

Community Grid *Plus*: 10 Points of Enhancement

CenterState CEO recommends a **Community Grid *Plus*** solution that builds on the foundation of the New York State Department of Transportation’s (NYSDOT) proposed Community Grid alternative with ten points of enhancement. CEO recognizes that no single solution – grid, new viaduct, or tunnel – is adequate to fully maximize the economic transformation and social benefits of this project for the region. The Community Grid, however, best reflects the values set forth by CenterState CEO, and these Grid *Plus* enhancements seek to address more than just the roadway by advocating for additional elements to more fully meet the economic, environmental, social, and transportation needs identified by our community throughout this process. CenterState CEO is committed to working with stakeholders across the community to add to, refine and advance these enhancements.

I. REGIONAL ROADWAY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

This project should go beyond tackling just the elevated portion of I-81 through the city by addressing the entire regional transportation system, including:

- Incorporate public transit enhancements - in advance of I-81 construction - adopting recommendations of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council’s current mass transit study (SMART 1).
- Designate remaining spur sections of I-81 north of I-690 interchange and south of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive as the “I-81 Business Spur.”
- Improving the Bear Street corridor to enhance transportation infrastructure and support the development of the Inner Harbor and the surrounding area.
- Add an additional lane to I-481 between exit 3 (Fayetteville/Dewitt) and the northern interchange of I-481/I-81 in both directions as well as other places where appropriate.
- Redesign interchanges and over/under passes along I-481 for safe pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular traffic flow.
- Develop and implement plans that create an interconnected system of bike and pedestrian ways in communities divided by I-481.
- Eliminate tolls on the NYS Thruway in the Syracuse area to facilitate east/west traffic movements and accommodate truck traffic.

II. MINIMIZE “COMMON FEATURES” IMPACT

The “Common Features” are elements of the project NYSDOT plans to construct regardless of the alternative selected. To minimize negative impact to Syracuse’s Northside community, eliminate the construction of the:

- “Missing Links” between I-81 and I-690.
- Additional lanes for I-81 north of downtown between I-690 and Hiawatha Boulevard.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

There should be a full examination of noise impacts along the portions of I-81 remaining as spurs in the city, as well as the current I-481 corridor, and development of a plan to work with local residents to design and install sound attenuation measures, where appropriate, that also provide environmental benefits (e.g. vegetation for filtering pollutants, solar panels to generate electricity, etc.).

Community Grid by the Numbers

1.2 MILES
of Highway Replaced
by Surface Streets

4 - 7 YEARS
to Complete

Up to
7 ACRES
Returned to Tax Rolls

\$1.3 BILLION
Least Expensive Option

IV. MITIGATION FUND

A special fund should be established to provide financial assistance as necessary for:

- Communities and businesses that may experience a reduction in traffic, developing new opportunities to invest in “demand drivers” to increase visibility for visitation and overnight stays.
- Urban design assistance to enhance all communities adjacent to the highway.
- Implementing a comprehensive, holistic mixed-use and mixed-income revitalization plan for the East Adams neighborhood.
- Mitigating the loss of parking in the City of Syracuse.

V. INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT

There needs to be a strong commitment to inclusive employment and contracting opportunities, providing preference for contractors and employers that ensure jobs created by the project are filled by local M/WBE contractors and residents.

VI. REVITALIZATION COMMISSION

Establish a community-oriented Revitalization Commission to give a voice to all community stakeholders to shape a revitalization plan moving forward. This group would develop strategies and metrics to:

- Turn excess land within the city back to the community for redevelopment and rebuilding the local tax base.
- Incorporate inclusive development principles for property disposition and construction activities.
- Consider how to assist the suburbs in developing lands adjacent to I-81 and I-481.

VII. MITIGATE TRUCKING IMPACTS ON TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Work with community partners to address concerns about truck traffic.

- Mitigate issues related to truck traffic in the western towns; on city streets; in the towns along I-481 - as truck traffic shifts east to access the enhanced CSX terminal in DeWitt; and encourage more shipments to travel by train.
- Develop a comprehensive rail and freight plan for the region.
- Transfer ownership of certain state routes to the county or locality, enabling them to regulate truck traffic.

VIII. MAINTENANCE FUND

Establish a special fund to ensure the long-term maintenance of infrastructure and city streets used for the Grid.

IX. TRAFFIC COORDINATION AND SIGNAL ENHANCEMENTS

Improve traffic flow and congestion at peak travel times by coordination and optimization between state-, county-, and city-owned signals.

X. CONSTRUCTION PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Measures should be taken to better utilize this opportunity for the community’s benefit including:

- Breaking the project into smaller components to allow more local contractors a better opportunity to bid on and be engaged with the project.
- Use design build or conventional design, bid, build delivery processes to their best advantage on the different components of the project.