

August 22, 2016

DeWitt Town Board Resolution

Motion by Councilor Young, seconded by Councilor Frank.

MEMORIALIZING THE INTENT OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF DeWITT, COUNTY OF ONONDAGA, REGARDING THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING ALIGNMENT OF INTERSTATE 81 THROUGH SYRACUSE

WHEREAS, for the last 50 years, Interstate 81 has served as a vital backbone for the economy of the Central New York, connecting commuters, businesses, tourists, visitors, and through-travelers alike; and WHEREAS, among its important functions, Interstate 81 provides vital links with access to downtown Syracuse, all of our hospitals, Syracuse University, Destiny USA, present and future businesses and residents along 81 corridor, to business and residents within the Town of DeWitt; and

WHEREAS, Moody's Investors Service has assigned a Aa3 rating to a recent Town of DeWitt Public Improvement (Serial) Bond with the expectation of the stable tax base of approximately \$2.9 billion continuing to experience modest growth given it's close proximity to the City of Syracuse (G.O. rated A1, negative). Acting as a transfer point between the New York State Thruway, Route 481 and Interstate 81, the town has a significant commercial presence (39% of tax base) consisting of hotels, shopping centers, office buildings, manufacturing facilities, and restaurants geared in part toward travelers across these thoroughfares; and

WHEREAS, turning Interstate 81 to Route 481 leaves no alternative north-south Route for national defense, national disaster, and general maintenance and repairs; and

WHEREAS, although there are a variety of ways to deal with I-81's aging infrastructure, the existing "Interstate" function and designation must be preserved, because any solution which would remove I-81's vital function from its present alignment would irreparably harm the regional economy and corresponding employment dependent upon the highway network in addition to negatively impacting DeWitt's neighborhoods and its residents quality of life; and

WHEREAS, redirecting I-81 traffic to Route 481, transfers what the City of Syracuse sees as a problem to DeWitt; and

WHEREAS, DeWitt forms the eastern border of Syracuse and its neighborhoods already suffer the consequences of commuter traffic to and from the City of Syracuse, along local Routes 173, 5, 290, 298, in addition to the Interstate Highways including the Thruway and Routes 690 and 481. Consequently, moving Interstate 81 to Route 481 will only exacerbate local and pass-through traffic leaving a heavy toll on already taxed DeWitt resources. Namely, increasing the

wear and tear on DeWitt's local roads and infrastructure that are already insufficient and underfunded; and

WHEREAS, increased traffic causes increased noise, dust, toxic emissions and atmospheric deposition of pollutants on land and water, business, homes, and schools; and

WHEREAS, redirecting Interstate 81 to Route 481 is not smart environmental policy because the distance traveled for through traffic and further stop and go intercity commuting traffic is increased. This is polluting, inefficient, requires the use of greater amounts of petroleum based fuels, hurts the regional economy, and is detrimental to social welfare and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the future of I-81 presents one of the greatest planning decisions to face New York State in decades and the outcome will impact our region for the next 100 years; and August 22, 2016

WHEREAS, it is the consensus of the DeWitt Town Board that any decision reached by the NYS DOT should satisfy function first, and should be closely tailored to satisfy that function; and

WHEREAS, we support smart growth and the creation of a new and welcoming entrance to Syracuse, and the integration of the hospitals and university areas with the rest of downtown, we believe it must not be accomplished by compromising one of the most significant advantages of living, working, doing business and visiting Onondaga County;

WHEREAS, DeWitt supports a balanced, comprehensive approach, a regional transportation plan is necessary to ensure smart choices are made, a plan that can provide environmental, social and economic benefits to all of Central New York, one that promotes alternative and mass transit options including alternate fuels, electric vehicles, and a light rail system; for out suburban communities are in dire need of a traffic diet as well; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the DeWitt Town Board memorializes its determination that the existing Interstate 81 alignment through Syracuse and Central New York must remain and its function and designation as an interstate highway must not be removed or impaired; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Supervisor of the Town of DeWitt is hereby directed to cause a copy of this resolution to be transmitted to the New York State Department of Transportation, to the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, and to the various legislative members representing Onondaga County at the state level.

Adopted 5 Ayes

1 Nay - Rigney