



January 9, 2023

To: Elaine Elbich, PennDOT

CC: CM Squilla, SR Isaacson, SS Saval

From: Jeff Hornstein, President Northern Liberties Neighbors Association

RE: NLNA Community Feedback Regarding Possible Poplar Street Changes

Thank you for seeking our neighborhood's input into the proposed changes. We neither support nor oppose the tunnel under I-95 at Poplar Street at this time.

We have the following suggestions and concerns raised by neighbors at the well-attended community meeting on Dec. 5, 2022. We look forward to regular, ongoing discussions with PennDOT and the City of Philadelphia regarding the feasibility of the community's input.

Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan (2005) emphasized the need to connect parts of the neighborhood bisected by I-95, and to connect the neighborhood as a whole to the Delaware waterfront. We hope that whether Poplar St becomes a through street or not, that the quality of this connection will be a priority as the plan develops. Improvements are needed to the entirety of Front St, from Fairmount past Laurel, and existing connections at Fairmount, Green and Laurel require investment to be made safer and more welcoming.

Construction:

The neighborhood will require engagement regarding this large construction project, both as it pertains to the impacts on individual property owners, and the neighborhood as a whole.

Parking:

If additional parking is created, neighbors would like consideration given to maximizing the utility of these spots for the neighborhood. Suggestions included timed zones to increase circulation and committed parking for near neighbors. Other issues below were considered to be a higher priority than parking as a reason to consider opening up Poplar. One of the primary concerns related to parking was safety. Comments to combat safety issues included lighting, cameras, security and hours of operation.

Traffic:

The lack of a connected Poplar creates a circuitous route to points North from the area

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around 2nd and Poplar now that American St is no longer connected to Girard going North. Trucks have trouble with the turn onto New Market from Poplar. We support a plan that makes additional connections in the neighborhood without causing new problems. Suggestions included limiting truck traffic East on Poplar from Second, and prioritizing cyclists and pedestrians in all underpass connector streets.

Public Space:

Neighbors would like to see green spaces/parks incorporated into the plan but are concerned that the current underpasses and adjacent spaces are not well maintained, or require near neighbor interventions to maintain them. A plan that works with the neighborhood for continual maintenance is preferred.

Connection:

Consideration must be given to the entirety of what a connected Poplar Street connects people to. Safety at street crossings, the state of Front St, Delaware Ave crossing – these are all current problems that would need to be addressed to have a successful connection through Poplar. Neighbors who currently live on the East side of I-95 near existing connection streets said they were valued in that they connect them to the neighborhood at large but would like to see them improved in terms of aesthetics, safety, and variety of uses.

On all points, the neighborhood would like to know, in advance, what the process will be for community input on design. Whatever the fate of Poplar St, neighbors would like a public vetting process for all changes that affect them. The focus must be on the entire area from Fairmount to North of Laurel, Delaware Ave to 2nd St, and how this area works as a whole for neighbors. This is unique opportunity that the neighborhood would like to be fully engaged in.