The Central New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA CNY) resolves to support and engage with SMTC (Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council), the State DOT and the Federal Highway Administration’s planning & design process, for the highway project known as the Interstate 81 Viaduct Project (Onondaga County, New York) in keeping with AIA national policies for Community & Transportation, Urban Design and Historic Preservation.

Whereas the AIA CNY Chapter was identified and appointed to the “Stakeholders Working Advisory Group” for the NYS DOT “I-81 Viaduct Project” and

Whereas the Chapter formed the “I-81 Task Force Study Subcommittee” of the Urban Design Committee of the AIA CNY Chapter, which has worked continuously on this project since September of 2013 when it was formed and

Whereas the two Co-Chairs of the Urban Design Committee, Robert Haley, AIA and Dean Biancavilla, AIA had represented the AIA CNY Chapter on the Steering Committee for the 2 1/2 year SMTC “The I-81 Challenge” study in 2011 and

Whereas the Task Force published its early research into the four NYSDOT I-81 Viaduct options in September of 2014 titled “Syracuse I-81 – Urban Design Study of the I-81 Project Area” and

Whereas the Task Force will continue to work with the NYS DOT engineering Team and consultants as they progress through the planning & design phases and the Task Force will continue to promote “Standards of Excellence” for Urban Design, Smart Growth & Planning to the NYS DOT, local and state government agencies and

Whereas the Task Force will continue to support & assist the development of “Form Based Zoning Guidelines” for the Syracuse Downtown I-81 Viaduct Project area and

Whereas the Task Force has essentially completed its research, discovery & evaluation phase of its assignment and

Whereas the conclusion of the Task Force study is that Community Grid Option is in the best interest of the city, county and region for a variety of reasons including changing trends in federal highway standards for urban areas, and Urban Planning & Design “best practices” standards that will create increased land values, long term economic growth and viability, improved pedestrian safety; it reduces traffic speeds through urban areas, reduces congestion for commuter traffic; it will include the return of approximately 20 acres of land for new urban development with enhanced and improved access, for public health and development between the Hospital and University Hill area, and the Downtown Syracuse area.

Therefore Be It Resolved:

Resolved that The I-81 Task Force may propose to draft Enabling Legislation for assistance in the City & County planning process and

Resolved that The Task Force may assist with visualizations of proposed planning & design options for the public & key decision makers and

Resolved that The Task Force shall indicate to local and state government, state agencies and the public the AIA CNY support of the Community Grid option as a logical conclusion in line with of the 2 1/2 year period of evaluation of the research, documentation, and case studies which all point to this option as being in the best interest of the city of Syracuse, county of Onondaga and the region of CNY Region of Upstate New York.

By the Board of Directors
American Institute of Architects, Central New York Chapter by majority vote on March 10, 2016.