

January 5, 2017

Town of Spafford Town Board Resolution #8-2017

**MEMORIALIZING THE INTENT OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF SPAFFORD,  
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 Spafford; 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 local neighborhoods and quality of life; 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

WHEREAS, it is the consensus of the Spafford 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, the Spafford Town Board 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; and,

WHEREAS, if Interstate 81 is not retained as an interstate highway through Syracuse, truck traffic will become a greatly increased burden for communities to the west of Syracuse;

WHEREAS, the Almond Street "boulevard" and parallel streets in Syracuse would bear the burden of scores of thousands of additional vehicles each day, displaced by the removal of the elevated highway;

WHEREAS, additionally, if Interstate 81 is not retained as an interstate highway, trucks headed north through Syracuse to Interstate 690 or the New York Thruway would encounter a boulevard laced with 14 signalized intersections, then have to make a right turn onto Erie Boulevard, travel east two blocks, make a left turn to pass under I-690, and then another left turn onto a westbound I-690 ramp. It is very unlikely that trucks traveling north on I-81 with a destination to the west would travel this route, nor would they divert miles out of the way to the east of Syracuse and pay increased tolls on the Thruway to reach their goal. The result would be communities west of Syracuse experiencing a greatly increased burden of truck traffic, with many of the trucks carrying hazardous wastes;

WHEREAS, the Town of Spafford is primarily a rural and residential community with farming as one of the Town's primary industries; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of Interstate 81 as it currently exists would force westbound traffic to be channeled through western communities such as Spafford and said additional traffic would jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the resident and in particular interfere with farm equipment traveling on said roads thereby causing additional safety concerns,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the SpaffordTown 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 Spafford 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            4 Ayes            0 Nays            1 Absent