AIA Task Force for the Design of I-81 – July-August Update

Our volunteer members of the Task Force regularly meet and work on design ideas to address the proposals presented by the NYSDOT for the re-design of the I-81 corridor through the City of Syracuse.

During the month of June the Downtown Committee had its Annual Lunch meeting at the OnCenter and was celebrating its 40th anniversary. A presentation by Merika Treier, Executive Director, on the events of the organization over the past 40 years covered important milestones of development issues in Syracuse. This included the Downtown Committee’s recommendations for the I-81 Viaduct Project through downtown Syracuse. She wrapped up her presentation with a series of incredible 3-D images of new development of mixed use buildings along a street level solution of the former right-of-way of I-81 Viaduct. At the end of
Merika’s presentation to a packed house she received a standing ovation from the CenterState CoE “Downtown Committee” members and lunch guests.

ReThink81.org has been very successful in promoting the “street level” option, capturing land under the viaduct, and promoting new “mixed-use” development between downtown & the University Hill. Our local AIA members have contributed their talents and ideas to these visions and created the “AIACNY Urban Design Study of the I-81 Project Area” produced a year ago.

The images that Merika presented were the work of the Re-Think 81 group. The Task Force members contributed ideas to the images of potential buildings that could be developed on the land which would be available for new city fabric which you can see are quite stunning.

One of the proposals from the NYSDOT involved re-tasking and re-designing parts of I-690 for larger capacity of absorbing re-directed traffic from I-81 Viaduct. The Task Force has been working on these NYSDOT proposals these last few months with new ideas that could do better at interacting with existing city fabric and city grid. More on these ideas soon.

Dean Biancavilla, AIA, for the AIA CNY “I-81 Task Force” a subcommittee of the AIA CNY Urban Design Committee.