerns. Thank you so much for your hearing today.

15 MR. SMITH: Okay. We're going to  
16 return to Mr. Wagner. I think that he was cut off  
17 prematurely, and he wanted to speak for another  
18 thirty seconds.

19 MR. WAGNER: Yes, and thank you for  
20 recognizing that error. I want to say in closing  
21 that the project has laudable goals, but it is the  
22 wrong solution. Instead of a highway eighteen feet  
23 overhead in Syracuse, NYSDOT will be building a  
24 highway at ground level. This cannot and does not  
25 advance any of the project objectives, especially

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2 those related to equity and social justice. We urge  
3 you to consider fully the skyway grid alternative in  
4 a fair and comprehensive way, and listen to the  
5 citizens of Syracuse who want a modernized I-81, not  
6 just what certain people think. Thank you very much.

7 MR. SMITH: Next up to speak is  
8 Michael Bome, followed by Constance Nyman.

9 MR. BOME: Can you hear me? Are you  
10 able to hear me now?

11 MR. SMITH: We can hear you fine.

12 MR. BOME: Thank you. I had a little  
13 problem with that before, but thank you for giving me  
14 the opportunity to speak. My name is Michael  
15 Bome -- spelled correctly B-O-M-E -- I'm a retired  
16 physical therapist, I live in Marietta, New York, and  
17 my statement or my question would be what have these  
18 studies shown, regarding the increase in commercial  
19 traffic exiting at Cortland, Preble, Tully or  
20 Lafayette, passing through Scott, Spafford, Tully,  
21 Marietta and Skaneateles, to get to the Thruway West.  
22 If there is an increase in commercial traffic, do you  
23 have any plans to restrict the traffic on these  
24 exits, or rural roads?

25 My other comment would be, we talk

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2 about safety, and I would question how many people  
3 have been killed walking or riding on the viaduct.  
4 My guess would be zero, since it is illegal to do  
5 those two activities. However, people walking and  
6 biking on a grid will succumb to injuries, and maybe  
7 die. And also, we may have an increase in fatalities  
8 on our rural roads, as a result of, I anticipate,  
9 commercial traffic.

10 The mayor should be well aware, as he  
11 knows the area here in Marietta well, families  
12 frequently walk these streets. So I thank you for  
13 giving me the opportunity to speak, and I hope we  
14 make the right decision. Thank you.

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Bome. Next  
16 up to speak is Constance Nyman, followed by Peter  
17 Sarver.

18 MS. MAGUIRE: Constance Nyman, you  
19 should be able to unmute yourself.

20 MS. NYMAN: Thank you. My name is  
21 Constance Nyman -- N-Y-M-A-N. Can you hear me now?

22 MR. SMITH: We can hear you fine.

23 MS. NYMAN: Thank you. I'm in favor  
24 of the community grid, with improvements to the bus  
25 service and scheduling. I've lived in Central New

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2 York 27 for the last fifty years, and nine of them in  
3 Syracuse. I retired to Syracuse from Orlando,  
4 Florida, because this is a great place to live, and I  
5 want it to be livable as well. I represent Moving  
6 People, which is part of the Alliance of Communities  
7 Transforming Syracuse.

8 Improved transportation has been the  
9 major mission for Moving People for nearly ten years,  
10 and we're not talking about cars and roads. Rather,  
11 Moving People advocates the best transportation for  
12 everyone. Moving People asked me to speak to one of  
13 its five major points. N.Y.S.D.O.T. must work  
14 closely with Centro to get planned and designed into  
15 our community grid the accommodations for buses and  
16 their riders, for now and in the future, when we  
17 expect that the Bus Rapid Transit will be a reality.

18 I feel strongly that to make Central  
19 New York a better place to live, we must make it  
20 better for all citizens. That means transportation  
21 in C.N.Y. -- Central New York -- must be able to move  
22 all of us efficiently to our jobs. To make it a  
23 better place, we must also reduce our carbon  
24 footprint. A public transportation system must be  
25 designed into the community grid, as if people are

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2 really going to use it. Coordinated plans between  
3 Centro and the New York State D.O.T. will move  
4 Syracuse towards this vision of livability. Thank  
5 you very much. Please support the community grid and  
6 recommended bus transit improvements.

7 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Nyman.  
8 Next up to speak is Peter Sarver, followed by Barry  
9 Gordon. I'd like to remind everyone to state and  
10 spell their name before they begin to speak.

11 MR. SARVER: My name is Peter  
12 Sarver -- Sarver is S-A-R-V-E-R -- and I'm the  
13 convener of the Moving People Transportation  
14 Coalition, which includes some twenty organizations,  
15 and hundreds of individuals who support community  
16 grid as the I-81 replacement. My purpose in speaking  
17 at this session this morning is to focus on jobs for  
18 local people, as a priority.

19 As the mayor suggested, we need to aim  
20 high. We specifically support the training and  
21 hiring of local residents that the Urban Jobs Task  
22 Force recommended for building equity in the  
23 construction trades, including a pro-Syracuse version  
24 of the Federal Government's local hire program,  
25 called SEP-14. That provides for training and hiring

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2 and the C.W.A.-P.L.A. agreement on I-81. That  
3 includes unions and community representatives in  
4 decision-making on the implementation of the I-81  
5 plan.

6 Moving People believe this is an  
7 important priority because social justice requires  
8 the chronically disabled, disadvantaged persons to be  
9 made a priority with this huge infrastructure  
10 project. In closing, we've been working on this as a  
11 group for eight to ten years, and we would oppose any  
12 kind of an extension of comment period. Everyone has  
13 had more than enough time to digest and articulate  
14 various viewpoints. Thanks very much for listening.

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Sarver.  
16 Next up is Barry Gordon, followed by Donald Doerr.

17 MR. GORDON: Hello. My name is Barry  
18 Gordon. That's B-A-R-R-Y, G-O-R-D-O-N. We have  
19 lived in Onondaga County since 1969, and in the Town  
20 of Lysander since 1976. We feel a strong attachment  
21 to Syracuse, and travel there multiple times each  
22 week. For the past two or three years, I have been a  
23 volunteer with the I-81 Project of the New York Civil  
24 Liberties Union.

25 This project's efforts are directed

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2 towards ensuring a just solution for the people of  
3 the Southside, and surrounding neighborhoods in  
4 Syracuse. The highway replacement should be viewed  
5 as a matter of justice -- environmental and  
6 racial -- and as an attempt to avoid a repeat of the  
7 unfair effects created when the original highway was  
8 built. The original highway's construction, as well  
9 as its current urban renewal projects, combined to  
10 destroy the fifteenth ward community.

11 Today, and throughout this commentary,  
12 you will receive many specific comments, such as  
13 concern about the unfortunate proposed location of  
14 the roundabout adjacent to Martin Luther King School.  
15 I prefer to focus on the broader picture, in an  
16 effort to place many of those specific comments in  
17 context. In the past, the New York State Department  
18 of Transportation, and other transportation -- I'm  
19 sorry, but I had to move my cursor -- and other  
20 transportation agencies across the country, have  
21 primarily seen their role as providing for the  
22 movement of traffic.

23 I hope this longstanding approach has  
24 evolved into an enlightened understanding that  
25 systems designed to move people, have far-ranging

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2 effects beyond transportation. For the decades of I-  
3 81's existence through Syracuse, the people,  
4 including ourselves, who have benefited most from the  
5 road's utility, are the people who have suffered the  
6 least of its ill effects, and the people who have  
7 received the least utility from the road, have borne  
8 the greatest burden of its negative effects. It is  
9 time to correct this imbalance. Thank you.

10 MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir. Next up  
11 to speak is Mr. Doerr, followed by David Carnie.

12 MR. DOERR: Hi, my name is Don Doerr.  
13 It's Donald Doerr -- D-O-E-R-R. I'm a resident of  
14 the Town of DeWitt, and I work in the City of  
15 Syracuse. I think that right now it's a really big  
16 mistake if you go ahead with the community grid,  
17 without looking at some of the alternatives. I've  
18 heard mention of a sky bridge. I go back and I  
19 started looking at, you know, the volumes and volumes  
20 of paper that you put in the D.E.I.S.

21 I'll tell you one thing I saw, was I  
22 had comments that I gave back at Jamesville-DeWitt  
23 High School almost five years ago -- November, five  
24 years ago -- and everything I said I went and read,  
25 and they're pretty much the same concern. The other



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thing I see is that you have in your appendix all the stakeholder and public meetings. If you get down to the one that Senator John DeFrancisco had at Henninger High School, and all you put there is 'event sponsored by others'.

There were hundreds of people at that. Mark Frechette was there. The director was there. There was a lot of politicians, community leaders, and every single problem with the community grid that was raised, none of them have been addressed. The whole key is to have a high speed, north-south alternative, to keep in place of 81.

Right now, I took a look at that video, the one where you're behind the wheel. That is absolutely atrocious. You're taking 81; you're slowing everything down to thirty miles an hour. And I said this five years ago, and I'm going to say it again. You're taking an Erie Boulevard, and you're plopping it down in the middle of the city. You have pollution. You have sound. You have all sorts of problems, by doing that.

The main purpose of 81 -- or one of them -- is so that you could get in and out of Syracuse. That's one of the advantages of living in

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2 Syracuse, is that we have that access. You're taking  
3 81, and turning it into an Erie Boulevard. You're  
4 not making it any safer. If you look at Erie  
5 Boulevard right now, would you take Erie Boulevard  
6 into the city from the east, or would you take 690?  
7 No, you hop on 690, and it brings you right into the  
8 city. You get off the exit, and you're right  
9 downtown.

10 The problem you have is right now you  
11 have a chance to build consensus. The sky bridge, or  
12 having some alternative of north-south traffic, is  
13 really what you need to do. And right now you can  
14 build consensus. Senator Schumer said there's  
15 consensus. There is not consensus.]

16 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

17 MR. DOERR: Read the hundreds, if not  
18 thousands of comments, directors. I mean, read all  
19 the stuff of the negative effects. You have not  
20 addressed any of all the communities from the west.  
21 The tractor trailers, you have not addressed that.  
22 And the other thing you haven't addressed -- and this  
23 is crazy -- is Destiny U.S.A., the sixth largest mall  
24 in America, you get the sales tax revenues from that.  
25 Where does that go? To the City of Syracuse. Please

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2 open your eyes and give some more time, and look at  
3 the other options. Thank you.

4 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Doerr.  
5 Next up to speak is David Carnie, followed by Jackson  
6 Hurst.

7 MR. CARNIE: All right, good  
8 afternoon. Can you hear me okay?

9 MR. SMITH: Yes, we can hear you  
10 great.

11 MR. CARNIE: All right, thank you very  
12 much. My name is David Carnie - D-A-V-I-D, C-A-R-N-  
13 I-E. I am the Town of Salina Fourth Ward Councilor.  
14 So I am not in favor of the proposed community grid.  
15 I speak on behalf of the constituents -I represent.  
16 I speak today regarding the Appendix D-2 Economic  
17 Considerations in the D.E.I.S.

18 The market information which had been  
19 used to this point, in the decision-making process,  
20 has numerous pitfalls and shortcomings inherent to  
21 the data. There's out-of-date information. The  
22 labor force data used is from the 2000 U.S. Census.  
23 We just now had been released 2020 U.S. Census data  
24 that should be used. The current and forecasted  
25 employment conditions are irrelevant. One example is

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2 the new Amazon distribution center in Clay -- three  
3 point eight million square foot warehouse -- one of  
4 the largest warehouses in the world.

5 Number two was contradictory data.  
6 There's multiple sources that will develop different  
7 estimations, even though the estimates are for the  
8 same market. So one example is 81 North to Seventh  
9 North Street, which is my district. Currently it's  
10 six point five miles on 81 North, from 41 North, to  
11 where the 81 business Loop will begin. -- six point  
12 five miles. If you take 81 North, take the business  
13 loop to 81 South, back down to the Seventh North  
14 Street exit, it's an additional thirteen point five  
15 miles longer.

16 So the data is contradictory.  
17 Projections can differ on how conservative or liberal  
18 the estimators are, and their interpretation of the  
19 raw data. Thirdly, there's a lack of ... A local  
20 study on area data gathered and analyzed, were  
21 established to ... locations to an overall metro  
22 area. So the study areas has established the focus  
23 on potential ... growth does not apply to suburban  
24 areas, and negatively impacts them.

25 In closing, I'll just say that when

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2 you look at data sources, you require the use of both  
3 primary and secondary data. Primary data is data  
4 gathered specifically for the task at hand. It is  
5 the data obtained from a site inspection. I urge for  
6 primary data to be gathered by direct observation,  
7 and explicit questioning of people in businesses that  
8 represent the areas impacted. I thank you for your  
9 time, and I look forward to your responses. Have a  
10 good day.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Carnie.  
12 Next up is Jackson Hurst, followed by William  
13 Sanford. I can't hear you, Mr. Hurst.

14 MR. HURST: Hi, my name is Jackson  
15 Hurst -- J-A-C-K-S-O-N, H-U-R-S-T -- and I highly  
16 approve and support N.Y.S.D.O.T.'s I-81 Viaduct  
17 Project. The alternatives I strongly feel that  
18 N.Y.S.D.O.T. should drop from consideration, is the  
19 no-build alternative, and the viaduct alternative.  
20 You should basically keep the community grid  
21 alternative. Now, with the community grid, I support  
22 that.

23 The other alternative that I highly  
24 support is the skyway bridge alternative, if nothing  
25 else. If there is so much community opposition to

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2 the community grid alternative, just go with the  
3 skyway alternative, please. I understand about the  
4 community grid, how it is going to basically reduce  
5 pollution and noise, by taking away the physical  
6 effects of 81 through fifteenth ward.

7 MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir. Next up  
8 is William Sanford, followed by Charlene Tarver.

9 MS. MAGUIRE: William Sanford, you  
10 should have the ability to unmute yourself.

11 MR. SMITH: Okay. We'll try to get  
12 back to Mr. Sanford in a moment, if he's having some  
13 technical difficulties. Please let us know in the  
14 chat if you're still on the line. Next up on my list  
15 is -- oh, is that Mr. Sanford?

16 MR. SANFORD: Yes.

17 MR. SMITH: Okay. You're up, sir.

18 MR. SANFORD: Yes, sorry for that.

19 MR. SMITH: That's okay.

20 MR. SANFORD: Thank you for having  
21 this public hearing. My name is William Sanford, S-  
22 A-N-F-O-R-D. I grew up in the fifteenth ward, and I  
23 saw the devastation that was done to the  
24 neighborhoods there, at that time. And I also served  
25 as the chairman of the County Legislator, from 1980

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2 to 2001, and I was seeing a similar project that was  
3 going to really change the Southside, and the effect  
4 on those people down there, during my tenure.

5 And the people stood up and moved  
6 against that, and so it didn't happen, and so here's  
7 another time that I would like to see the people on  
8 the Southside be able to, you know, comment on this  
9 whole process. I just spent three weeks down in the  
10 Southside, reacquainting myself with some of my old  
11 neighbors, and also talking with many people, and  
12 they're clueless. They don't know how this is going  
13 to affect them, and I think that there is a  
14 responsibility by the D.O.T. to make sure that those  
15 folks have the information.

16 And so the other concerns that I have,  
17 in just looking at this, I guess is that there's  
18 going to be more traffic in those neighborhoods, as  
19 it's all funneled through the city. And it's going  
20 to cause neighborhoods, and the ability to be a  
21 neighborhood, having kids playing out there by the  
22 streets and all of those things, as well as the  
23 environmental impact of, you know, all that exhausts  
24 and everything going into that area, and so I'm  
25 really worried about that.

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2 I'm not against the grid, but I think  
3 that we should probably have a hybrid-type thing  
4 going on, so that the people that want to just  
5 continue at high speed through this area, would be  
6 able to do that. And so the other thing is that we  
7 just got the census back, and the City of Syracuse  
8 has grown, and the only one Upstate that's done that,  
9 which is great. And so in the E.I.S., as far as I  
10 can find out, there isn't any accommodation for the  
11 growth.

12 In fact, it's ... of growth, I think,  
13 or maybe it's just even. So I think you'd better  
14 take a look at that again because it's going to be  
15 affecting those neighborhoods at that time. And so I  
16 appreciate, again, the time that you are all putting  
17 in, and I hope that you will take these comments into  
18 consideration. Thank you very much.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Sanford.  
20 Next up is Charlene Tarver, followed by Mary  
21 Cunningham.

22 MS. TARVER: Yes, this is Charlene  
23 Tarver. Can you hear me?

24 MR. SMITH: We can.

25 MS. TARVER: Yes. Good afternoon.



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2 Thank you again to the New York State D.O.T. for the  
3 work that you've done in convening this project, and  
4 of course convening this public hearing. My name is  
5 Charlene Tarver -- T-A-R-V, like Victor, E-R. Excuse  
6 me, T-A-R-V-E-R. I am a resident of Syracuse. My  
7 family has resided in Syracuse for more than five  
8 decades.

9 According to the 2010 census, Syracuse  
10 had the highest concentration of black and brown  
11 poverty in the nation. That, coupled with the  
12 history of redlining in Syracuse, and the further  
13 isolation -- segregation -- enforced by the viaduct,  
14 really leads me today to echo a number of the  
15 comments that have already been made regarding the  
16 need for local hiring, and the emphasis in  
17 prioritizing establishing a land trust that would  
18 address some of the historic racial, social, economic  
19 and environmental justices that have been done and  
20 committed against African-Americans in the City of  
21 Syracuse.

22 The City of Syracuse is actually  
23 ranked one of the worst -- one of the top ten worst  
24 places in the country for African-Americans to  
25 reside. This one point nine to two point two billion

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2 dollar project is an opportunity to address some of  
3 those economic issues and inequities it has been  
4 stated, and also a report was created by the Urban  
5 Jobs Task Force and Legal Services of Central New  
6 York, which identify that a number of the recent  
7 construction projects in Syracuse, eighty-eight  
8 percent of those workers in construction are white,  
9 and a very low percentage of those are even from the  
10 City of Syracuse.

11 The STEAM School, which is located  
12 right at the base of the construction of the removal  
13 of I-81 -- the viaduct -- those students are eighty  
14 percent black, and ninety-nine percent low income. I  
15 think that it is very imperative that we give the  
16 community more time to review the two  
17 hundred -- excuse me, the twenty-eight thousand page  
18 report that has come out, so that the community can  
19 be better galvanized, that there be a stronger  
20 emphasis on hiring local, and hiring African-  
21 Americans specifically, since they are the ones who  
22 are going to be most impacted. I think it is also  
23 imperative that we look at the environmental issues  
24 here, the placement of the construction site there at  
25 Wilson Park, and ensuring that our children are not

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2 further impacted.

3 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

4 MS. TARVER: That is one of the lowest  
5 performing schools in the State of New York. And  
6 again, I think there is an opportunity here not only  
7 to integrate the community, but to further integrate  
8 culture, and create a stronger sense of economic  
9 development and economic viability within the  
10 African-American community that was destructively  
11 impacted by the removal and the destruction of ward  
12 fifteen. Thank you.

13 MR. SMITH: Thank you, ma'am. The  
14 next speaker is Mary Cunningham, followed by Holland  
15 Gregg.

16 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Hi. My name is Mary  
17 Cunningham, C-U-N-N-I-N-G-H-A-M. One of the causes  
18 of the deterioration of cities is when cities start  
19 to emphasize that they are places of parking lots and  
20 high-speed traffic and big trucks. And we really  
21 need to remember that cities are also places where  
22 there's people who are living in neighborhoods that  
23 we want to form.

24 I want to remind people that all the  
25 streets in our city should be thirty-mile-per-hour

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streets. There should not be any other streets in our city that are higher than that, certainly not near schools. And school -- if you go down East Genesee Street, everybody slows down to twenty miles an hour for a high school, and we should be slowing down to twenty miles per hour for the Martin Luther King STEAM School. One, there should be no business loop or qualified highway going near that area, along Almond Street, and particularly near the school. Lanes should be eleven feet to slow down traffic.

If people have to take five more minutes to get from one place to another, from the north to the south, or the south to the north, I'm sorry; it's worth the health and the welfare of the people on the Southside who have been so punished by having I-81 raised in their middle. There should be no roundabout near M.L.K. As one person said, if there had been a roundabout there first, no one would have built the school there. So why would we now say, well, there's a school; let's build a roundabout? It's going to bring more traffic, more pollution, more noise, more destruction, and it's a barrier.

We are taking down 81 to try and

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2 remediate a barrier that made us a segregated city.  
3 Putting a roundabout in that area, it could go off at  
4 West Street into Fayette. It could go down it right  
5 now, so that it is not a barrier, nor does it then  
6 concentrate traffic in a roundabout right by a school  
7 where there is preschoolers, kindergarten, young  
8 children. And kids don't watch traffic the way we  
9 would like them to, so it is just murder waiting to  
10 happen. It is dangerous. The last thing I guess I  
11 want to --

12 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds remaining.

13 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. The last thing  
14 I want to encourage is that when we talk about local  
15 hire, we think about local hire from the fifteenth  
16 ward, and nineteenth ward, where it's been most  
17 impacted by the construction of I-81, that we don't  
18 think ... so much as we see city and the local  
19 Southside for training and hiring. Thank you.

20 MR. SMITH: Thank you, ma'am. Next up  
21 to speak is Holland Gregg, followed by Adara Hobbs.

22 MR. GREGG: Testing. Can you hear me?

23 MR. SMITH: Yeah. We can hear you,  
24 Holland.

25 MR. GREGG: Okay, thank you. First of

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2 all, thank you all for conducting this Zoom meeting.

3 It's going very well, even with the technical issues.

4 My name is Holland Gregg. First name is H-O-L-L-A-N-

5 D, and last name is Gregg, G-R-E-G-G. I'm a resident

6 of Skaneateles. I'm the executive director of a

7 preservation group here called the Citizens to

8 Preserve the Character of Skaneateles. I have sent

9 my comments in, via email, and so I'm assuming those

10 are on the record, and so I would just like to

11 summarize those.

12 First of all, I do believe that the

13 City of Syracuse does need an update to its

14 cityscape, and so many good reasons have been

15 articulated today. Our concerns are about the

16 traffic study that the State has conducted. There's

17 great nervousness about the way those traffic studies

18 were calculated, and what I'm hoping is that -- I've

19 heard enough noise about the calculations, that I'm

20 hoping that the State would entertain the idea of

21 having some objective traffic experts come in and

22 comment about those calculations, and to really get

23 them around together in a constructive way, to make

24 sure that the calculations are accurate. The one

25 thing that could be a disaster is if they've been

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2 underscored, or if they've been -- if the counts have  
3 been too low, because we'll never get a chance to  
4 correct that, and so now would be the time.

5 Our other concern is for the  
6 communities to the east and north of Syracuse, and  
7 all of the traffic that's going to impact  
8 their -- again, I've outlined this in my comments, in  
9 writing. And that, as Mr. Bone said earlier, traffic  
10 coming through above Route 81, the design, as far as  
11 we could see, is -- the design of the new traffic  
12 pattern is going to really discourage members of the  
13 trucking industry, especially long-haul truckers  
14 coming up from the south and heading west, to  
15 continue on and go through the city, and go east, go  
16 north, and then come back west.

17 This is going to have a negative  
18 impact on all of the communities, not just  
19 Skaneateles. This is not a Skaneateles problem.  
20 This is a Cortland problem, and an Ithaca problem,  
21 and an Aurora problem. In other words, this  
22 community grid design is going to impact all of  
23 Central New York, and a lot of us are very, very  
24 nervous about this.

25 And what I'm hoping is that the State

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2 will adopt regulations that are enforceable, to keep  
3 the trucks on the highways, and not allow them to cut  
4 off, and cut through the back roads, which all we  
5 could see is more traffic, over two hundred and fifty  
6 trucks that come through every single day. And then  
7 the Amazon outlet too, is going to have an impact.  
8 So thank you very much. You have my comments in  
9 writing, and I do appreciate it. I hope you will  
10 address them. Thank you.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Gregg.

12 Next up is Adara Hobbs, followed by Peter King.

13 MS. HOBBS: Hello. Can you hear me?

14 MR. SMITH: Yes, we can.

15 MS. HOBBS: Hi, my name is Adara Hobbs.  
16 Spelling is A-D-A-R-A, last name H-O-B-B-S. I'm a  
17 community member and lifelong resident of Syracuse,  
18 New York. I am also a teaching assistant at Brighton  
19 Academy, which is the feeder school for Dr. King.  
20 And I would just like to address my concern with the  
21 racial and economic disparities that would take place  
22 when this project is in effect.

23 First and foremost, I really am  
24 concerned about the displacement of this community.  
25 I lived in McKinney Manor as a child. A lot of my



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2 family members still reside in these neighborhoods,  
3 and my concern is primarily the access to different  
4 areas, and even opportunities. A lot of these  
5 students who come up in this neighborhood, have an  
6 opportunity to get an education at Syracuse  
7 University, like myself, at an extremely discounted  
8 or free rate because of their residence there, and I  
9 want to know what will be put in place to continue to  
10 create equity in this community.

11 As we know, when the bridge was built,  
12 it was a ... when they destroyed the fifteenth ward.  
13 And to my group, particularly my demographic, our  
14 biggest concern is how that would happen again, and  
15 how this gentrification will affect this  
16 neighborhood. My students have lived in this area  
17 their whole life. Their grandparents have lived  
18 here. Pioneer Homes is one of the oldest public  
19 housing buildings in the United States -- one of the  
20 fifth oldest. It's been here since 1940. There's  
21 whole communities that would be displaced. Their  
22 grandparents would be displaced. They will not have  
23 the strong community unit, which is very important in  
24 the black community.

25 So I have several concerns I would

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2 like to address furthermore. The roundabout at Dr.  
3 Martin Luther King School is completely unethical and  
4 unsafe for our students, on the basis of traffic and  
5 speeding around that roundabout. My concern is that  
6 one of my children will die at that roundabout, as  
7 well as the pollution that will be caused with this  
8 project.

9 I strongly encourage you guys as well  
10 to extend the comment period from the community  
11 because, like someone else said, they are completely  
12 clueless. I think that the Department of  
13 Transportation should take some responsibility for  
14 informing these people what really is going to  
15 happen, and what the effects of this displacement  
16 will be. Thank you.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, ma'am. The  
18 next speaker is Peter King, followed by Kevin  
19 McCormack.

20 MR. KING: Hello. Hello?

21 MR. SMITH: I can hear you, sir.

22 MR. KING: Okay. I am Peter  
23 King -- P-E-T-E-R, K-I-N-G -- and I have lived in  
24 Syracuse for twenty years. I am supporting the  
25 project concerned, expressed by Moving People

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2 Transport Coalition and the New York State Civil  
3 Liberties Union. I think the health and safety  
4 concern should be a priority for the 81 project.

5 In general, the community grid option  
6 would more likely improve public health concerns in  
7 Syracuse and the region, largely by reducing traffic  
8 volumes and speed. However, I recommend a maximum  
9 speed of thirty miles an hour, and eleven-foot lanes  
10 along business loop 81 within the city, and also  
11 slowing and dispersing traffic from Martin Luther  
12 King East until the 481 South interchange.

13 These measures will promote public  
14 health and safety for pedestrians and cyclists by  
15 calming traffic, and are more likely to reduce the  
16 air pollution here. However, D.O.T. should not  
17 underestimate the air quality issues remaining in the  
18 city, and especially on the Southside, even after a  
19 grid conversion. Nobody has adequately studied air  
20 quality and its related effects in Syracuse, which  
21 are structural environmental justice concerns.

22 D.O.T. needs to examine the  
23 microclimate here, and plan for reducing the air  
24 pollution overall, and buffering its impact. For  
25 example, as is common on hilly terrain, the cold air

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likely drains each night from the university area and Oakwood Cemetery, blowing along 81 into the Southside. On still days, atmospheric inversions can also occur, keeping pollutants recirculating in the valley. Keeping this microclimate in mind, the traffic between Martin Luther King East to the 481 South interchange should not remain a high-speed roadway, but should be dispersed along the street grid as much as possible.

The public health impact from this stretch can be reduced by including more road access to and from the Southside and university, for example like the proposed interchange at Colvin Street. D.O.T.'s planning for natural areas along the Southside may be beneficial for air quality, but should be openly evaluated.

Dust concern is especially a concern in the city neighborhoods during the construction phase and after. D.O.T. should attend remediating heavy metals from the soils underneath the current viaduct and surrounding area for at least a hundred feet. Existing techniques can do this efficiently without costing too much.

D.O.T. should use input from multiple

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2 sources, including experts, people's on the ground  
3 observations and knowledge, and technical  
4 measurements for air quality, for monitoring the  
5 rebuild process and afterwards. D.O.T. should  
6 rethink the roundabout currently planned for the  
7 Martin Luther King intersection.

8 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds.

9 MR. KING: As within this location is,  
10 six hundred feet of a busy roadway, a school. In  
11 general, that is most of my comments. Thank you very  
12 much.

13 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. King. Next  
14 up to speak is Kevin McCormack, followed by Woodruff  
15 Carroll.

16 MR. MCCORMACK: Thank you. I'm Kevin  
17 McCormack. McCormack is spelled M-C-C-O-R-M-A-C-K.  
18 I've lived in the town and village of Skaneateles for  
19 over forty years, and I'm currently serving on the  
20 Town Board of Skaneateles. I'm here to echo, to a  
21 large extent, the comments of Mr. Gregg. I'm very  
22 concerned about the impact of the community grid plan  
23 on truck traffic exiting off of I-81, and coming  
24 north through the small towns and villages west of  
25 the city. We already have a problem with long-haul

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2 freight and garbage trucks, traveling off of I -- I'm  
3 sorry, Route 481 and 41A along the lake, the  
4 Skaneateles Lake.

5 In addition to the problems mentioned  
6 by Mr. Gregg, there's a danger of accidents,  
7 particularly in the winter. Anyone's who's traveled  
8 the 41A in the winter will know how narrow it is,  
9 especially when there are storms, it's very  
10 dangerous. And our lake is a significant water  
11 supply for the City of Syracuse, and accidents  
12 occurring along those routes will be catastrophic for  
13 the water supply. The community grid plan will  
14 increase this traffic significantly, and encourage  
15 more trucks to leave I-81.

16 I'm asking the New York State  
17 Department of Transportation to consider mitigation  
18 methods to discourage trucks leaving I-81, and  
19 perhaps speed limit signs and roundabouts, or other  
20 means of restricting traffic. Specifically one issue  
21 I'd like to raise with the New York State D.O.T. is  
22 trucks coming up Route 41A and exiting onto Route 20  
23 in the Village of Skaneateles. It's an extremely  
24 dangerous situation, and we desperately need a real  
25 traffic light at that intersection, and we need

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2 crosswalk markers to allow village residents to  
3 safely cross Route 20.

4 I think that would be a very helpful  
5 improvement, and once again can reduce and help to  
6 discourage trucks from leaving I-81. Thank you very  
7 much. I appreciate your time.

8 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. McCormack.  
9 Next up is Woodruff Carroll, followed by Ronald Van  
10 Norstrand.

11 MR. CARROLL: Hi, can you hear me?

12 MR. SMITH: I can hear you.

13 MR. CARROLL: Okay, thank you. The  
14 concern I've been having, as I look at this, is I  
15 don't see what the consideration has been, and what  
16 effect it will have on economic development in the  
17 city to go to this community grid approach. I was  
18 wondering if you could make some comments on that.

19 MR. SMITH: Mr. Carroll, did you have  
20 more to say?

21 MR. CARROLL: No, not at the moment.  
22 I've heard every other possible issue addressed, but  
23 nobody's addressed anything to what it would do for  
24 economic development in the city.

25 MR. SMITH: Understood. Thank you,

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2 sir. Next up is Ronald Van Norstrand, followed by  
3 Paul Czajkowski.

4 MR. VAN NORSTRAND: Thank you. My  
5 name is Ron Van Norstrand. That's in V, as in  
6 Victor, A-N, N-O-R-S-T-R-A-N-D. I'm a resident of  
7 the City of Syracuse. I've lived here for thirty-  
8 eight years, and I'm a recently retired civil rights  
9 attorney. During my legal practice, many of my  
10 clients struggled with numerous quality of life  
11 issues, of living in an environmental justice  
12 community.

13 I implore the D.O.T. to acknowledge  
14 and to take concrete actions to address the fact that  
15 these quality of life issues arose primarily from the  
16 destruction of the fifteenth ward, and the enabling  
17 of white flight suburbs, caused greatly by the  
18 initial construction of I-81. Many people have  
19 addressed examples of concrete actions that could be  
20 taken.

21 I would point out that it is  
22 imperative that you reserve an equitable percentage  
23 of I-81 demolition and construction jobs for Syracuse  
24 city residents, and that you use an independent  
25 compliance officer, which is general practice for



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2 construction projects, to effectively monitor the  
3 local hiring goals. Thank you.

4 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Van  
5 Norstrand. At this time, I'd like to remind the  
6 public that the D.O.T. and Federal Highway  
7 Administration will not be extemporaneously answering  
8 questions during this call. But all of your comments  
9 are being carefully recorded and will be responded to  
10 in due course, as part of the final environmental  
11 impact statement. Next up is Paul Czajkowski,  
12 followed by Megan Lee.

13 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: Good morning. Good  
14 afternoon, I'm sorry -- a quarter of one.

15 MR. SMITH: Hello. Good afternoon,  
16 sir.

17 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: Hello, how are you?

18 MR. SMITH: Go ahead.

19 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: Can you hear me?

20 MR. SMITH: We can hear you fine.

21 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: Thank you. So a lot  
22 of the comments I've heard have been on truckers, and  
23 I originally had submitted some maps for D.O.T. via  
24 email, on August 10th, and it was looking at an  
25 alternative route from I-81 northbound going to I-90

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2 westbound, and vice versa, for truck traffic. It  
3 seems right now there's an issue in Skaneateles, as  
4 well as there will be other issues toward the  
5 business loop with truck traffic, as we go westbound  
6 and southbound. I think the D.O.T. should look at an  
7 alternative. I included a map of Baltimore,  
8 Maryland, where they have a complete interstate that  
9 goes around the entire City of Baltimore. It could  
10 actually be tied back into Cicero, where the Amazon  
11 building -- or, excuse me, that's up in Clay.

12 But having a basic interstate  
13 roundabout that would take basically 481 currently,  
14 and basically near it, right over 81, and create an  
15 interstate that goes around the entire City of  
16 Syracuse. And that would help both propel the  
17 business loop and community grid project, as well as  
18 provide an alternative means for both through traffic  
19 going northbound, to alleviate some of the issues we  
20 see currently with the interchange exit three at five  
21 and seventy-two, as well as provide access to western  
22 areas, such as Oswego and Fulton, with the  
23 development of the port authority up there in Oswego  
24 currently.

25 It could be pulled down, you know,

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2 depending on the route of it, looking at Google Maps,  
3 utilizing the current Route 80 through Tully, between  
4 Skaneateles and Marcellus, and extending out towards  
5 between Weedsport and Jordan on I-90. This corridor  
6 could provide access for the many Finger Lakes  
7 regions, and it could also provide additional support  
8 for congestion within the City of Syracuse, as an  
9 alternative to access 81 and I-90 in that area.

10 MR. SMITH: Thirty second remaining.

11 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: I know ninety -- or  
12 excuse me, the ... exit is definitely very busy. My  
13 wife ... in DeWitt, and I think that that situation  
14 needs to be looked at again, and more comments ...

15 MR. SMITH: Mr. Czajkowski, can you  
16 hear me? Can you hear me, sir?

17 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: Yes, sir.

18 MR. SMITH: We lost you there for a  
19 moment. I'm going to give you a little extra time so  
20 you can finish your thought.

21 MR. CZAJKOWSKI: I'm all set. Thank  
22 you.

23 MR. SMITH: You're all set, okay.  
24 Thank you, sir. The next person to speak is Megan  
25 Lee, followed by Jacqueline Lasonde.

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2 MS. LEE: Hi, my name is Megan Lee

3 --- M-E-G-A-N, L-E-E. I strongly support the  
4 community grid alternative. The community grid  
5 alternative not only meets the needs of the project  
6 described in the project documents, but it also  
7 rights the historical wrong done to the people  
8 displaced by the original build of I-81. I am a  
9 resident of the Town of Geddes.

10 I appreciate the opportunity to share  
11 my opinion, yet it is vital that the most attention  
12 is paid to the people living directly around the I-81  
13 highway, in the City of Syracuse -- those whose  
14 health, homes and lives are most impacted by the  
15 highway in its current form, and who will be most  
16 impacted by the changes to come. I would echo the  
17 Urban Job Task Force's clear and attainable demands  
18 for environmental, racial and economic justice, in  
19 the implementation of the community grid alternative.

20 I look forward to someday viewing this  
21 chapter in Syracuse's history, and knowing that our  
22 community made a series of moral choices. Many  
23 people participating today have asked for an extended  
24 comment period. I would ask that as well, given the  
25 magnitude of the decisions being made here. Thank

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2 you very much for the opportunity to speak.

3 MR. SMITH: Thank you, ma'am. Next up  
4 is Jacqueline Lasonde, and I would like to remind  
5 everyone, as we reach the end of our list of people  
6 who have submitted their names ahead of time, if you  
7 wish to speak, please raise your hand using the Zoom  
8 app, and we'll make sure that you get the  
9 opportunity. So next up is Jacqueline Lasonde.

10 MS. LASONDE: Good afternoon. Can you  
11 hear me?

12 MR. SMITH: I can.

13 MS. LASONDE: Great. So thank you for  
14 the opportunity, and for bringing this  
15 meeting -- very important meeting -- together, and I  
16 look forward to the others as well. My name is  
17 Jacqueline Lasonde. I'll spell the last name -- L-A-  
18 S, like Sam, O-N-D-E. I am a member of the I-81  
19 Project, which is run by NYCLU, as well as I am the  
20 president of the Greater Syracuse Southside  
21 Neighborhood Association, in which we are civically  
22 engaged and run a full service food pantry on the  
23 Southside.

24 I have not grown up here, but I'm here  
25 now six years. And as a Southside resident and

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2 homeowner, I have many concerns, as many of the  
3 residents of the Southside do. I am deeply concerned  
4 about the business loop, which should not be placed  
5 near the Dr. Martin Luther King School. This is not  
6 a business. It is a school.

7 The quality of life, as it regards to  
8 air quality, is a priority. It has not been during  
9 the endurance of this bridge that has gone above this  
10 school and Wilson Park, above their heads. Well,  
11 traffic should not be a consideration. Respiratory  
12 and quality of life, and making right the atrocities  
13 of the past, this is what the goal should be, and  
14 should always be. The deadline for commentary should  
15 be extended, I agree, at least six months.

16 This community, as well as other  
17 people, but specifically here, we have gone through a  
18 lot of things. We are still in COVID, job loss, home  
19 loss, and so we need to take all of these things into  
20 consideration because we are in unprecedented times.  
21 Jobs should be concentrated to the persons most  
22 affected before this interstate demolished ward  
23 fifteen. And now that it will be removed, the City  
24 of Syracuse residents, predominantly African-  
25 Americans, should benefit from this. There needs to

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2 be accountability on all of these projects because it  
3 is very concerning that there are a lot of comments,  
4 and people in the surrounding areas, based on ...

5 MR. SMITH: Thirty seconds.

6 MS. LASONDE: And yet we are the ones  
7 who these decisions were made about, so we need to be  
8 the ones that are specifically and totally involved.  
9 Thank you for your time, and I look forward to going  
10 forward with the project.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Lasonde.  
12 That concludes the list of people that we had ahead  
13 of time. I'm going to pause for a moment, to give  
14 the moderator an opportunity to see if there's any  
15 other people who wish to speak through raising their  
16 hand on the app, and we'll be back in a moment. I  
17 see that a couple of people have been added. Next up  
18 to speak is Courtney Alexander. Oh, I'm sorry; I  
19 don't know if you could hear me before. I see that a  
20 couple of people have been added to my list. Next up  
21 to speak is Courtney Alexander, followed by Mark  
22 Tucker.

23 MS. ALEXANDER: Excellent, thank you.  
24 I'm Courtney Alexander. I'm the deputy town  
25 supervisor, as well as town councilor, in the Town of

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2 Skaneateles, and we have some different concerns  
3 about this project. I am here speaking on behalf of  
4 myself and our board, and I know Mark will also be  
5 speaking as well. We have a request that the final  
6 report and E.I.S. that the Federal Highway  
7 Administration and the New York State Department of  
8 Transportation recently released, that identifies the  
9 community grid alternative as the project's preferred  
10 alternative.

11 Our concerns are for the impact and  
12 the increase in interstate trucks entering and  
13 exiting Interstate 81 at the Homer exit, as a  
14 shortcut from the throughway to Seneca Falls. This  
15 will create an untenable negative impact on our  
16 small, rural communities on the Skaneateles Lake, and  
17 throughout the Finger Lakes. Skaneateles Lake is the  
18 source of unfiltered drinking water for over two  
19 hundred thousand people in Skaneateles, the City of  
20 Syracuse, and many surrounding communities.

21 Truck traffic entering and exiting  
22 Interstate 81 at Homer will travel along this highway  
23 on the east and west side of Skaneateles Lake. That  
24 has potential consequences to all these communities,  
25 and the surrounding towns and villages in Central New



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2 York. This has not been adequately addressed by the  
3 D.E.I.S. We have sent this letter of our concerns on  
4 to Rick Marquis, the Division Administration, but I  
5 can't communicate enough the impact that this project  
6 will have on the traffic in these surrounding  
7 communities and the Finger Lakes, and I would like to  
8 formally request that this be examined thoroughly as  
9 the project moves forward. Thank you for your time.

10 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Alexander.  
11 Next up to speak is Mr. Tucker.

12 MR. TUCKER: Hello. Can you hear me?

13 MR. SMITH: I can hear you.

14 MR. TUCKER: Hi, this is Mark Tucker,  
15 town councilor for the Town of Skaneateles. T-U-C-K-  
16 E-R is the last name. I'm glad we have a chance to  
17 listen to all the comments here today. I have to  
18 agree with Courtney on what she said about trucks. I  
19 mean, we've had this discussion quite a bit. The one  
20 thing I always considered with this community grid,  
21 have they looked at the pollution?

22 I read these articles that say, well,  
23 these highways create pollution through the community  
24 for those. But if you're going to start putting in  
25 all these traffic lights, are you going to

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2 take -- how are you going to create a better  
3 environment with vehicles idling at those  
4 intersections? The other thing, if this thing is  
5 wide, like Erie Boulevard, as one guy mentioned  
6 earlier, it's still going to keep the place separated  
7 down there. And I don't know on the land, that I  
8 hear there's going to be all this land for  
9 development.

10 Who's going to get that? Is it going  
11 to be hospitals, or the university, which don't  
12 supply any taxes to the City of Syracuse? Those are  
13 some of my concerns. I understand these people have  
14 had some unjust down there over the years, but let's  
15 not make it worse for them by putting in too many  
16 traffic lights, or at least get them timed right, or  
17 something. I don't know if that's been addressed.  
18 And that's all I have for now. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Tucker. I  
20 believe we've reached the end of our speaker list.  
21 This hearing will be continued at five o'clock today,  
22 so we will go into recess. It will not end. And I  
23 want to thank everybody who participated, and I  
24 appreciate all of your comments. And I know that the  
25 D.O.T. participants are listening carefully, and

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2 considering everything you have to say.

3 (The proceeding concluded.)  
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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, ANNETTE LAINSON do hereby certify that the foregoing  
4 was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place,  
5 as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that  
6 the foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of  
7 pages 1 through 72, is a true record of all proceedings  
8 had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
10 subscribed my name, this the 1st day of September, 2021.

11

12 ANNETTE LAINSON, Reporter

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2 NEW YORK STATE

3 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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5  
6 I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT PUBLIC HEARING

7 DATE: August 18, 2021

8 TIME: 3:38 p.m. to 7:20 p.m.

9 LOCATION: ONCENTER

10 800 South Street

11 Syracuse, New York 13202

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2 APPEARANCES;

3 Mahlon J. Sodlay

Mable Wilson

4 John Edinger

Anthony Tartaro

5 Kevin E. McCormack

6 Daniel N. Weingarth

Tom Carlin

7 Woodruff Carroll

Joe Bright

8 George Lawrence

Patrona Jones

9 Dave Podkowinski

Audrey Fletcher

10 Andy Boucounis

Twiggy Billue

11 Stephen Erwin

James W. Darlington

12 Giovanni Vazille

13 Tom Law

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2 (On the record at 3:38 p.m.)

3 MR. JODLAY: What I wanted to check  
4 was -- what I wanted to check was, the 2nd November  
5 1950, I was born in Crouse Irving Hospital. So I saw  
6 81 built. Not heard about it, not waited until it  
7 was done, I watched it built. And one thing I'm kind  
8 of commenting about is once they do what they're  
9 going to do, are they going to have more cut-offs  
10 where you can go places, you know, to see different  
11 things? Go to the university, go to the hospitals,  
12 go to your friend's house, go the grocery store, go  
13 to the liquor store, go visit a friend. That's what  
14 I want to know, what they're going to do about that?  
15 As far as I'm concerned, that's it.

16 MS. WILSON: Hi. I'm Mable Wilson and  
17 I live in Pioneer Homes. My -- one of my great  
18 concerns is that the roundabout at Martin Luther King  
19 school is not a good idea because our kids have the  
20 highest incidences of asthma and other respiratory  
21 diseases. I think that there should be a good -- a  
22 good look into the environmental impact that's going  
23 to be on us residents that live in Pioneer Homes  
24 until we're able to move out of that area.

25 And also, I want to see a lot of green

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2 spaces -- paces -- places when the grid is done, and  
3 trees in our area because we have the lowest amount  
4 of trees in the African-American community, a native  
5 plant. And if we can, have a park somewhat similar  
6 to Central Park, but it might have to be on a small  
7 scale, but a park like that in this area would bring  
8 vitalization to the community, and us to go out when  
9 it's nice and warm, to take our children and  
10 grandchildren and great-grands to these areas.

11 And also, open up jobs for African-  
12 Americans to work on this project because as far as I  
13 know there haven't been any African-American  
14 contractors involved, and I think that's a shame.  
15 And I think it's a shame if you're not looking at the  
16 needs of the minority community with environmental  
17 protections.

18 Thank you.

19 (Off the record, 3:47 p.m.)

20 (On the record, 4:11 p.m.)

21 MR. EDINGER: Hello. My name is John  
22 Edinger. I am a current resident of the town of  
23 Preble in Cortland County, but live right near the  
24 Onondaga-Cortland County line. I've traveled on  
25 Route 81 all my life, either as a driver or a



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2 passenger. I am currently employed with National  
3 Grid as a Class A truck driver, and for our warehouse  
4 which is located on Henry Clay Boulevard in  
5 Liverpool.

6 I'm -- I'm present at the meeting  
7 today to give my objection to a new community grid.  
8 I feel that -- that the community grid is going to  
9 hold up much -- a lot of traffic to go throughout the  
10 area the way it is. I also feel that it's also going  
11 to force people to leave the -- move out of the area  
12 -- force people to go outside of the area to, you  
13 know, to get to work like myself. Like myself, it  
14 probably would add time to like, fifteen, twenty  
15 minutes -- probably ten, fifteen minutes every day  
16 going back and forth to work.

17 I also feel that this is also going to  
18 force truck travel throughout -- you know, outside --  
19 you know, that is coming in from Syracuse. It's  
20 going to force it to go into towns of Homer and  
21 Skaneateles where there -- even their ordinances  
22 about they're still not -- they're going to be  
23 risking that going through the -- those areas.

24 I also feel that it may force us to go  
25 -- do different things in regard to traveling to --

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2 you know, traveling west to let's say the State  
3 Fairgrounds or to the amphitheater or, you know,  
4 going into Buffalo. It would change my routes that I  
5 normally would take, which would be a lot longer than  
6 what it currently is now.

7 I plan on giving a more formal  
8 statement, but I wanted to just at least express my  
9 dissatisfaction of the grid. And I feel that this  
10 has not been treated as -- treated as a regional  
11 decision. It's only been treated as a city decision,  
12 and it needs -- this needs to be more regionally  
13 focused.

14 That's my statement.

15 (Off the record, 4:14 p.m.)

16 (On the record, 4:25 p.m.)

17 MR. TARTARO: Okay. I want to know if  
18 there has been an environmental impact statement, or  
19 an environmental impact study of the increase in  
20 miles traveled if you change 81 to 481? I've -- I've  
21 clocked it on my motorcycle and it's over five miles  
22 longer distance, going around the city, than it is  
23 going straight through the city.

24 In 2002, approximately twenty-five  
25 thousand of the cars that were on 81 each day were

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2 through cars. That means they weren't stopping in  
3 the city, they didn't start in the city, they didn't  
4 finish in the city, they were just going through the  
5 city. So that's twenty-five thousand cars every day  
6 that will be traveling an extra, at least five miles  
7 an hour around the city of Syracuse.

8 And if there isn't an environmental  
9 statement already, impact statement, I think there  
10 should be one because you're going to add a hundred  
11 and twenty-five thousand miles driven every single  
12 day, needlessly. It's going to cost all those  
13 twenty-five thousand people every day that much money  
14 to drive around Syracuse, but most importantly, it's  
15 going to create a hundred and twenty-five thousand  
16 miles of exhaust every single day that doesn't have  
17 to be there if you keep the cars going straight  
18 through Syracuse like it was.

19 And I'd like to know what the  
20 environmental impact of all that would be. I guess,  
21 that's it.

22 MR. MCCORMIACK: Hello. My name is  
23 Kevin McCormiack. I live in the town and village of  
24 Skaneateles. I'm also a town counselor on the  
25 Skaneateles town board and have been for the last

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2 four years. I'm concerned about the impact of the  
3 community grid plan on truck traffic coming off I-81  
4 and exiting south of Syracuse.

5 For years, we've had significant truck  
6 traffic, specifically fifty-foot-long trucks with  
7 freight and garbage taking a shortcut through small  
8 communities like Skaneateles, Cortland, Auburn, and  
9 Ithaca. Currently, we're experiencing two hundred  
10 and fifty trucks a day in the village of Skaneateles.

11 These in my opinion represent very  
12 dangerous trips up very narrow winding country roads,  
13 particularly Routes 41 and 41A, East and West Lake  
14 Road in Skaneateles.

15 And in the winter, there're extremely  
16 dangerous snowstorms, et cetera, and we're trying to  
17 keep it so that the amount of trucks that Exit 81  
18 will -- will be reduced.

19 One of the problems too is, if there's  
20 an accident on 41 or 41A and something spills into  
21 the lake, as you -- as you well know, it's the water  
22 supply or part of the water supply for the city of  
23 Syracuse. So it's important, in my opinion, to keep  
24 the truck traffic under control. The community grid  
25 will increase the traffic significantly.

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2 What I would ask is that the New York  
3 State Department of Transportation consider ways to  
4 reduce the traffic such as reduce speed limits, maybe  
5 make it more attractive on the Thruway by reduced  
6 tolls, more stop signs, maybe a roundabout.

7 And one specific recommendation, I  
8 live on 41A. 41A intersects with Route 20, State  
9 Route 20 in the village. It's a mess. Trucks --  
10 there's no stop -- there's no traffic light, full  
11 traffic light, green, red, yellow, and it's really a  
12 mess. And we would ask that the Department of  
13 Transportation New York State consider putting in a  
14 permanent traffic light and an intersection with  
15 markers so that -- so that pedestrians can cross  
16 safely. I think putting in the light will help to  
17 reduce the truck traffic.

18 I want to thank you for the  
19 opportunity to speak. That's all I have. Thank you.

20 (Off the record, 4:32 p.m.)

21 (On the record, 4:37 p.m.)

22 MR. WEINGARTH: Hello, my name is  
23 Daniel Weingarth, W-E-I-N-G-A-R-T-H. I live at 139  
24 Turtle Street, Syracuse, New York 13208.

25 They are now going to close Court

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2 Street on-ramp to 81 North, and they're going to  
3 close the Court Street exit at Bassett Street that  
4 goes to 81 North. And now they're going to make the  
5 on-ramp at Bear Street. So they're going to move the  
6 highway down two blocks to where they're going to get  
7 on, and that's going to increase a lot of traffic  
8 going by my house.

9 I'm two -- two houses away from the --  
10 from Sunset and I'm a senior, I'm a veteran, and I  
11 was wondering if I could get some help with  
12 soundproofing my house. I asked the State  
13 Environmental. They told me no because they don't do  
14 soundproofing; only the federal government does. I  
15 thought the federal government was putting a lot of  
16 cash into this adventure, and I was wondering if  
17 somebody out there would see if I can get some help.

18 Thank you very much. Daniel  
19 Weingarth.

20 (Off the record, 4:39 p.m.)

21 (On the record, 4:50 p.m.)

22 MR. CARLIN: Hi, my name is Tom  
23 Carlin. My company is Technical Workplace  
24 Consulting. I'm an I.T. consultant. I have about  
25 fifty clients throughout Central New York. I have --

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2 I have clients in Utica, in Auburn, in Cortland, in  
3 Fulton, a whole bunch in Syracuse and surrounding  
4 villages.

5 My clients depend on me to be able to  
6 get to them quickly in the event of a -- of a  
7 problem. It's -- it's critical for them to know that  
8 if there's a problem with their computers, I can get  
9 there quickly and get them back up and working.

10 I have a really serious concern that  
11 the community grid-only option is going to limit my  
12 ability to get to my clients quickly. A friend of  
13 mine, you know, says what I do is something like a  
14 bumble bee. I'm always hopping from client to  
15 client. So I could be in Auburn and somebody in  
16 Liverpool could call and say, hey I need you to get  
17 up here, and so I have to be able to -- to get up  
18 there quickly.

19 So like I said, I'm very concerned  
20 about the issue of being able to get to my clients  
21 quickly.

22 The other side of this is I've heard  
23 some people who support the community grid-only  
24 option as -- say something to the effect that Ithaca  
25 is a good model for what they want to do. Well, I

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2 drive all over Syracuse. I have no problem driving  
3 in Syracuse. Heck, I even have no problem driving in  
4 Boston, but I cannot drive in Ithaca. It is a -- it  
5 is a total mess. And so using Ithaca as a model for  
6 what they want to do is, quite frankly, not really  
7 good salesmanship, frankly.

8 Finally, Syracuse and Central New York  
9 is changing. Our population is growing. We have  
10 more immigrants. We have more jobs. Where those  
11 jobs are is changing a little bit. And my big  
12 concern is that the D.O.T., when they put this plan  
13 together, used stale data, used data from ten years  
14 ago, eight years ago, whatever, and they didn't take  
15 into account what's happened in the past, you know,  
16 four or five years. I think that they really should  
17 step back and reconsider this whole plan and come up  
18 with something that meets the needs of everyone and  
19 not just certain ones. That's it.

20 (Off the record, 4:53 p.m.)

21 (On the record, 4:55 p.m.)

22 MR. CARROLL: I just wanted to have  
23 you folks look at the option of allowing the city of  
24 Syracuse to take the crossroads on the viaduct area  
25 where you've got the community grid, and have them go



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2 under or over the new highway at ground level. I  
3 think that would be an important change and addition  
4 that might make a big difference.

5 Let the city of Syracuse pay for it  
6 and it would be fine, but I think the proposal should  
7 include that option if the city wants to take it and  
8 they want to do that. That's it. Thank you.

9 (Off the record, 4:56 p.m.)

10 (On the record, 4:58 p.m.)

11 MR. BRIGHT: My name is Joe Bright, J-  
12 O-E B-R-I-G-H-T. That's all.

13 (Off the record, 4:58 p.m.)

14 (On the record, 4:59 p.m.)

15 MR. LAWRENCE: All right. This is a  
16 different perspective of what I've heard. I'm from  
17 -- my name is George Lawrence and I'm from Roanoke,  
18 Virginia. For those of you geographically  
19 challenged, Roanoke is five hundred and seventy-five  
20 miles south on Interstate 81. It is in the southern  
21 end of the Shenandoah Valley of the Blue Ridge  
22 Mountains of Virginia.

23 Back in the '60s, the Virginia  
24 Department of Transportation came to Roanoke and said  
25 81 is going to come through here, do you want it to

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2 go through the city or bypass the city? And the city  
3 of Roanoke said we don't want all that traffic and  
4 pollution in our city, we want it to go by the city.  
5 And so it did.

6 And in the late fall or winter, if you  
7 look over into the valley you can see the city from  
8 the side of the mountain that 81 run -- runs down.  
9 Unfortunately, the city of Roanoke did not understand  
10 the volume of traffic that 81 would carry. They saw  
11 all the trucks and cars. They saw all the commerce  
12 and money driving right by the city.

13 So they went back to the Virginia  
14 Department of Transportation and they said we want a  
15 spur. Now, they had six exits off of 81, but none  
16 were direct. You kind of got off and wandered around  
17 for a while. So the Department of Transportation  
18 decided they'd put -- they built the spur of 581  
19 directly into the heart of Roanoke -- downtown  
20 Roanoke.

21 And today, you have six lanes, three  
22 each way, and you have a -- a viaduct partly about  
23 three-quarters the size of the one that we have.  
24 It's much wider because it follows the -- the later  
25 building regulations, but it goes right through the

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2 city. And it also did the same thing Syracuse did.  
3 It put it through part of the Black community and  
4 changed that part of the city.

5 So the point I'm making is this. If  
6 you don't want to see the cars, and the trucks, and  
7 the commerce, and the money go by the city, then you  
8 should rethink what you're doing here. Thank you.

9 (Off the record, 5:02 p.m.)

10 (On the record, 5:04 p.m.)

11 MS. JONES: All right. My name is  
12 Patrona Jones, P-A-T-R-O-N-A. I am a south side  
13 resident, and I am speaking on behalf of the  
14 residents of the south side within -- within the  
15 13205, 13202, and 07, possibly 04 area. Those areas  
16 are amongst the greater and great impact areas. And  
17 I was looking to see how those residents within that  
18 area would be able to take advantage of possible  
19 funds that would be eligible to them to have for  
20 facade improvements, being that the highway will come  
21 down, a lot of the homeowners in that area have been  
22 in the primary distress areas and -- and have -- had  
23 less means of securing loans that others may have  
24 been able to receive.

25 So for the -- for the greater impact

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2 area, which is probably from the highway to South  
3 Salina Street, you will probably have between two  
4 hundred to three hundred homeowners and those  
5 homeowners should be able to receive funds for  
6 improvements. And at the least, most home  
7 improvements would probably cost between ten and  
8 twenty thousand dollars for facade infrastructure.  
9 Those infrastructures would be somewhere from paint  
10 jobs, sidings, roof repairs, porches, fences, tree  
11 removal, et cetera.

12 The further out, those projects could  
13 possibly go probably to Midland Ave. So from the  
14 highway to Midland Ave and -- and if -- and if that  
15 was to Midland Ave, you will probably have somewhere  
16 to maybe seven to nine hundred homeowners in the  
17 area. And so just looking at the amount of funds  
18 that would probably be allocated to this type of  
19 project, with other projects that have happened  
20 similar in the area have been disbursed over somewhat  
21 of a five-year plan type of thing.

22 So if it was a quarter of a million-  
23 dollar project solely allocated to homeowner  
24 improvements over a five-year plan, I think that that  
25 would be something that would benefit the residents

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2 that are greatly impacted within that 13205 area.

3 (Off the record, 5:08 p.m.)

4 (On the record, 5:09 p.m.)

5 MR. PODKOWINSKI: Hi. It's Dave  
6 Podkowinski. For the 81 project, I would recommend  
7 making sure that the shoulders of the road are wide  
8 enough because it does snow in Syracuse. I notice  
9 that you have them coming close in some spots. And  
10 also so you can get vehicles off the road in case of  
11 breakdown.

12 One other thing is for maintenance for  
13 the road and for the trees and the grass and whatever  
14 is needed out there, they should be wide enough so  
15 that vehicles can park alongside the road.

16 Street lighting is another concern.  
17 In the northern part, I don't know if it's going to  
18 be changed any, but the lights in the middle of the  
19 road are horrendous to work on. Right now, the  
20 existing road is so narrow you can't get a vehicle  
21 off the road to work on the lights.

22 I guess that's it.

23 (Off the record, 5:11 p.m.)

24 (On the record, 5:49 p.m.)

25 MS. FLETCHER: I'm Audrey Fletcher and

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2 I'm speaking as a resident of the city of Syracuse  
3 where I've lived for over forty years.

4 I strongly support development of the  
5 community grid along with replacement of the viaduct.  
6 These two solutions are not mutually exclusive. We  
7 can create a street level grid with all of its  
8 benefits, including reconnecting city neighborhoods  
9 and addressing racial and environmental justice, as  
10 well as maintain a critical elevated roadway through  
11 our city.

12 I have several concerns. For one,  
13 sixty days is not nearly enough time to assess a  
14 twenty-eight-thousand-page document. This just isn't  
15 reasonable. We should extend the comment period in  
16 order to review and react to the D.O.T.'s latest  
17 recommendations.

18 Next, the D.O.T. has been researching  
19 this matter for years. And based on early data, it  
20 concluded that the grid-only option is best, but so  
21 much has changed in just the last several years. The  
22 latest figures from Department of Labor show an  
23 increase in private sector jobs. Early 2020 census  
24 data show an increase in population for the first  
25 time in years. Local defense manufacturers are

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2 receiving large contracts and plan to add to the  
3 workforce. Amazon is hiring a thousand workers. If  
4 we are lucky enough to get the Intel plant, that  
5 could be another thousand plus jobs. D.O.T. must  
6 consider this new data and how it impacts the need  
7 for fast and direct transport.

8 Over the last several years, I've made  
9 a point of asking friends, colleagues, and many total  
10 strangers their opinion on the I-81 debate.  
11 Overwhelmingly, the people I speak with are in favor  
12 of maintaining a high-speed road. The standard in  
13 this debate is consensus. If more people support  
14 replacing the bridge, then there is no consensus  
15 around a grid-only option, despite what our  
16 politicians say.

17 Finally, I have an issue with the  
18 process. D.O.T. did its research and made its  
19 recommendation. At no time has there been a true  
20 question and answer forum with D.O.T. in front of a  
21 large audience. It's easy to stand by your point of  
22 view when you never have to defend it. The people  
23 deserve the opportunity to hear D.O.T. answer hard  
24 questions and defend their conclusions for all to  
25 hear and judge.

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2 In conclusion, we can meet the needs  
3 of all of our citizens with a combination of a street  
4 level grid and a new viaduct, but it's reasonable to  
5 request additional time to assess the latest D.E.I.S.  
6 It's reasonable to expect D.O.T. and grid-only  
7 proponents to keep an open mind to change based on  
8 new data. Our citizens should insist that D.O.T.  
9 answer direct questions in a public forum. And above  
10 all else, let's figure out what the consensus really  
11 is. Thank you.

12 (Off the record, 5:52 p.m.)

13 (On the record, 5:54 p.m.)

14 MR. BOUCOUNIS: Hi. My name is Andy  
15 Boucounis. I own and operate Andy's Produce and Food  
16 Service at the corner of 101 West Court Street and  
17 Genant Drive in Syracuse, New York. I designed and  
18 had the building built and moved in in 1994, twenty-  
19 seven years ago. And I have four driveways, two  
20 driveways on Genant Drive and two driveways on Court  
21 Street.

22 I only have two trailer -- tractor  
23 trailer receiving docks and I have one major driveway  
24 that they need to back into, and I want to make sure  
25 that this driveway is protected. It is on Genant



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2 Drive, closest south, and it's a sizeable driveway.  
3 And the docks are recessed, so I really need that  
4 dock to -- excuse me -- that driveway to stay intact.

5 There's also a telephone pole there  
6 that, over twenty-seven years, they've probably taken  
7 it out about eight or ten times. The D.O.T.  
8 recommended that I say maybe there's some way they  
9 can move that somewhere safer to make it also easier  
10 for the drivers to get in there.

11 We really would like all four  
12 driveways protected as we are -- the two in the front  
13 on the north end of the building are for retail. The  
14 two in the back are for wholesale. So we really need  
15 the entries and exits to be left intact. Thank you  
16 so much.

17 (Off the record, 5:56 p.m.)

18 (On the record, 5:57 p.m.)

19 MS. BILLUE: My name is Twiggy Billue,  
20 T-W-I-G-G-Y B-I-L-L-U-E. I work for Jubilee Homes of  
21 Syracuse as the workforce development coordinator. I  
22 am the president of the Syracuse Chapter of the  
23 National Action Network. I am also a candidate for  
24 Syracuse City School Board.

25 I want to start by saying that I am

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2 very disappointed in the way that this process worked  
3 out. Those of us that were here before six did not  
4 get to speak. It seemed that only the status quo or  
5 those with privilege got to speak first, and those  
6 that were directly involved in the footprint had to  
7 wait until after six.

8 Therefore, I want to start with saying  
9 that we need jobs in our community. We need the  
10 D.O.T. and its office of civil rights to institute a  
11 C.D.L. training program immediately, so that by June  
12 2022 we have folks ready and trained with C.D.L.s to  
13 be on this job.

14  
15 We also want some mitigation funds  
16 directed to Dr. King School. We believe that the  
17 roundabout at Dr. King school will become  
18 problematic. Being from Syracuse, so living in  
19 Syracuse, I used to reside in Washington D.C. that  
20 has the highest amounts of roundabouts in any city in  
21 the country, as well as the highest amount of  
22 accidents with youth passing those roundabouts.

23 Roundabouts are not supposed to be  
24 walkable neighborhoods. Roundabouts are traffic  
25 barriers. Roundabouts keep high speeds and it's not

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2 a very viable way for youth or elderly to be able to  
3 cross the street.

4 We also want to talk about mitigation  
5 money for Dr. King School. So if the school needs to  
6 be moved into another building while the highway is  
7 under construction, that the school district does not  
8 have to fund that or foot that bill, that there's  
9 mitigation money from the Office of Civil Rights and  
10 the Department of Transportation.

11 We also want to make sure that there's  
12 a fund available through the Department of  
13 Transportation for those that may have to move for no  
14 fault of their own, that it matches the market rate  
15 apartment prices that are out there. Put them into  
16 high quality homes, unlike what happened at Kennedy  
17 Square when those buildings come down.

18 We want to talk about social impact  
19 financing and career impact bonds to guarantee that  
20 on-the-job training, not just work smart. On-the-job  
21 training is done in a different way that we get a one  
22 stop for P.B.E.s, M.W.B.E.s, X.B.O.s, so that by the  
23 time this program starts we have people already in  
24 the certification process, if not already certified,  
25 but can go somewhere very locally, get information so

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2 that our vendors and suppliers and our construction  
3 companies can actually take part on this project and  
4 hire from within the city.

5 We believe that there should be a  
6 priority plus hiring initiative. That means at least  
7 twenty-five percent of all jobs must come from the  
8 footprint and another fifty percent must come from  
9 the city within itself. That's taken off of the  
10 priority source from Buffalo, but we know we can do  
11 that here.

12 We're also believing that a pay-for-  
13 success initiative -- there was a pay-for-success  
14 initiative with formally incarcerated folks at the  
15 tune of fifteen point five million dollars that were  
16 used for heavy highway projects and bridges between  
17 Rochester and Syracuse. We believe that if we  
18 replicate those programs, we will be able to provide  
19 training for all, for students, for adults, and for  
20 those that were formerly incarcerated.

21 We need the D.O.T. and the Office of  
22 Civil Rights for the D.O.T. to bring back that hazmat  
23 trainings for free, those C.D.L. trainings for free,  
24 back into the neighborhood so that people that live  
25 in the footprint can actually get some of these high-

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2 quality jobs that are coming through with I-81.

3 (Off the record, 6:02 p.m.)

4 (On the record, 6:07 p.m.)

5 MR. ERWIN: My name is Steve Erwin.

6 I'm the Regional Vice Chairman of the Trucking  
7 Association of the State of New York and I want to  
8 talk about the grid option.

9 I've heard the people from Salina, and  
10 I realize the economic impact to the people of  
11 Salina. One of the things that's been totally not  
12 discussed is the businesses to the west of Interstate  
13 81. All of the major food distributors are located  
14 west of 81, G&C foods, Sysco Foods, Dot Foods, McLane  
15 Northeast, Anheuser-Busch. There is about twenty-  
16 five companies located west of 81 that would be  
17 adversely affected by the grid.

18 I also am opposed to it being called a  
19 grid. The definition of grid is a series of parallel  
20 and crisscrossing lines. This is going to be a  
21 boulevard. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it.  
22 The same number of cars that, today, come down off of  
23 the interstate onto Adams and Harrison Street are  
24 going to be using this boulevard, for the lack of a  
25 better word.

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2 I'm also opposed to the D.O.T. funding  
3 any part of the business loop if that's what ends up  
4 becoming of this is it is not a business loop. It  
5 doesn't promote through transportation. It actually  
6 kind of discourages any type of through  
7 transportation, which I understand that's what we are  
8 trying to do.

9 The pictures being painted to the  
10 residents are very disturbing because it shows a very  
11 sparsely traveled road, and that's not going to be  
12 the case.

13 All the injustice that was done to the  
14 residents of the Fifteenth Ward in the '50s is going  
15 to be repeated again with the grid. They are going  
16 to end up being the bigger -- biggest losers with the  
17 grid. They're being painted a picture of this  
18 beautiful park-like setting with half a dozen cars on  
19 the street. That's not what it's going to be. There  
20 are going to be numerous -- numerous, thousands of  
21 vehicles on these streets. There will be all type of  
22 gridlock.

23 And all the talks of pollution, the  
24 most polluting vehicle on the road is a vehicle that  
25 has stopped at a traffic light. Vehicles travelling

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2 at highway speed are at the most efficient point of  
3 the combustion engine. Vehicles stopped at a traffic  
4 light or idling and traveling at -- at extremely slow  
5 speeds on a city street emit way more pollution than  
6 a vehicle traveling on the highway.

7 The other thing I've -- I heard in  
8 some of the other comments today was about the grid  
9 spurring growth in the city. Yet, the D.E.I.S. has  
10 no mention of growth, or no accommodation of growth  
11 for at least twenty years I believe, if we've read it  
12 right. So it kind of contradicts itself.

13 So the roundabout at Dr. Martin Luther  
14 King School is a horrible idea. A roundabout,  
15 period, is a horrible idea. Nine out of ten drivers  
16 do not like roundabouts, and they are afraid of them.  
17 And especially putting a roundabout at the end of an  
18 interstate to transition into a city street makes no  
19 sense whatsoever. It's going to be a high accident  
20 area.

21 And we're concerned about the added  
22 cost all the companies west of 81 are going to have  
23 to endure. And these are companies that supply the  
24 inner city, as well, with food. So it's not a  
25 suburban -- just a suburban problem. This will

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2 affect the inner city.

3 The market -- the regional market, all  
4 the produce that goes into the regional market comes  
5 in on truck. Those trucks will endure additional  
6 costs. I fear a lot of them will go up through the  
7 grid because it would be the most direct route to the  
8 market. And I'm afraid we're going to have all kinds  
9 of issues with the trucks on the grid. And -- and --  
10 and the trucking industry is going to get a bad name  
11 for that, but it's the design for the D.O.T. that's  
12 going to be the problem.

13 So there are better options out there.  
14 I think the grid plus the skyway option kind of meets  
15 the needs of both people. But again, just the --  
16 just the grid option, I believe the residents of  
17 Pioneer Homes are going to be the biggest losers all  
18 over again. I -- I think we're just going to repeat  
19 what was done in the 1950s.

20 Thank you.

21 (Off the record, 6:10 p.m.)

22 (On the record, 6:37 p.m.)

23 MR. DARLINGTON: Hi, my name is James  
24 Darlington. I'm a resident of the Syracuse area and  
25 have been most of my adult life and beyond, actually.



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2 I'd like to make some comments concerning the Route  
3 81 reconstruction.

4 Let me begin by saying that if the  
5 north -- I'm sorry -- if the southwest quadrant of  
6 the ring -- interstate ring road around the inner  
7 urban area of -- of Onondaga County were complete,  
8 I'd be in favor of the removal of the interstate and  
9 81 viaduct.

10 However, that's not the case. It  
11 never will be the case. It will never be built. And  
12 therefore, I am in favor -- very much in favor of the  
13 maintenance of some sort of viaduct or non-street-  
14 level interstate connection through the city of  
15 Syracuse.

16 I -- I say this for a whole series of  
17 reasons, beginning with the fact that the interstate  
18 is -- or the -- the removal of the interstate will  
19 pose a serious commuting problem for -- and time  
20 delay for those commuting from the south of -- south  
21 of Syracuse into the city and beyond, to the north of  
22 the city, and people from the north commuting to the  
23 south beyond the city.

24 This is particularly true for the  
25 northwest quadrant of Onondaga County and beyond,

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2 places like Liverpool, and Baldwinsville, and Solvay,  
3 and Camillus, and Elbridge, and Lysander, et cetera,  
4 North Syracuse. And I say this because the grid  
5 system will delay the commute substantially.

6 The last numbers I saw were that the  
7 delay would be approximately seven minutes. Anybody  
8 who has studied this sort of commuting calculation  
9 knows that they are consistently under -- they  
10 consistently underestimate, substantially, the  
11 commuting times. It's not something new. It's  
12 something that's just based on this project; it's  
13 uniform across North America. And there's been  
14 enough documentation of that to justify what I'm  
15 saying.

16 But let's just be reasonable in our --  
17 in our time -- estimated time. I'm sure it's greater  
18 than this, but let's assume that it's just ten  
19 minutes. It's a little bit more than what they're  
20 saying, but certainly nothing outrageous. Ten  
21 minutes each way adds twenty minutes to your commute  
22 every day. That's a hundred minutes a week. That's,  
23 in a fifty-week work -- or fifty -- yes, fifty-week  
24 work schedule, that's five thousand minutes a year.  
25 That's well over three days of your life. And ten

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2 minutes each way, that's when things are working  
3 smoothly.

4 To -- to use the interstate all the  
5 way around to take 690 all the way to DeWitt and  
6 around 481 is going to add substantial time. Traffic  
7 is going to be substantial. The delay is even going  
8 to be greater.

9 And I know that there's a substantial  
10 number of people who -- who do the commute from the  
11 north to the -- from the northwest portion of the  
12 county, south of the city on a daily basis and vice  
13 versa because I travel it myself and I see the  
14 traffic, and I see it at various times of the day.  
15 For example, students from the north who are  
16 attending O.C.C., they travel down 81 and then they  
17 get off at Colvin Street to go up to the -- to  
18 Onondaga Hill. There's no real reasonable  
19 alternative.

20 So commuting times for -- for -- for  
21 the general public is critical and it's being -- this  
22 isn't really being discussed as far as I am concerned  
23 and made public, the way it should be with realistic  
24 numbers. We're not talking about additional time to  
25 -- or wear and tear on the vehicles and all that sort

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2 of thing, nor are we talking about congestion -- the  
3 added congestion it will create, greater traffic  
4 congestion within the city itself.

5 Let's talk about trucks and truck  
6 transport. Right now, at the present time, there are  
7 a number of major trucking firms that are based in  
8 the northwest quadrant of Onondaga County, primarily  
9 in the Baldwinsville area, McCann. Is it McCann?  
10 It's one of them. I can't think of the others off  
11 the top of my head. There's also all of the traffic  
12 that is generated by the paperboard company, WestRock  
13 in Solvay.

14 And I know that in their case -- I  
15 can't tell you the exact number of trucks that go  
16 down 81 every day and travel east on -- on 690 and  
17 then take the -- the connector in the city to travel  
18 south towards New York City on 81. What I do know is  
19 it's a substantial number.

20 Personally, I drive from Syracuse to  
21 Binghamton on a daily basis and it is not uncommon  
22 for me to overpass -- or overtake, rather, as many as  
23 three of their trucks. And the trucks that are  
24 coming out of WestRock are easily identifiable, at  
25 least many of them are. I'm sure there are maybe

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2 others that -- that I don't know the characteristics  
3 of, but many of them I do. And so it's not unusual  
4 for me to be overtaking at least three in a eighty-  
5 mile, seventy-mile journey.

6 They're traveling at seventy miles an  
7 hour. I'm traveling at seventy-five. To overtake  
8 three tells me that there's an awful lot of trucks  
9 coming out of WestRock that are heading south on a  
10 daily basis. Multiply that times five days a week or  
11 even seven days a week because WestRock is a  
12 continuous operation, it goes night and day, nonstop.

13 Okay. That said, so there's a lot of  
14 trucks that are using that now. Authorities have  
15 told me that the average mileage eighteen -- that an  
16 eighteen-wheeler semi tractor-trailer gets is  
17 approximately six miles to the gallon of diesel fuel.  
18 They're not going to be taking the city streets.  
19 They're not going to be taking the city grid. And  
20 they're going to be forced to go around on 690 to the  
21 east and then south on -- on -- on 481 and link --  
22 link up with 81 to head south. That's going to add  
23 at least ten miles, if not twelve or more, to their  
24 -- to their travel distance.

25 That's a lot of -- that's a lot of

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2 diesel fuel given that this is going to -- you can  
3 extend that not just for one trip but of course the  
4 hundreds, thousands of trucks that are going by using  
5 this route on a daily basis, on a weekly basis.  
6 Extrapolate that to a year and this system, this  
7 structure, or road system is going to be in place for  
8 at least half a -- half a century, that is a lot of  
9 fuel.

10 There's also another aspect of the  
11 trucks that I think is oftentimes not considered.  
12 One -- and one of those things is the travel time  
13 that the truckers are -- are under in terms of how  
14 many hours they can -- they can drive without having  
15 to stop and take a -- take a break.

16 The added congestion, which is clearly  
17 going to be there because the basic system is going  
18 still -- still be in place, it's going to impact  
19 that. To what extent, I can't say, but it's going to  
20 impact it in a -- in an adverse way.

21 Another aspect of the -- that will  
22 happen, or something else that will happen is if the  
23 viaduct isn't maintained is that southbound traffic  
24 for trucks is going to be forced to use 481 the old  
25 Rock Cut Road valley, if you will. The problem there

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2 is that you're -- the trucks are now left with one  
3 alternative for getting through the city if they're  
4 southbound. Whether they're coming from the west,  
5 whether they're coming from the north, whether  
6 they're locally generated, they're all going to be  
7 taking that route. And it is not out of the realm of  
8 possibility that there will be a major accident.

9 And I do not mean that in the sense  
10 that because of the congestion, but because there'll  
11 will be a truck just carrying flammables that's doing  
12 this kind -- some kind of hazmat materials. There's  
13 going to be an accident. It's going to shut the  
14 whole system down. This has happened in the past.  
15 It happened several years ago down in the Binghamton  
16 area on I-88 that shut down the system there for a  
17 day or more.

18 Well, in the case of the Binghamton  
19 area, they could easily reroute the trucks to State  
20 Highway 7 parallels -- parallels I-80 -- I-88. In  
21 the case of if the viaduct is eliminated in Syracuse,  
22 trucks -- any -- any kind of traffic that's backed up  
23 to southbound traffic or northbound traffic as far as  
24 that goes for trucks, but more importantly southbound  
25 traffic, they're not going to have any alternatives

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2 other than Salina Street, the old Route 11 going  
3 right through the city of Syracuse. That's just the  
4 -- that's just reality.

5 All the other southbound highways --  
6 state highways, with the exception of Route 11, climb  
7 very serious grades and the trucks aren't going to be  
8 able to do that.

9 So for a matter of -- of just -- we  
10 need the redundancy of the -- of the viaduct in order  
11 to assure that that sort of catastrophe doesn't  
12 happen. And it easily could happen at an  
13 unpredictable time, of course. And hopefully it  
14 never happens, but I think we'd be foolish -- I think  
15 the state would be very foolish and federal  
16 government to think that it wouldn't.

17 So we've got fuel issues with the  
18 trucks, we've got possible hazmat problem that would  
19 result in a major delay and forcing the trucks to --  
20 to -- to either take a very long detour to -- to  
21 Albany or wherever, to the -- to the east -- I guess  
22 maybe they wouldn't have to go to Albany, but they'd  
23 have to go east substantial distance. It would be a  
24 major delay. We've got travel times with the  
25 truckers, just to summarize that.



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2 Finally, perhaps even most  
3 importantly, the towns, villages in the northwest  
4 quadrant of Onondaga County and, for that matter,  
5 beyond will be very much ill-served by the  
6 elimination of the viaduct, economically ill-served  
7 because, as we all know, transportation is crucial  
8 and the location and somebody choosing a location for  
9 a business. Good connections are important, are very  
10 important, they're critical. And if -- if we  
11 eliminate the viaduct, it's going to put the  
12 northwest quadrant of Onondaga County and the towns  
13 there and villages at a severe disadvantage in  
14 competing with other locations here in Central New  
15 York, and in Onondaga County and beyond because  
16 they're simply not going to have the same efficient  
17 connection that they have now.

18 I say all this thinking also of NEPA  
19 and the guidelines of NEPA. NEPA's regulations  
20 require that the impact, the negative impacts on any  
21 transportation decision not significantly --  
22 adversely significantly impact the community. It's  
23 hard to imagine that, for reasons I've stated, that  
24 the elimination of the viaduct will not seriously,  
25 significantly adversely impact the citizens, private

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2 citizens, the communities as a whole from an economic  
3 standpoint, and businesses, particularly those that  
4 are very much dependent on transportation.

5 I could say more but the  
6 stenographer's hand is getting tired, I'm sure. So  
7 I'll -- I'll -- I'll close with that.

8 Thank you.

9 (Off the record, 6:55 p.m.)

10 (On the record, 7:08 p.m.)

11 MR. VAZILLE: Hello. My name is  
12 Giovanni Vazille. I'm a city resident of Syracuse,  
13 New York. And I would just like to say it's -- I  
14 have been fortunate to be a part of a group that has  
15 been canvassing every section of Syracuse for the  
16 past eight weeks.

17 And the stories that the residents  
18 have been telling us is hurt -- it's hurtful,  
19 heartful, and surprising, but they all hold a common  
20 ground. That is these people have been trained, they  
21 have their certifications; yet, they are being  
22 overlooked for jobs, jobs that will give -- will  
23 provide their family so much. And I just want to  
24 say, because all these stories are very much the  
25 same, something is clearly wrong.

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2 Being overlooked for jobs when you  
3 clearly have certifications, when you're ready to  
4 work is just not cool. And I would hope that all  
5 these jobs coming to the city of Syracuse -- or with  
6 the construction, I would hope at least -- at the  
7 very, very least, that twenty percent of these jobs  
8 will go to the city of Syracuse residents because  
9 they desperately need them. Communities are being  
10 destroyed. Families need jobs. They need money to  
11 survive, overall. So yes, thank you.

12 (Off the record, 7:10 p.m.)

13 (On the record, 7:18 p.m.)

14 MR. LAW: Yeah, my name is Tom Law. I  
15 finished about twenty minutes ago in the open hearing  
16 here in Syracuse. I want to add to my final comment  
17 on using the old concrete. I suggested it could be  
18 used in lining the Inner Harbor Canal, but also, it  
19 could be used in lining the end -- the mouth of Ley  
20 Creek, not far from there on -- on Onondaga Lake.

21 Also, as a possibility of other points  
22 along the lake being used to stabilize or build dock  
23 works, say, at the western part of the -- of the  
24 lake, or again lining Nine Mile Creek as it goes  
25 through the Solvay waste beds. So what I'm -- and

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2 there's stockpile room down near the Inner Harbor, a  
3 few blocks, large tracts that aren't used to date  
4 that could be a stockpile for working this forward,  
5 so long as it hasn't got chemicals in it, adjudevants  
6 (phonetic spelling) they're called, from the mix that  
7 they used on the bridges prior. Adjudevants weren't  
8 used a lot, I believe, in the 1960s. So I'm not  
9 saying this is a perfect solution to -- for  
10 construction debris, but it possibly has some merit.

11 And the area that I've said, the Inner  
12 Harbor and Ley Creek are very close in terms of  
13 transportation time and potentially could be a --  
14 what do you call it -- a repurposing of a lot of  
15 concrete so long as it doesn't pollute.

16 That's it. Thank you.

17 (The hearing concluded at 7:20 p.m.)  
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2   STATE OF NEW YORK

3   I, ROBERT WURTZ, do hereby certify that the foregoing was  
4   reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place, as  
5   stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that the  
6   foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of pages 1  
7   through 41, is a true record of all proceedings had at the  
8   hearing.

9                           IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
10   subscribed my name, this the 2nd day of September, 2021.

11  
12   ROBERT WURTZ, Reporter  
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