



May 16, 2014

The Honorable Kenyatta Johnson
Room 589 City Hall
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

Re: CHOP Project – Placement of Single Curb Cut on South Street Bridge

Dear Councilman Johnson:

We write in response to the May 13 letter from Children's Hospital which addresses five issues, only one of which, the South Street Bridge curb cut, remains problematic. However, it is a very substantial problem. In addition, the CHOP letter does not address the urban interface issue raised in our May 2 letter to you.

CHOP's Prior Two Curb Cut Design

At its final Community Design Review meeting held May 6, the CHOP design team called for two curb cuts on the south side of the Bridge: a western curb cut leading into a covered low-ceiling driveway accessing a parking garage; and an eastern curb cut connecting to an open air driveway leading to a drop off loop situated in the front of CHOP's proposed office building on that portion of the project labeled "Bainbridge Place."

In response, the CDR panel reiterated its earlier recommendation stating "continue to look at options to two South Street curb cuts." As reflected in our May 2 letter, as well as the May 5 letter from SSWBA, the community shares the CDR panel's concerns about placing two curb cuts on the eastern down stroke of the Bridge, a proposal which will adversely affect the convenience and, far more critical, the safety of all Bridge users – motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

CHOP's Present Single Curb Cut Plan

CHOP now states that it "has decided to remove the second curb cut from our plans." However, by choosing to eliminate the eastern curb cut connecting to the open air driveway, CHOP has forgotten the reason for placing a ramp off of the Bridge in the first place: to minimize CHOP-specific traffic entering the adjacent residential neighborhood.

At the April 22 City Hall meeting which you convened, CHOP asserted that the easternmost of the two curb cuts was essential for four classes of users: persons being dropped off or picked up by private autos; taxis; the LUCY bus; and fire trucks. (They could have added oversized vehicles generally.) Now CHOP has eliminated the eastern curb cut leaving a single western curb cut leading into the low ceiling garage. This option would force all four classes of users to bypass the sole remaining curb cut, proceed to the end of the Bridge and negotiate the hairpin turn at 27th onto Schuylkill Avenue, a neighborhood street. By contrast, a single eastern curb cut would accommodate all four classes of users. Moreover, an

Preserve, enhance and celebrate urban living

Executive Officers

Jeffrey Braff, President
Maggie Mund, Executive Vice President
Charles Goodwin, Vice President
Judy Heller, Vice President
John Maher, Vice President
David Rose, Vice President
Dawn Willis, Secretary
Virginia Nalencz, Assistant Secretary
Walter Spencer, Treasurer
Daniel J. Dougherty, Assistant Treasurer

Board of Directors

Guy Aiman
Emmeline Babb
Phillipa Campbell
Elena A. Cappella
Kevin Dunleavy
Bill Faust
Kate Federico
Barbara Halpern
Kim Jessum
Brian Johnston
Robin Kohles
Dilek Karabucak
Michele Langer
Fran Levi
Philip McMunigal
Fred Murphy
Andy Nicolini
Charles Robin
Matt Schreck
Donna Marie Strug
Wendy Weiss

Executive Director

Stephen N. Huntington

House Tour Co-Chairs

Kathleen Federico & Kate Federico

Counsel

Stanley R. Krakower

Past Presidents (Active)

Adam Schneider
Vivian Seltzer
Pamela Rosser Thistle
Lolly LaGreca
George R. Brodie, Jr.
Eugene Dichter
Samuel Weinberg
Wm. J. D. Jordan
Lenore Millhollen
Kristin Davidson

Center City Residents' Association is a 501(c)3 organization. The official registration and financial statements may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

eastern curb cut offers the possibility of a layby lane at the South Street Plaza, adjacent to the office building's public entrance, enabling vehicles to discharge passengers without backing up traffic or blocking the Bridge's eastbound cycling lane.

At the May 6 CDR meeting, in response to the suggestion that the eastern curb cut be the only curb cut, CHOP stated that this would present a problem with "utility connections." In its May 13 letter, CHOP amplifies on this somewhat by stating that: "The utilities serving this property need to be above the flood plain and beneath the level of the pedestrian plaza." We are a civic association, not an engineering firm and, absent a review of CHOP's utility blueprints, can only respond by asking two common sense questions:


- How did CHOP design around this utility/flood plain issue when it advanced its double curb cut proposal?
- More importantly, at this design stage, before anything has been built, why can't this utility issue be solved?

Finally, CHOP's May 13 letter does not address CCRA's request for an urban interface between Schuylkill Ave and the eastern curb cut driveway. CHOP proposes a grassy berm which the CDR correctly characterizes as "inconsistent with a street frontage in an urban setting." We reiterate our request that CHOP consider buildings fronting Schuylkill Avenue containing active uses.

We appreciate CHOP's movement on the many issues that have been raised by the community and the CDR. But this is a huge and extremely important project. Even with the eastern curb cut as the only curb cut off the Bridge, the residential neighborhood will see a material increase in traffic, with its attendant safety issues. And that traffic will only get heavier as the additional phases of the project are built. As a practical matter, there is only one time to get this piece right. And that is now.

Thank you again for your efforts to make this project work well for CHOP, the neighboring community, and the City.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Braff,
President

cc:

The Honorable Jordan Harris
Alan Greenberger
Peter Grollman
Gary Jastrzab
Lauren Vidas

Marcus Iannozzi
Barbara Failer
Rina Cutler