

Resolution Number 174
Resolution to Remove the Elevated Lanes of I-70

Whereas, the National Park Service has stated in their General Management Plan a desire for better connectivity to downtown along the north and south edges of the JNEM and that I-70 is an impediment to such connectivity; and

Whereas, the St. Louis Chapter of American Institute of Architects, Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Laclede's Landing Redevelopment Corporation, Laclede's Landing Merchant's Association, St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission, Citizens for Modern Transit, Open Space Council, City of St. Louis Mayor's Vanguard Cabinet – Planning and Land Use Committee, and the William Kerr Foundation have endorsed the removal of the elevated sections of I-70 as an urban design solution; and

Whereas, all five finalists in the City Arch River Design Competition advocated for removing I-70 to improve connectivity between the Arch and downtown St. Louis, noting that Memorial Drive could not be activated and utilized to its full potential until I-70 is removed from downtown; and

Whereas, I-70 will soon be rerouted over the new bridge into Illinois, making the stretch of former I-70 between the Poplar Street Bridge and Cass Avenue redundant; and

Whereas, due to the new bridge, traffic will be diverted into Illinois and reduced along the present I-70 corridor in downtown St. Louis. An at-grade boulevard in place of the elevated lanes can potentially accommodate up to 50,000 cars per day, sufficient for the traffic that would remain in St. Louis city; and

Whereas, the removal of I-70 and creation of an at-grade boulevard will provide new economic opportunities with the creation of new and expanded buildable parcels as well as opening up now isolated districts to redevelopment. This will bring new jobs, new residents, and ultimately new revenue for the city; and

Whereas, removing the elevated lanes of I-70 and replacing them with a boulevard creates connections between the Mississippi River and the City of St. Louis, particularly in the areas of Laclede's Landing and the Bottle District, improving access for both pedestrians and automobiles and re-establishing St. Louis' historic connection to its riverfront; and

Whereas, the U.S. DOT, in their 2010-2015 Strategic Plan (April 15, 2010) stated, "In this era of limited resources, achieving a State of Good Repair will require DOT and our State partner agencies to take a strategic approach by considering and evaluating where transportation and community needs have changed over time. As parts of our major roadway systems reach the end of their useful lives and must be replaced at significant cost, those portions in center cities should be identified that, because of employment and residential decentralization, no longer serve central transportation goals and are capable of being decommissioned or downsized. In such instances, a wiser public investment might be to reclaim the land for commercial and community use, particularly in economically distressed communities. For example, after the Loma Prieta earthquake, San Francisco tore down the damaged Embarcadero Freeway in 1991 rather than rebuild it, reuniting the waterfront and downtown and spurring new commercial development. Similarly, Fort Worth relocated a portion of its interstate away from its downtown, and cities like Seattle, Phoenix, San Diego, and Hartford have capped their downtown

interstates with decks in order to reclaim land for parks, museums, schools, and housing.”; and

Whereas, in February 2012, the St. Louis Development Corporation issued a "Request for Proposals for Downtown Multimodal Access Study" that asks the selected consultant to "address the potential removal of the elevated sections of I-70 from north of Pine St. to O’Fallon St, to determine feasibility and traffic impacts should the elevated sections be completely removed, brought to grade, and what various alternatives might be considered for this scenario to occur long-term." This major objective of the study is recommendations for connecting downtown to the riverfront acknowledging the obstacle posed by the elevated lanes of Interstate 70.

Now therefore be it resolved by the St. Louis Board of Aldermen that the City of St. Louis and its agencies shall work toward removal of the elevated lanes of Interstate 70 and their replacement by a suitable at-grade roadway upon the opening of the new Mississippi River bridge that will carry I-70, and that the Transportation & Commerce Committee shall hold public hearings to investigate the aforementioned and shall invite stakeholders on the subject to provide testimony.

Introduced on the 16th day of November, 2012 by:

Honorable Scott Ogilvie, Alderman 24th Ward

Adopted this the 16th day of November, 2012 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen