

HIGHWAYS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE EMERGING SHAPE OF CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Federal and State highway departments control the production of highway facilities from planning phase to construction and operation. They wield a disproportionately large influence on the comprehensive planning process and on the pattern of decentralisation in the metropolitan areas. Because of this influence, highway departments have been able to pursue the narrow objective of accommodating traffic despite attempts by the Congress to redirect transportation goals towards meeting the land-use needs of declining central cities and avoiding the adverse social, economic and environmental impacts of highways. Some of these adverse effects include isolation of central city's transit-dependent minorities from suburban employment and the creation of a massive dependence on gasoline.

The inertia of this limited purpose highway program has been sustained by massive federal funding, a bureaucratically embedded and technologically intimidating planning methodology, and a system of federal planning and impact reviews whose major effect has been to expedite the approval and construction of highway projects. These token reviews and deficient impact analysis reviews have deprived the public and elected officials of vital information about foreseeable adverse effects, and have unreasonably restricted their ability to judge highway proposals or to make decisions concerning the decentralisation of cities.



EXTRACT FROM THE TEXT

Unfortunately, the end result of the 'highways' concept has not been achieved, as it still caused time-loss. A viscous cycle has been created between increase in the trend to use cars, and a decrease in public transit usage, resulting in the perpetual demand for more and more highways.

