Freeway Revolts: Why not the Twin Cities?

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Why Did Revolts Originate?

- Prior to 1916
- Federal Aid Road Act (1916)
- Federal Highway Act (1921, 1934, 1944, 1952)
- Federal-Aid Highway Act (1956)

From dirt roads, to surfaced roads, to a network of roads. That was the plan.
The National Highway System

- Interstate System
  - Conceived in the 1930’s
  - Funded by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956
  - Planned 41,000 miles of road
  - To be completed in within 20 years
    - 35,000 miles actually built by 1975
Problems Along the Way

- Designed by State Engineers
- Due to poor planning, problems arose that were not designed for
  - Miami, FL (Overton)
  - Nashville, TN
  - Other Cities
  - Minneapolis?
    - Engineering Solutions to Congestion
St. Paul: I-94, Two Perspectives

- **Engineers**
  - Ultimately in charge of route selection
    - Chose route that would reduce congestion the most
      - Use of “Control points” and “Desire Lines”
    - Chose most inexpensive route to construct

- **City Planners**
  - Routes based on effect on local communities
    - Old Planners disagreed on route selection
    - Newer Planners eventually agreed on routes
Beginning in the late 1950’s thru the 1980’s, civic activism against freeway construction

As the highway interstate system developed, questions arose about where highways would go in cities. The answer: existing neighborhoods

Feds, States, & Localities tried to override local citizen concerns

Environmental, energy and housing concerns were driving forces for activists
San Francisco Chronicle publishes map of proposed city freeway routes

Construction of the Embarcadero Freeway begins
Embarcadero Freeway
The Road to Nowhere
Freeway Revolt Across the USA

- Other proposed and existing freeway systems became the focus of activists, and where either halted or torn down.
- Cities including Portland, OR, Baltimore.
- Other examples include Boston’s “Big Dig” project.
Moses v. Jacobs

- Robert Moses: Visionary or Scoundrel?
- Jane Jacobs: Activist or Development Thorn?
Questions

- Where Did Revolts Come From?
- Public Responses to Freeways
- How Do We Prevent Revolts?
- What About the Twin Cities?
What is Government Facing?

- Transportation efficiency requirement
- Increasing traffic congestion
- Environmentalism
- Energy shortage
How Can the Conflicts be Solved?

- Expand road capacity
  - Add new links (better land use and planning)
  - Add new lanes
- Develop public transportation
  - Rail
  - Bus rapid transit
- Restrict traffic demands
  - Congestion Charge
  - HOV lanes
- Promote other alternatives
  - Telework
  - Walk and bicycle
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

- “BRT is a complete rapid transit system that provides:
  - The performance and feel of rail at a Fraction of the cost”
- Many technologies related
  - Busway plan
  - Fare collection
  - Route design
  - ITS
  - Access route
BRT Planning

**I-15 Managed Lanes**
- Direct access ramp with Bus rapid transit station

- Main Lanes
- Managed Lanes
- Park-and-Ride
- Direct Access Ramps
- Direct Access Road to Arterial
- BRT Station

A concept drawing that sadly neglects pedestrian & bicycle access

*Source: San Diego Council of Governments*
Car Pooling

- High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes
  - California: SR91
  - Texas: Katy Freeway
  - Colorado: I-25 (conversion from HOV lanes)
Minnesota HOT

- Dynamic pricing
- Spread the flow at peak hour
- Finance road system
- Manage congestion
- Reduce pollution
Congestion Charge

- Singapore — the first city had this policy in 1998
- London — the largest city to do so
- Other cities include:
  - Oslo
  - Bergen
  - Trondheim
Telework

- "Employees perform their usual job duties away from their central workplace."
- Depending on newly-developed technologies: telephone, fax, Internet...
- Work trips reduce
- Flexible Working Schedule
Where Will it Stop?

- A transportation infrastructure has to go somewhere.
  - Rail lines
  - Power lines
  - Pipelines
- If not here, then where?
  - Light Rail Revolt?
  - NIMBY
Questions

- Can building a new rail line solve congestion? Can there be Rail Revolts? Or, Toll Revolts?
- Is it ethical for government officials (city, state, and or national level) to use highways to develop cities as they see fit?
  - Urban Renewal programs?
- Do highways get designed to develop cities, or do cities end up getting developed around highways?
  - Won’t a city develop around a highway wherever the highway is located?
- Who should have the final decision on if a highway is good for a city?
  - Does the Public know what it good for itself?
- Have we learned from our mistakes in the past?
  - Can there be more freeway revolts in the future?