



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

313 Pine Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

March 1973

THE RAMPS ARE COMING! THE RAMPS ARE COMING! (Maybe not)

Right now, I-95 is a fact of life. It's a giant ten-lane interstate coastal highway that's due to parallel Delaware Avenue.

The neighborhood had been so busy over the past half dozen years trying to get a cover over the historic-area section and fighting the Crosstown Expressway that it didn't notice two ramps at Lombard and South Streets which would make a traffic nightmare out of the whole neighborhood, clogging every street with bumper-to-bumper traffic and creating intolerable levels of noise and air pollution. (See map and environmental-impact statement on following pages for extent of devastation.)

Once these ramps were noticed (and they are currently about to be built), a SHCA committee, co-chaired by April Morrison and Duncan Buell, was formed to analyze the problem. The only way to solve it, they decided, was to eliminate the ramps.

Other nearby communities would also be affected; as many as 14 Civic Associations are uniting in a Coalition to keep I-95 an interstate artery by not letting the highway engineers put entrances or exits between Vine Street and the Walt Whitman Bridge.

The fight will be a tough one. The City and State want the ramps for a number of reasons which the Coalition feels are fallacious or devastating to the neighborhoods.

A lawyer, John Hunt, an expert in representing communities against highway interests, has been hired. Mr. Hunt worked on Boston's successful fight to stop work on I-95 and re-route it around that city. Lawyers cost money. So do organized lobbying efforts. So do efforts to make our voice heard. Concerned citizens can do two things immediately:

1. Send money. Funds are vital to this fight. Make checks payable to Society Hill Civic Association and send them to Mark Kessler, Treasurer, 12 S. 12th Street, 22nd Floor, Philadelphia 19107, with a notation that they are for the I-95 Special Fund.
2. Write to Governor Milton J. Shapp, The Capitol, Harrisburg, Pa. 17105, expressing your opposition to any I-95 ramps, between Vine St. and the Walt Whitman Bridge. Stamp, but do not mail your letter. Drop it in the mail slot at one of these pick-up points: 220 Spruce, 322 Lombard, 518 Spruce, 620 Pine.

A report on the committee's work will be the main subject at the next membership meeting on Tuesday March 27 at Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church.
Come listen and speak out on the issue.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERT'S OPINION ON THE I-95 RAMPS:



Quotes from a memorandum from Edward W. Furia, regional administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, written September 1972:

"We calculate that noise levels will rise so drastically due to the highway that homeowners may be unable to get Federally guaranteed loans solely because of this project. We project that the noise created by I-95 will exceed the level that is deemed unacceptable according to HUD standards. We expect similar results with regard to ambient air quality, and therefore believe it is unwise to connect a major interstate highway through the urban core area unless these problems are addressed and shown to be solvable.

"Studies developed by PennDOT's consultants indicate that the design capacity of the road north of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge is 100,000 vehicles per day. PennDOT's projections show that 216,000 vehicles will be using the road daily in 1990. When we scale back the traffic levels to 1976, our numbers indicate that the road will be 130% of its design capacity the day it opens.

"The ambient levels of air quality in Philadelphia already are from 154% to 228% of the Federal EPA standards. The largest source of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrous oxides in Philadelphia is the automobile. The level of nitrous oxides in Philadelphia is one of the most serious in the country. The effect of the completion of I-95 in its present location will further add to serious levels of pollution already experienced in Philadelphia.

"Furthermore, I-95 will likely increase the flow of traffic on Philadelphia's already congested streets and thereby produce worsening of a situation which already requires a reduction in auto traffic by 30%."



I-95: A TRAFFIC NIGHTMARE?

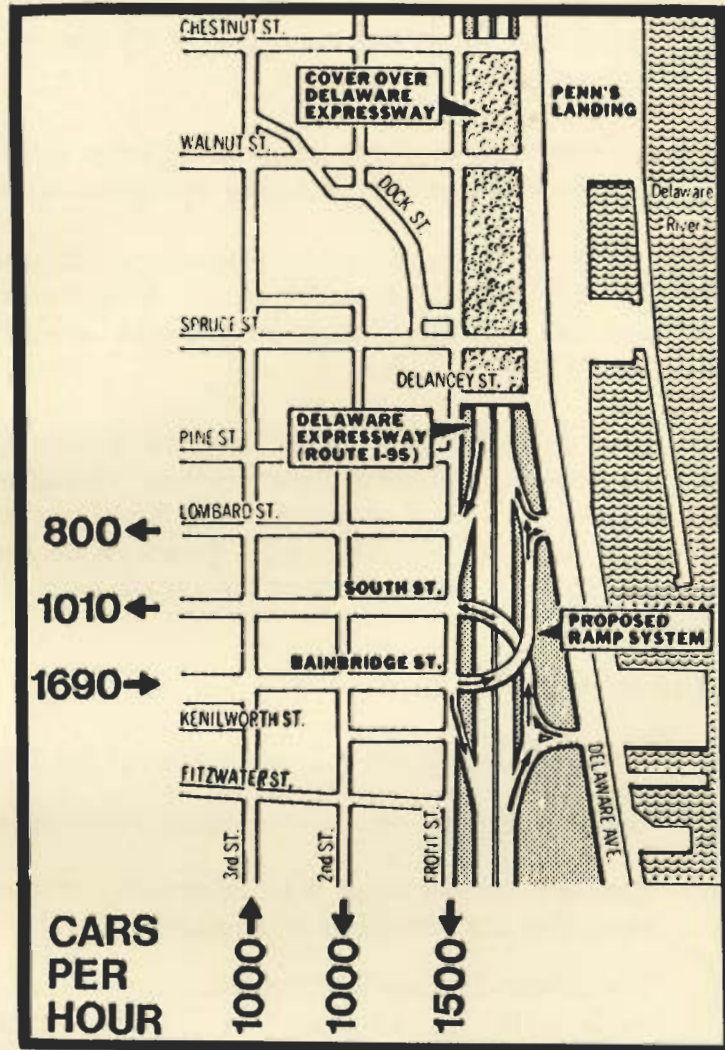


Chart is based on the City Planning Commission's estimates of traffic (cars per hour) to be generated by ramps off I-95 at Lombard and South Streets.

These figures would mean eliminating all curb parking. They would also mean bumper-to-bumper flows on all lanes of affected streets during peak hours. (The rest of the neighborhood would almost certainly clog up as drivers struggle to get out of tie-ups.)

Past experience has shown that planners almost invariably underestimate traffic flows on new highways.

(Note: Head House East shopping center, when completed early next year, will generate thousands of additional cars per day. This figure has not been included in the City Planning Commission's traffic estimates.)

BENEZET IN LIMBO

The federal moratorium on urban housing subsidies has put the Benezet project on ice. The plan called for erection of 19 low-cost rental units at 6th and Lombard and 6th and Panama Streets.

The project was originally conceived to keep six families facing eviction by the Octavia Hill Association from being removed from the neighborhood.

Objection to the scale and federal funding of the project caused a contested election for control of SHCA last January. New President, Paul Putney, and his Board promised that SHCA approval would be withheld pending an Association referendum on the subject.

The referendum had been planned for the March meeting and was to be conducted by the American Arbitration Association. Because U. S. funds were frozen, Benezet Court, Inc. has requested the Redevelopment Authority to postpone consideration of the plan for 90 days. Leaders of groups on both sides of the issue have agreed that no good purpose would be served by holding the referendum right now.

What's happening now is:

1. Benezet is looking for non-federal funding.
2. Octavia Hill is proceeding with eviction of the six families.
3. The opposition says it is currently studying other ways to keep the six families permanently in the neighborhood.
4. President Putney and the Board continue to pledge that the issue will be presented to the membership before Benezet's plans are submitted to the Board of the Redevelopment Authority.

TENNIS ANYONE?

A gala tennis party is scheduled for Saturday evening April 28, 1973, from 8 p. m. to midnight at Pier 30 Tennis Courts, Delaware Avenue and Bainbridge. SHCA has full and exclusive use of all eight courts for the evening. Watch all your sportif neighbors get aced. Refreshments will be served. Five dollars per person will cover four hours of tennis, playing, and partying. Please send your check within the next two weeks to Phil Baer, 302 South Front Street, Philadelphia 19106, and indicate whether you are a beginner, intermediate, or advanced player.

GEORGE WASHINGTON DIDN'T SLEEP HERE. WHY SHOULD WE?

Independence Hall and its surrounding historic park is not just a mummified, impersonal group of buildings. It's a living complex that can remind the city and the nation about the days when Philadelphia dared to be great. And it might inspire contemporary adoption of that credo.

That's why a brand new organization, The Friends of Independence National Historic Park, has gotten together with the National Park Service. They're working together to spark new interest in the Park buildings with increased activities and programs for the public and through the acquisition of works of art, antique furnishings, manuscripts of historical importance to the Park's collections.

One of the first projects is a lecture series on American history and culture. Write these dates on your calendar:

March 23: Graham Hood, Director of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg: "American Silver in its Social Context".

April 27: Mrs. Claude A. Lopez, Assistant Editor, The Papers of Benjamin Franklin: "Benjamin Franklin, Citizen of Two Worlds". On April 27 the Friends will also sponsor a preview opening of the Park exhibit: "Archaeology at Franklin Court."

All lectures, free to the public, will be held at 8 p. m. in the House of Representatives Chamber at Congress Hall, 6th and Chestnut.

You are invited to support this group through your talents and by becoming members. Inquiries may be directed to Miss Anne Rowland, Chairman, Friends of INHP, 313 Walnut Street, Philadelphia 19106.

Classes of membership are: Annual, \$15; Family-Annual, \$25; Contributor-Annual, \$100; Sponsor, \$1000; and Benefactor, \$5000.

King George should be able to read this without putting on his spectacles.

PLAY BALL!

In spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to -- baseball. John Nelson has once again volunteered his time and talent to the organization of a spring and summer program at Starr Garden, for young men ages 13-16. Volunteers to coach and umpire are needed. Contact John at WA 5-6179.

SURVIVING 1976

The neighborhood may not want the cars that the I-95 ramps would perpetually spill into the area. But it is not an unfriendly place. Society Hill was one of the few areas of the city that went on record as favoring a Bicentennial. Its residents have looked forward to the challenge of hospitably receiving visitors from all over the country and the world during the celebration of America's 200th birthday.

It has also foreseen that there will be all sorts of temporary inconveniences in handling crowds that might reach 100,000 people a day and has started planning ways to make their visit a pleasant one. And to improve the neighborhood in the process.

Last year the Company for Historic Philadelphia was formed.

The Company is a non-profit group whose general boundaries of interest presently run from Delaware Avenue to Seventh, Race to Washington Avenue, and probably will extend beyond that.

It was formed to make sure this area would be able to help coordinate solutions to the traffic, trash-collection, parking, commerce, and safety problems increasing numbers of Bicentennial visitors will bring. It also intends to insure that the neighborhoods will be improved rather than harmed after the celebration is over.

The Company, currently chaired by Ted Newbold, is requesting seed money from the City to hire a part-time executive secretary to run its day-to-day operations and to rent headquarters space. It is working with the SHCA as well as other nearby civic associations.

To provide input, the SHCA has formed a special Bicentennial Committee. Its chairman is Gretchen Niedermayer. The committee is currently assessing the needs and desires of the neighborhood in hosting Bicentennial visitors.

Your suggestions, fears, ideas, and views are wanted. Write them down and bring them to the March 27th meeting. And if you want to have even more of a say, join the Committee. Contact Ms. Niedermayer, 514 Spruce Street -- MA 7-7927.

FEED A TREE, OR A DOLLAR FOR A DAFFODIL

The Washington Square Association is seeking Associate Members in support of its efforts to preserve and beautify Washington Square. Mrs. G. H. Elliott, 225 South Eighth Street, is in charge of the committee which hopes to enhance the Square with seasonal plantings and care for the magnificent trees and shrubbery. Green thumbs or not, they hope you'll respond to their call for help.

POOH LIVES!

SHCA is sponsoring a children's library at St. Peter's House, 313 Pine Street. Some of the books will come from the Free Library of Philadelphia; others will be donated by interested individuals and institutions.

Anyone who would be willing to volunteer as librarian from 3 to 5 p. m. once a week should contact Liz Schall at MA 7-2792.

Watch for notices in the A & P and local stores for news of the opening.

WANTED: PARK SPARKERS

A committee is forming for the improvement of Delancey Park, between Third and Fourth on Delancey. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Liz Schall -- MA 7-2792.

READY TO ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES?

If you are interested in working on one of the committees now being organized, contact the chairman or send your name to SHCA, 313 Pine Street, Philadelphia 19106.

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| Bicentennial | -- Mrs. Gretchen Niedermayer |
| Communications | -- Mrs. Peggy Duckett |
| Housing | -- Mr. Marshall Meyers |
| Neighborhood Amenities | -- Mr. Thomas Byrne |
| Schools and Recreation | -- Mrs. Liz Schall |
| Social, Artistic, Athletic | -- Mr. Philip Baer |
| Transportation | -- Mr. Harry Schwartz |

"PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR DOG TO FOUL THE FOOTPATH"

The English phrase the plea this way. Others say it differently. But numerous neighbors have barraged the Board and Newsletter to urge that we all mind the existing City ordinance. Others trumpet support for the City Council plan to make dog owners liable to stiff fines for violations. Get the point? Watch the placement, 'cause the dogs don't.

MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday March 27, 1973
 Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church
 South side of Pine Street between 4th and 5th
 8 O'clock



DARTS AND LAURELS

- Laurel: To Central-Penn Bank for allowing neighbors to use its Second and Pine parking lot at night for their own cars. Memo to Central-Penn: You can gain permanent possession of the neighborhood Good Guy Stanley Cup if you plant a few trees around the Bank.
- Dart: To the City for failing to enforce parking regulations on Fifth Street around the State Store and A & P on Saturday, making that thoroughfare virtually impenetrable.
- Laurel: To Wildflower for providing another tasteful, appetizing place to eat and drink in the neighborhood. The handsome new restaurant is on Fifth above South.
- Dart: To Pennsylvania Hospital for not trying harder to save the historic buildings on Spruce Street between Seventh and Eighth. Their facades could be incorporated in the design of the new hospital facility to be erected there. The local AIA Chapter can show how.
- Laurel: To Froots 'n Things for brightening up their sidewalks with a great assortment of cut flowers.
- Dart: To whoever thought up the cutesy name for that store.
- Laurel: To April Morrison and her friends on the Coalition against the I-95 Ramps for showing that Gloria Steinem and crew knew what they were talking about. All power to women!
- Dart: To Tom Van Arkel for being such a smoothie that the neighborhood has okayed his Cherry Hill West project at Head House Square.
- Laurel: Silk Purse out of Sow's Ear Award to Design III for making those Penn's Landing Square boxes salable at an even higher price through some interior-design magic.

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THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER welcomes newsworthy contributions of neighborhood interest. Send to our Secretary, Mrs. Peggy Duckett, 335 South Second Street.

Contributors to the March issue: Peggy Duckett, Alan Halpern, Georganne Mears.