

January 9, 2025

Dear Neighbor,

Demonstrating the power of civic associations to lead the way, 150 Philadelphians from Society Hill, Old City, Queen Village, Pennsport and Whitman gathered on October 23, 2024 to share their visions for a reimagined I-95, led by Frank Jaskiewicz of JzTI. The report resulting from that meeting follows, highlighting the challenges, opportunities and most of all, the communities' needs.

We know from PennDOT that they plan to rebuild the aging highway adjacent to our neighborhoods in the next 10 - 20 years and the communities want our voices heard now, early in the planning.

Sponsored by Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) and hosted by Pennsport at their EOM Athletic Association, consultant Frank Jaskiewicz engaged the community who said:

- NO to new ramps because of their imposition into neighborhoods
- YES to traffic calming elements at transitions from highway ramps and from Columbus Boulevard to the communities
- YES to preserving and improving amenities such as the skating rink and ballfields
- YES to realizing Foglietta Plaza design
- THINK BIG - can the roadway be sunken and covered, similar to the Boston Big Dig?
- INTEGRATION IS ESSENTIAL - with other modes of transportation and plans for the area
- THE FUTURE - plans must consider future changes in mobility

The pages that follow delve into all these opportunities and provide a starting point for PennDOT as they begin their plans. We will continue to advocate for the needs of the communities as a priority in that roadway planning.

In Community,

Mary Purcell

Mary Purcell
Chair, I-95 Task Force

Society Hill Civic Association



Acknowledgements

We thank all who participated in the community meeting and creation of the report:

- Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) I-95 Task Force members: Paul Boni, Jeff Fogg, Lorna Katz Lawson, Mark Keener and Bob Kramer.
- SHCA for funding the project and Pennsport for hosting the meeting.
- Community Leaders: Cait Allen (Queen Village), Susan Burt Collins (Society Hill), Brian Donnelly (Whitman), Patrick Fitzmaurice (Pennsport), Job Itzkowitz (Old City) and Marc Kapczynski (Whitman).
- City and State attendees: Councilmember Squilla, Hugo Cortes (Rep. Fiedler's District Office Director), State Senator Nikil Saval and his Chief of Staff Alfredo Chuquihuara, Rep. Mary Isaacson's Chief of Staff Colleen McCallister and Christopher Johnson, Regional Representative for U.S. Senator Casey.
- Frank Jaskiewicz of JzTI
- All of our community participants from Old City, Society Hill, Queen Village, Pennsport and Whitman

I-95 Reconstruction Project: Community Issues & Opportunities

Summary Report
January 2025



Prepared for:
Society Hill Civic Association

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Appendix A: Written Community Feedback

JzTI & Society Hill Civic Association would like to thank the following communities and their representatives for helping to prepare for & participate in the project workshop:

Old City
Society Hill
Queen Village
Pennsport
Whitman

Title Page Imagery Sources:

Pat Fitzmaurice
Mark Kapczynski

1 - Introduction

The purpose of this project has been to assist Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) -- in conjunction with the adjoining communities of Old City, Queen Village, Pennsport and Whitman -- in preparing for its upcoming dialogue with PennDOT regarding the potential reconstruction of I-95 and its associated ramp structures from Center City through South Philadelphia.

The driving principle behind this endeavor is to advocate that the needs of the adjacent communities be elevated against the need for replacing/rebuilding the highway, such that the process is not "top-down" in nature but rather informed and guided by an understanding of the general topics of community concern such as highway encroachment, multi-modal connections, pollution, safety and peaceful enjoyment of city neighborhoods and amenities.

Aside from this report a slide presentation has also been developed illustrating desired best practices relevant to the pending I-95 project, and also addressing potential concerns about how it would interface with the community. The topics of this presentation include the following:

- **Review of existing conditions and PennDOT plans**, including a series of illustrations highlighting the main areas of concern within Society Hill and adjoining communities, as well as the current understanding of the potential changes being proposed by PennDOT
- **Review of best practices in freeway and neighborhood street design** including a series of slides showing selected imagery covering each of the key topics listed below, with samples from other locations and listing of the key features of each:
 - **Freeway structure design**, including the potential for graffiti-proof surface/wall treatments (including textured surfaces or pre-commissioned murals) as well as **underpass treatments** to promote safe and comfortable foot crossings
 - **Capping treatments**, drawing from the SHCA Olin concept design for Foglietta Plaza plus implemented examples from other locations, as well as potential **community-centric amenities** -- such as public art, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian paths, bike paths, parking, wayfinding and other key features -- in the spaces atop, alongside and underneath the future reconstructed freeway
 - **Transition treatments** including optimal intersection configurations at the junctions of freeway on/off-ramps and the surface street network
 - Supplementary **traffic calming measures** needed to protect neighborhoods from existing and future freeway traffic
 - **Street and sidewalk features** including the key elements of landscaping, shade, pedestrian buffer, bike lanes/paths, and paving/crosswalk enhancements, along with street, intersection and curb treatments that can be designed to accommodate **buses, delivery trucks and emergency vehicles** while helping to manage the speeds of both large vehicles and cars.

This presentation served as the basis for a joint community workshop on 23 October 2024 and is intended to be carried forward as a toolkit of best practices to help inform next year's interaction with PennDOT by SHCA and its neighboring communities.

This report summarizes the issues and opportunities discussed at the community workshop, the results of the preliminary evaluation that informed the session, and the community feedback received. It concludes with a set of recommendations drawing from these activities covering procedural issues and design priorities for the next stages of the I-95 reconstruction project.

2 - Preliminary Evaluation

This section presents the results of a limited level of preliminary analysis on potential issues associated with the I-95 project as discernible through the limited information provided to date.

Key issues and opportunities highlighted within this report include:

- Potential effect of relocated ramp structures on local traffic distribution
- Priority areas in need of protection from existing and/or any redistributed freeway traffic associated with the I-95 reconstruction project
- Opportunities for enhanced street and curb treatments to manage the speeds of buses and cars
- Opportunities for pedestrian and bike enhancements to better support safe movements
- Potential to incorporate public transit enhancements into the I-95 program.

It is important to note that no traffic modeling nor detailed design analysis on the proposed concepts has been undertaken as part of this process.

1.1 Market Street to Morris Street

The existing layout of I-95 from Market Street to Morris Street consists of five access points spread along the stretch from north to south, each of which represents either an on-ramp or off-ramp for the northbound or southbound direction (see **Figure 1**).

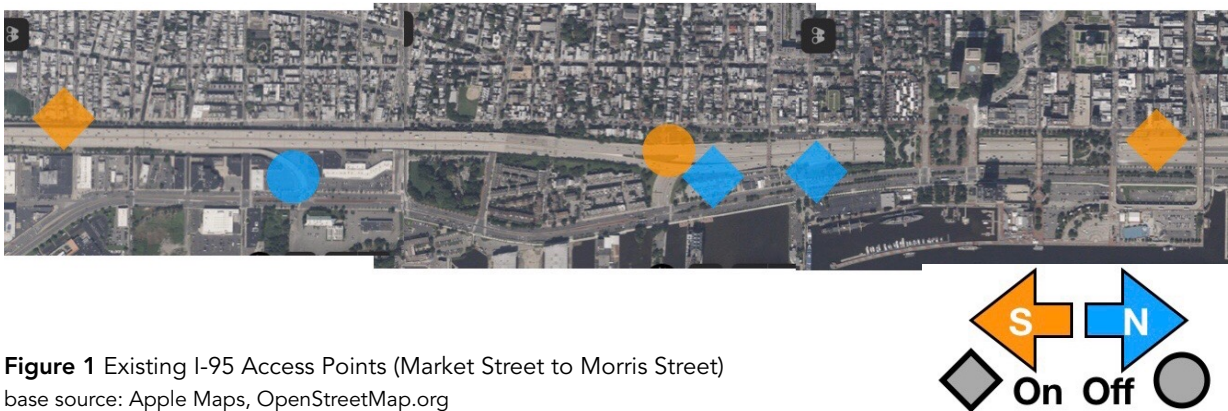


Figure 1 Existing I-95 Access Points (Market Street to Morris Street)
base source: Apple Maps, OpenStreetMap.org

The concept plans provided by PennDOT to date -- as well as supplementary information presented at previous PennDOT interactions with SHCA and other communities -- indicated the potential for the following changes (north to south):

- Removal of the existing Market Street on-ramp
- Highway widening between Pine Street and Christian Street
- Addition of a new off-ramp at Lombard Circle
- Addition of a new interchange at Wharton Street
- Relocation of the Morris Street on-ramp
- Shoulder and ramp widening throughout the project length

The proposed changes in access point locations associated with the PennDOT low, medium and high impact design concepts (as defined by PennDOT) are highlighted in **Figures 2 to 4**.

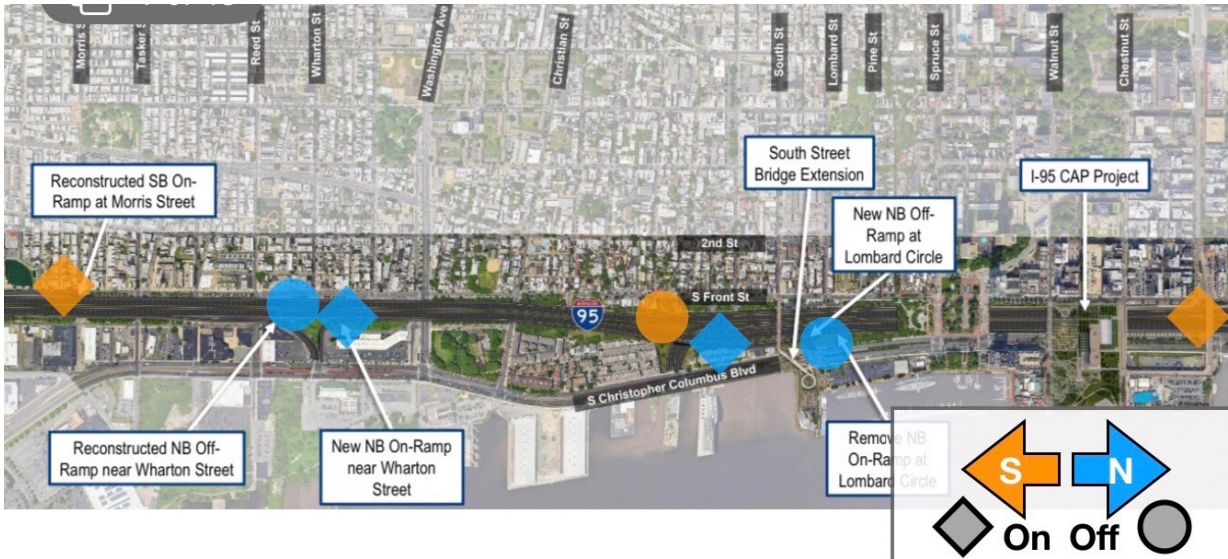


Figure 2 I-95 Access Points for the **Low Impact** Design Concept (Market Street to Morris Street)
base source: PennDOT



Figure 3 I-95 Access Points for the **Medium Impact** Design Concept (Market Street to Morris Street)
base source: PennDOT



Figure 4 I-95 Access Points for the **High Impact** Design Concept (Market Street to Morris Street)
base source: PennDOT

The proposed changes associated with each of the PennDOT design scenarios (Market Street to Morris Street) -- including the number of ramps in the northbound (NB) and southbound (SB) directions -- can be summarized as follows:

Current Layout

Total Access Points:

On-ramps	Off-ramps
NB: 2	NB: 1
SB: 2	SB: 1

Low Impact Design Concept

Total Access Points:

On-ramps	Off-ramps
NB: 2	NB: 2
SB: 2	SB: 1

Key Changes:

- Removal of the northbound on-ramp at Lombard Circle
- Addition of a northbound off-ramp at Lombard Circle
- Addition of a northbound on-ramp near Wharton Street

Medium Impact Design Concept

Total Access Points:

On-ramps	Off-ramps
NB: 2	NB: 1
SB: 2	SB: 1

Key Changes:

- Removal of the northbound on-ramp at Lombard Circle
- Addition of a northbound on-ramp near Wharton Street
- Removal of the southbound on-ramp at Morris Street
- Addition of a southbound on-ramp at Wharton Street as part of a consolidated interchange facing Delaware Avenue

High Impact Design Concept

Total Access Points:

On-ramps	Off-ramps
NB: 2	NB: 1
SB: 1	SB: 1

Key Changes:

- Removal of the southbound on-ramp at Market Street
- Removal of the northbound on-ramp at Lombard Circle
- Addition of a northbound on-ramp near Wharton Street
- Removal of the southbound on-ramp at Morris Street
- Addition of a southbound on-ramp at Wharton Street as part of a consolidated interchange facing Delaware Avenue

The High Impact design concept reduces the overall number of access points along I-95 between Market Street and Morris Street, while the Low Impact and Medium Impact concepts shift several of the existing access points to new locations. Each of the three concepts enlarges the interchanging functionality at Wharton Street, with the Medium Impact and High Impact options providing for all movements except a southbound off-ramp at this location. It has been indicated on PennDOT plans that all these access points would be focused toward Delaware Avenue.

While any shifting of access points will alter the traffic patterns to, from and through each of the adjoining communities, their consolidation toward Delaware Avenue will run the additional risk of increasing general traffic levels on this corridor and creating localized heavy-traffic locations both along Delaware Avenue and on the intersecting (i.e. east-west) cross-streets that connect it with the heavily populated areas of Central and South Philadelphia.

Figure 5 summarizes in diagrammatic form the concerns that could arise from these changes. Specifically they include:

- New traffic patterns through the residential areas nearest to I-95, especially the corridors of Front Street and 2nd Street which could see significant shifts in traffic levels along their lengths
- Significantly increased traffic levels on Delaware Avenue resulting from the consolidation of access points to face only eastward, as drivers will need to use Delaware Avenue to reach these access points particularly with the Medium Impact and High Impact design concepts
- Increase in traffic on the cross-streets connecting the residential and commercial areas of Central and South Philadelphia with Delaware Avenue
- Larger (and more difficult to traverse) intersections along Delaware Avenue as associated with its increased reliance as an I-95 access corridor, particularly at the location of the consolidated Wharton Street interchange included in the Medium Impact and High Impact design concepts
- Potential concerns with the design of the west (i.e. community-facing) sides of the proposed new ramps and enlarged interchanges (particularly at Wharton Street) as these risk large unbroken expanses of infrastructure not generally conducive to community amenity or walkability.

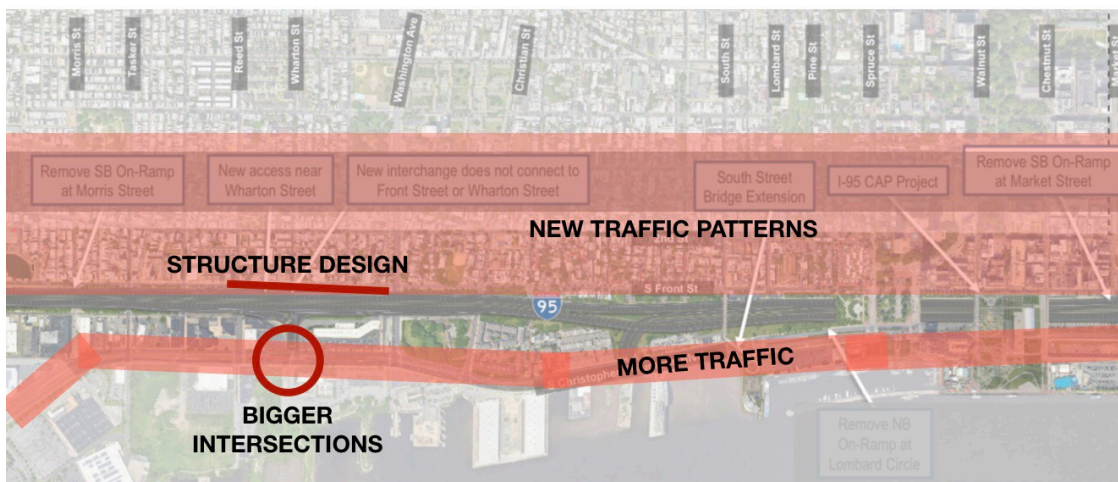


Figure 5 Summary of Potential Issues with Current I-95 Design Concepts (Market Street to Morris Street) base source: PennDOT

The focusing of additional traffic on Delaware Avenue could also undermine alternate visions of its future as previously developed through highly interactive professional and community engagement processes by PennPraxis and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC).

Each of these efforts focused on the re-envisioning of Delaware Avenue as a community-centric urban boulevard with a modern light rail service in its median and improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities along its length. The overall intent of these efforts was to better integrate Delaware Avenue with the rest of the city, and to transform the corridor into a stronger link in the cityscape between Central/South Philadelphia and the Delaware River waterfront.

Several of the concept designs generated during these engagements are shown in **Figures 6 & 7**.



Figure 6 PennPraxis Design Concept for Delaware Avenue
source: Concept Development for Transit on Delaware Avenue, DVRPC Nov 2018



Figure 7 DVRPC Design Concept for Delaware Avenue
source: Concept Development for Transit on Delaware Avenue, DVRPC Nov 2018

The potential for increased traffic on Delaware Avenue -- as appears intrinsic to the current PennDOT concepts -- runs the risk of precluding the opportunity for light rail service as well as undermining the objective of providing more generous, more pleasant and safer walking and bicycling spaces along this key waterfront corridor. This underscores the necessity of better coordination among State, City and Regional stakeholders as well as the critical need for a consolidated community-driven vision for Delaware Avenue before (or in conjunction with) further design action on I-95.

1.2 Whitman Interchange

The preliminary concepts provided to date by PennDOT for the Whitman interchange at the junction of I-95 and I-76 appear to be designed to provide for unbroken transitions for each directional movement between these two freeways, i.e. direct ramp connections that do not require drivers to exit onto local surface streets to reach separate ramps onto the intersecting freeway.

The existing layout of this interchange is shown in **Figure 8**.



Figure 8 Existing Walt Whitman Interchange (I-95 at I-76)
base source: Apple Maps, OpenStreetMap.org

As with the Market-Morris segment, PennDOT has indicated Low, Medium and High Impact scenarios, though with respect to this location the Low and Medium Impact concepts appear to be identical. It is worth noting that the nomenclature here identifies the subjectiveness with which these terms have apparently been applied as related to overall design priorities. Specifically:

- The High Impact option (see **Figure 10**) appears to have a significant impact on the east (i.e. Port of Philadelphia) side of I-95 but a relatively limited impact on the communities to the west of the freeway.
- In contrast, the Low/Medium Impact option (see **Figure 9**) appears to have limited design impact on the east/Port side of the freeway but a far greater impact (as compared with the "High Impact" option) on the adjoining communities to the west, particularly with respect to the ramps' impacts on community amenities such as the heavily used ballfields both north and south of I-76.

Given that large expanses of recreational community space are limited in the densely populated neighborhoods of South Philadelphia, the protection of these ballfields has been rightly identified as a high priority for the adjoining communities.



Figure 9 PennDOT **Low/Medium Impact** Design Concept for Walt Whitman Interchange
base source: PennDOT; ballfields inset: Mark Kapczynski



Figure 10 PennDOT **High Impact** Design Concept for Walt Whitman Interchange
base source: PennDOT; ballfields inset: Mark Kapczynski

While the goal of free-flowing connections between freeways is generally considered the aspirational standard of freeway engineering, the attainment of this in any particular location requires careful consideration of the benefits of this objective with respect to both its cost and its impact on surrounding communities. As such each of the following questions will need to be fully assessed before each of the proposed ramps can be individually justified:

- whether there is a demonstrable need (supported by traffic counts and origin-destination surveys) for each of the direct unbroken directional connections intended to be provided
- whether the surface streets currently used for these circulation purposes (particularly Front Street and Packer Avenue) are truly insufficient for the task, as these are both spatially offset from the nearest residential neighborhoods (limiting their community impact) and appear to have adequate capacity for accommodating these movements.

3 - Issues & Opportunities

This section summarizes the common issues associated with urban freeways (including the existing and proposed I-95 as described above) and opportunities for limiting and better managing their impacts. These were the main "best-practice" topics discussed at the joint community workshop of 23 October 2024 (see **Section 4**) to establish within the community the range of protection/enhancement measures that can potentially be requested for inclusion in the I-95 reconstruction project and budget.

These topics are presented here (as in the community workshop) in an order that proceeds from the I-95 corridor itself outward into the adjacent communities, as illustrated in **Figure 11**.

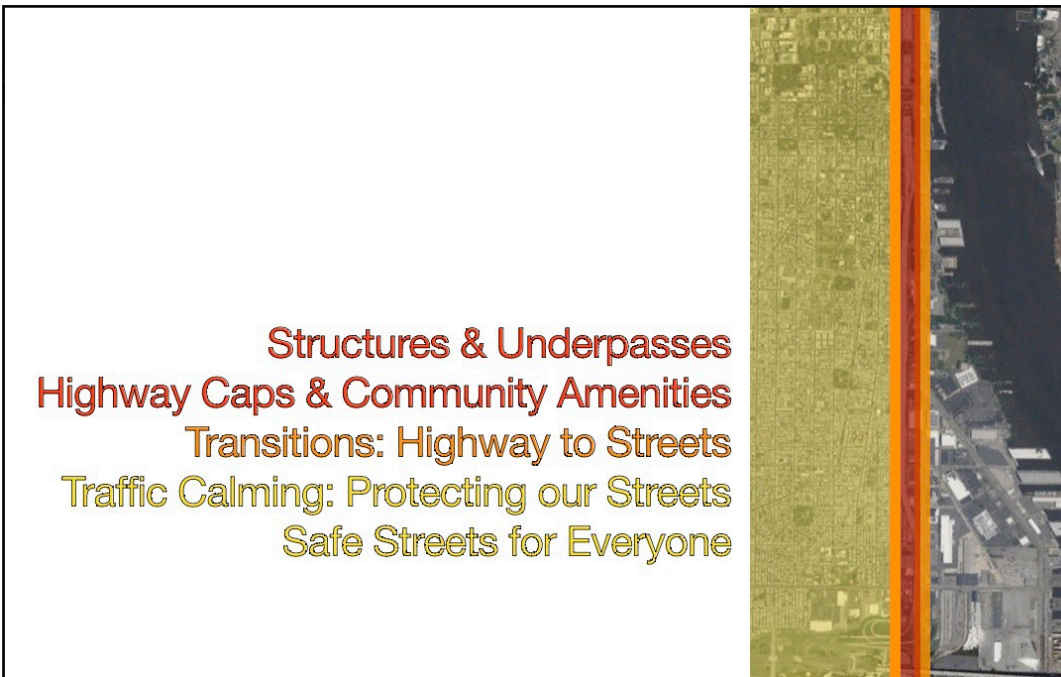


Figure 11 Spatial Orientation of Key Design Topics
base source: Apple Maps, OpenStreetMap.org

3.1 Structures and Underpasses

Since being first introduced in the 1940s the physical presence of freeways within urban settings have often severed communities and created dead or undesirable spaces alongside and across them. Although many advancements have since been made in the design of these types of structures they continue to create issues in the communities through which they pass.

The best examples of such structures (i.e the least impactful) pay unwavering attention to the application of the following design priorities:

- Generous width for the spaces beneath the freeway
- Landscaping and streetscaping to and across the freeway corridor
- Functional and natural lighting beneath the structures, including:
 - low-level pedestrian-scale lighting
 - decorative lighting
- Appealing vertical surfaces on all sides, emphasizing:
 - avoidance of smooth flat vertical faces
 - preference for textured or block surfaces (as a graffiti deterrent)
 - inclusion of color or public art

Imagery from strong examples of the application of these techniques is included in **Figure 12**.



Figure 12 Examples of Best Practices in Structure Design

- A: Sacramento - Landscaping
- B: Sacramento - Landscaping
- C: Sacramento - Lighting

- D: Sacramento - Lighting
- E: Denver - Public art
- F: Philadelphia - Public art

3.2 Highway Caps and Community Amenities

Highway caps have often been used to bridge the gaps created by urban freeways, offering an expanse of recreational space atop the highway and attempting to minimize the visual and audible impacts of the traffic. Community amenities such as parks, gardens, farmers' markets, public monuments and walking/cycling paths have often been included as part of such projects -- amenities which can also be provided beneath or alongside the highway (for instance, bike paths) given suitable conditions.

However these amenities require a commitment to maintenance as well as attention to a series of best design practices in order to ensure they become and remain valuable assets to the community. These best design practices include:

- Generous landscaping
- Noise dampening
- Activation of spaces
- Paths corresponding with pedestrian desire lines

Imagery from the SHCA / Olin Partnership redesign plan for Foglietta Plaza as well as other strong examples of community amenities atop, below or beside freeways are provided in **Figure 13**.

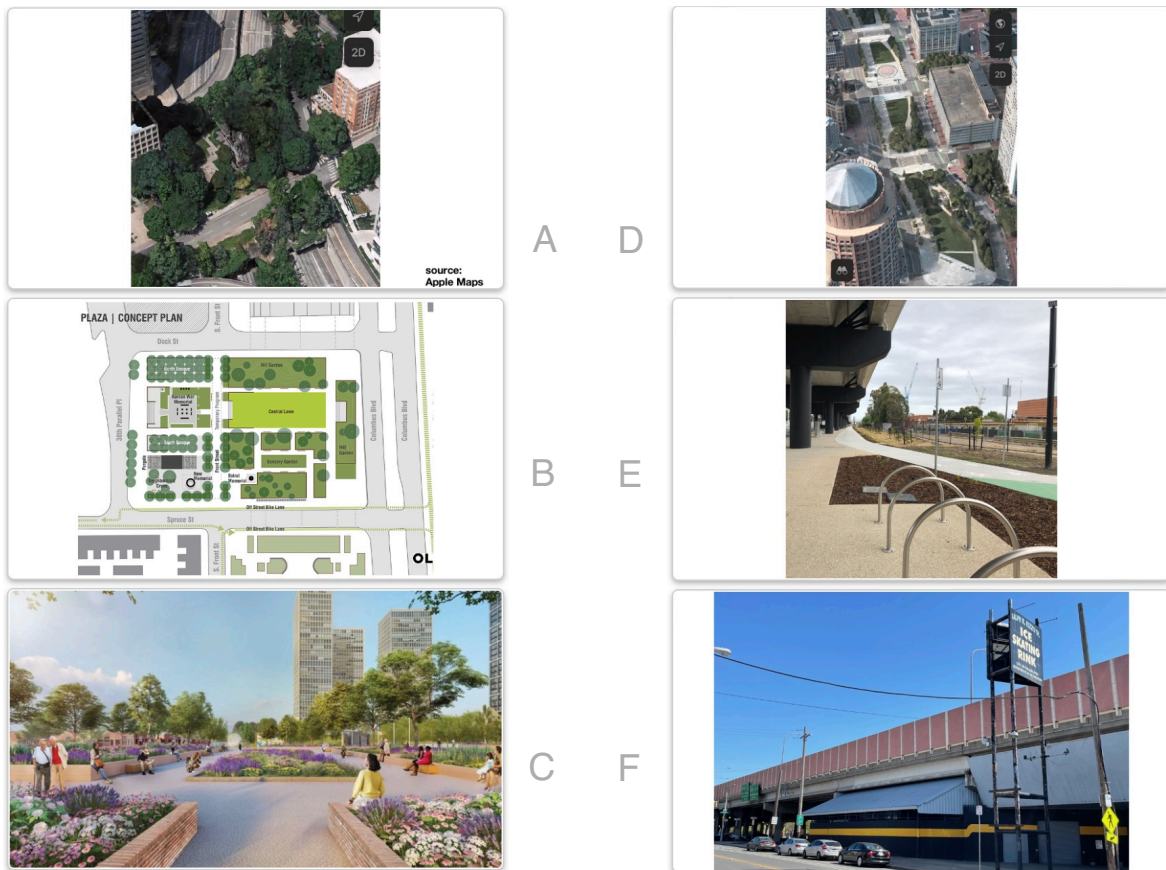


Figure 13 Examples of Highway Caps and Associated Community Amenities

A: Seattle | source: Apple Maps; openstreetmap.org
 B: Foglietta Plaza | source: SHCA/Olin
 C: Foglietta Plaza | source: SHCA/Olin

D: Boston | source: Apple Maps; openstreetmap.org
 E: Melbourne
 F: Philadelphia | source: Pat Fitzmaurice

3.3 Transitions: Highways to Streets

In terms of limiting the traffic-related impacts of urban freeways on adjacent communities, the most critical design locations are the transitions between the highway and the local neighborhood streets, specifically the ramps and first intersections at surface level.

In general these need to be designed such that traffic exiting the freeway has already slowed to a neighborhood-appropriate speed by the time it reaches ground level, while traffic entering the freeway should not have an opportunity to accelerate toward highway speeds until fully entering onto the ramps themselves.

To achieve these ends the following design characteristics are critical for ramps and adjoining intersections:

- Sharp speed transitions entirely contained within the space between the freeway and first surface intersection
- Narrow "urban" intersection geometries at street level
- Surface streets and intersections that feel very narrow and urban in nature
- Tight curves to limit the speed at which drivers can turn around corners where pedestrians may be present

Figure 14 shows an example of the "re-urbanization" of road geometries at Logan Circle on its approach to the Vine Street Expressway, as well as a couple other examples of the retrofitting of surface streets for an overall narrower profile and feel.



Figure 14 Examples of Urbanized Transitions and Road Narrowing Treatments

- A: Logan Circle Overview Showing Freeway (red) & Re-Urbanized (yellow) Design Zones | base source: Google Maps
- B: Logan Circle - "Before" | source: phillyhistory.org
- C: Logan Circle - "After" | base source: Google Maps
- D: American Street - Corner bump-outs
- E: Florida - Mid-block curb bump-outs

3.4 Traffic Calming

Traffic calming on local streets is an important complementary action in neighborhoods adjacent to urban freeways, as it is critical to ensure that any traffic exiting or heading toward the freeway operates in a manner consistent with the multifunctional nature of urban communities.

As modern traffic calming is a broad and increasingly sophisticated sub-specialty of urban street design, this report provides just a general overview of the types of treatments that may be appropriate for the urban streets of Central and South Philadelphia.

In general, to be effective, traffic-calming measures need to achieve one of the following main effects on traffic:

- Narrowing of the road in either an "actual" or "visual" sense
- Lateral deflection, i.e. shifting drivers away from a totally straight path
- Vertical deflection using road features such as speed humps or textured street treatments (i.e. bricks or cobblestones)

Examples of traffic-calming measures that achieve these ends are provided in **Figure 15**.



Figure 15 Examples of Traffic-Calming Treatments

A: Philadelphia - Naturally narrow street
B: Melbourne - Reclaimed narrowed street
C: Perth - Lateral deflection

D: Perth - Narrowing + vertical deflection
E: Perth - Vertical deflection
F: Perth - Painted speed notice

3.5 Safe Streets for Everyone

The objectives of traffic calming can be achieved without disrupting the efficiency of access for critical services such as emergency vehicles and buses, as has been demonstrated by the latest incarnation of road design and traffic calming throughout the world. These techniques allow streets to be designed for effective and safe circulation for everyone, including:

- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists
- Ambulances and fire trucks
- Buses
- Service and delivery vehicles

To accommodate larger vehicles without compromising the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, the following design tactics should be implemented:

- use of minimal lane widths and clearances required for buses
- traffic-calming measures designed to limit car speeds while accommodating emergency access, such as the use of mid-level curbs and aprons that are mountable by larger vehicles

Examples of these types of balanced street treatments are provided in **Figure 16**.



Figure 16 Examples of Street Treatments that Balance the Needs of All Users

A: Glenside - Basic pedestrian buffer

B: American Street - Use of minimum bus curb radius

C: American Street - Raised bicycle lane

D: Perth - Mountable curb/apron

E: Melbourne - Mountable roundabout apron

F: Melbourne - Raised ped/bike crossing

4 - Engagement Summary

A joint community workshop among the neighborhoods of Old City, Society Hill, Queen Village, Pennsport and Whitman was conducted by SHCA and JzTI -- with the assistance of representatives from each of the invited communities -- on 23 October 2024 at EOM Athletic Association in Pennsport. This event was open to the general public and advertised within the targeted communities.

The purpose of the workshop was to confirm both the priorities of the communities included within this project and to verify that the imagery selected to illustrate good practices with respect to each are consistent with the residents' aspirations for the future. The workshop was preceded a few weeks prior by a pre-workshop with leaders of the adjoining communities to ensure that all key issues were considered and to design a presentation format that would foster a focused discussion and directly relevant input.

SHCA and its partners organized the workshop (including the venue) and issued the invitations, while JzTI prepared the presentation, conducted the technical elements of the workshop, and solicited feedback with the assistance of SHCA.

Following the workshop SHCA collected and collated the written comments provided by the participants and issued an audio transcript of the event on which the spoken comments have been recorded. It should be noted that the feedback process continues to remain open through an invitation for feedback via email to community representatives, the email addresses for whom were provided to the participants at the workshop.

In general the feedback received verbally at the workshop and in the written comments could be organized into two general themes:

- Immediate concerns
- Long-term aspirations

4.1 Immediate Concerns

The near-term immediate concerns expressed by the workshop participants focused mainly on the need to preserve and enhance safety on local streets as well as to repair frayed neighborhood spaces near the freeway.

Walking was indicated as a high priority with respect to the streets, and speeding was identified as a common problem. It was expressed that currently there are major deficiencies regarding pedestrian safety throughout the wider area -- especially at street crossings -- as well as significant nighttime safety concerns near and under I-95. It was stated on multiple occasions that there is a need to slow traffic before it enters into the neighborhoods from the highway or commercial areas, and there was in general a positive response to the types of traffic-calming initiatives illustrated within the presentation.

One resident suggested changing the flow direction on some segments of one-way streets to ensure there is not a straight unbroken path by which drivers can speed through the neighborhood, underscoring that traffic calming or some means on speed control is a priority for many residents. "Daylighting" of intersections was also proposed, referring to ensuring that the entirety of pedestrian crossings are easily visible from all approach directions, which can be achieved by restricting parking near the corners and/or constructing curb bump-outs to narrow the crossings at key locations.

Cobblestones were also raised as a potentially effective means of controlling the speeds of traffic through the neighborhoods. Many residents expressed that they would like to see the City conduct a traffic study to examine the possibilities of fixing safety issues and installing traffic calming throughout the affected communities.

Specific comments related to the shortcomings of the existing freeway structure itself included:

- that the reconstructed freeway should not face the community with "just a blank wall"
- that the freeway structure will need better soundproofing
- that better landscaping is needed to soften the visual impact of the structure
- that better lighting and security is needed beneath the freeway including in parking areas
- that the realization of the new Foglietta Plaza design is critical to repairing this key link across I-95

Most participants at the workshop expressed that they are generally comfortable with the current locations of the ramps --- or were at least more comfortable with maintaining the current locations rather than risk having them moved to areas which could cause more (and unknown) problems.

A resident of Delaware Avenue expressed that most drivers generally act as if the corridor were a highway although most residents do not view it as such, which highlights the mismatch between the current geometric design of Delaware Avenue and the more multi-functional urban corridor many residents envision it as. This viewpoint was seconded by several residents of the neighborhoods west of I-95 who said they regularly walk to shops on Delaware Avenue and would like to see this become safer and more enjoyable in both the short term and long term.

Several concerns were expressed related to the lack of safety and maintenance in some existing community spaces. A commitment to maintenance was raised as a key issue given that many existing public areas (including streets and sidewalks) have been allowed to decline since the highway was initially constructed.

Other immediate concerns less directly related to the topics of discussion included:

- flooding on Delaware Avenue
- high weekend traffic levels
- confusion caused by current striping and lane configurations on some streets
- encampments in existing green spaces.

4.2 Long-Term Aspirations

One of the key points of emphasis with respect to the longer term was that PennDOT should be thinking of this project in terms of future (rather than present or past) realities about urban travel, noting that most people expected much higher proportions of walking, biking and public transit in the future in comparison to driving. Relatedly it was expressed that any short-term plans as part of the structural repairs should not preclude more significant changes in the future, i.e. the eventual downsizing, removal or repurposing of the freeway.

The potential for burying the freeway altogether (or at least parts of it) was discussed as an optimal solution for addressing many of the concerns raised with respect to the impact of the structure, at least as a starting point for the upcoming discussions with PennDOT. Also the possibility was raised of constructing a second deck to narrow its lateral footprint.

In any event there was a clear position among those in the audience that a more ambitious vision is needed for the whole area, not just a conventional approach that assumes heavy traffic flows will continue to persist. It should also be noted that no one in the audience expressed any support for widening the freeway for additional capacity, underscoring that most participants agreed that the travel planning priorities are shifting away from driving personal vehicles. It was also repeatedly expressed that there should be no encroachment of ramps or associated freeway design elements into the neighborhoods. As noted above several participants expressed that this vision would need to extend to Delaware Avenue, with many supporting the possibility of light rail along the corridor and others noting the critical need for walking and bicycling upgrades in both the near and longer terms. The realization of the Foglietta Plaza design was cited as a key step in the vision.

It was also asked whether the elected representatives could exert more influence over PennDOT's process and design for this project, to which the representatives in attendance responded positively. A need for coordination among various initiatives was also identified as a necessity, not only with respect to traffic versus transit on Delaware Avenue, but also with respect to port expansion and other city and regional plans. In terms of the overall procedure for determining the future of the highway, several attendees emphasized the need for a coordinated community-driven approach for the entirety of the affected area to ensure all factors are taken into consideration.

5 - Recommendations

This section summarizes the basic recommendations drawn from the preliminary evaluation and community engagement process as described above, with the goal of ensuring that community concerns are adequately captured within the I-95 planning process and that the eventual design of the project sufficiently reflects the evolving nature of the neighborhoods through which it passes.

These recommendations can be sorted into two main categories aligning with procedural and design considerations.

Procedural Recommendations

With respect to the procedure through which PennDOT and the affected communities can obtain optimal results from the I-95 reconstruction project, the following actions are recommended:

- PennDOT should engage in a thorough planning process to consider a long-range vision accounting for the expectation of increased mode share for transit, walking and bicycling as well as to account for existing concerns about the current and future I-95 impacts on local communities.
- The planning process should draw upon recent traffic counts (post-covid to reflect recent commuting and travel-pattern changes) as well as future traffic projections based on up-to-date conditions in the increasingly multi-modal focused neighborhoods along the freeway, particularly as may be affected by enhancements such as the CAP project and future Foglietta Plaza expected to increase the proportions of walkers and cyclists in the immediate area.
- The process should include a well-organized and well-considered series of steps to ensure that the planning and design objectives proceed outward from the community rather than downward from the State.

Design Recommendations

While preliminary in nature, a clear hierarchy of design priorities has emerged through the community engagement process which should be incorporated into the future design of I-95 and its surroundings:

- Design proposals should reflect the latest thinking (nationwide and globally) about how freeways can be most appropriately and safely integrated into urban surroundings, as introduced in this report and largely confirmed as community preferences through the engagement process. These generally suggest that:
 - narrow ramps and tight intersections help reduce traffic speeds prior to the interfacing with neighborhood streets
 - well-designed and well-lit highway underpasses are critical to both the reality and perception of community safety
 - attention to high-quality materials, landscaping, streetscaping and accompanying community amenities are critical to ensuring a better fit of the freeway into the urban landscape
- Design proposals should incorporate means of repairing and managing the community safety issues that resulted from the initial construction of the freeway and that continue to plague the surrounding streets. In particular these should include:
 - use of design footprints for ramps and intersections that ensure all surface-level locations are configured for community-appropriate speeds
 - complementary traffic-calming measures extending into the adjacent neighborhoods to help manage the speeds of vehicles upon their departure from (or approach to) the freeway, potentially in conjunction with the City and/or a community traffic-calming plan
 - mitigation of flooding issues throughout the area, which are disruptive to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike

- The next phase of the planning and design process should include better coordination with the City, DVRPC, Delaware River Waterfront Corporation and other local stakeholders to determine a consistent future vision for Delaware Avenue, with consideration of:
 - walking and bicycling enhancements
 - future development scenarios
 - potential introduction of light rail and/or other transit improvements
 - maximum traffic levels that could reasonably be absorbed by the corridor without undermining these and other competing priorities

In conclusion the I-95 reconstruction process represents an opportunity to work toward a range of community goals (both short and long term) as well as to repair existing issues that continue to linger from the freeway's initial construction.

However -- in order to accomplish these ends -- it is critical that a well-rounded and community-inclusive planning process is undertaken in advance of further design development. It is also necessary to thoroughly coordinate the I-95 design process with other agencies' initiatives for enhancing conditions throughout the area in order to ensure that all local objectives are fully respected in the final outcome.

**Appendix A: Joint Community Meeting Written Comments
October 23, 2024**

1. PERSON #1

- a. TRAFFIC CALMING PLEASE!
- b. Remove Turning on Red
- c. Daylighting Intersections
- d. Curb extensions at crossings
- e. Mid-way crossing islands
- f. Tighter streets, stricter turns
- g. Raised crosswalks
- h. ENFORCE EXISTING TRAFFIC LAWS!!!!
- i. Trees and landscaping
- j. Maintenance of crosswalk paint and white lines
- k. ADA compliant ramps being built currently by the City

2. PERSON #2

- a. NO new off-ramp at Lombard St or anywhere!!
- b. Do NOT remove Market St on-ramp without analysis and/or replacement - where will vehicles go if that ramp is removed? Has PennDOT projected for traffic in the area once CAP Park opens?
- c. NO ROAD-WIDENING either for wider ramps or new lanes or wider shoulders. Do not allow the road to encroach on the communities anymore than it already has.

3. PERSON #3

- a. Make Foglietta Plaza vision a reality!
- b. Replace and improve skating rink!
- c. Preserve and improve the ballfields at WWB!

4. LAUREN WEGMAN - Pennsport

- a. PennDOT needs to show long-term plan for the highway/neighborhood impact. Lack of communication is causing most of our issues at this time
- b. Because of cost and time, it is completely irresponsible of PennDOT to only think of immediate repair plans without having at least a 50-75 year goal in mind. Are they only interested in patching up the old? If they are truly interested in community involvement, PennDOT needs a long-term plan incorporated into their short-term construction plans.

**Appendix A: Joint Community Meeting Written Comments
October 23, 2024**

5. DAN BIGELOW - Society Hill
 - a. I liked the emphasis on traffic calming and safe bike lanes
 - b. I think traffic on major access roads - such as Delaware Avenue - could be improved with better synchronization of traffic lights.
6. JACOB UNTERREINER - Society Hill
 - a. I would love to know more about if the plans will include adding lanes or vehicle capacity to I-95.
 - b. The highway already has terrible health impacts on our community and we need the **highway to be smaller, not bigger**
7. PERSON #7
 - a. Increase bicycle and pedestrian safety
 - b. Keep public spaces, particularly parks and fields for children
 - c. Some people like to walk to shopping centers; improve pedestrian right of ways
 - d. I don't care about parking
8. PERSON #8
 - a. Slowing traffic from Delaware Ave. to Swanson
 - b. Would love to see lighting and security if parking is retained
9. DOLORES BEIDELL - Whitman
 - a. We need to keep the parking under I-95 but we need better lighting under the highway
 - b. No more ramps in our neighborhood!
 - c. I live in Whitman right across the street from I-95
10. WEI LU WEIYEELU
 - a. What did northern neighborhoods do (Fishtown, Northern Liberties) do with PennDOT when the highway was renovated - was there pushback/were they heard/any lessons learned from them that we can take from those community leaders?
11. PERSON #11
 - a. Railroad Right of Way on Delaware Ave