



**The 50 Worst Road Projects
in America That Would
Waste Tax Dollars, Harm
Our Communities and
Damage the Environment**

A report by
**Taxpayers for Common Sense
and Friends of the Earth**

April 1999

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**ROAD
TO
RUIN**



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Road to Ruin Summary

In 1999, taxpayers will pay for a record amount of new road construction. Unfortunately, this is not a case of smart policy decisions following proven strategies to address the nation's transportation needs. Instead, taxpayers are footing the bill for an outdated policy of blindly building new roads in an attempt to solve our transportation woes.

Many of the proposed new roads have been buried within state planning books for 20 to 30 years — unable to garner federal or state funding — until now. A lot has

changed since many of these roads were first on the drawing board.

There has been a colossal shift in public opinion on the building of new roads. Across the country, local communities are recognizing the impact of new road projects on their “quality of life” — loss of open space and natural areas, increased sprawling development, and more traffic congestion and air pollution.

But this new citizen awakening and effort to reinvent government transportation priorities has run into an onslaught of new federal funding for road projects, many of which are against the common sense agenda of local communities around the country.

Last year's federal transportation bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) will

spend a huge amount of money. TEA-21 guarantees a 47% increase in highway funding over the next five years, which means there will be a massive dumping of new money into highway construction. At the same time, community transportation needs are evolving.

Some of the proposed new roads in this report are partially funded through highway “demonstration” projects — specific pork-barrel projects earmarked at the request of a Member of Congress. Demonstration projects designate some roads as “high priority” which circumvents local decision-making and planning. The number of demonstration projects has dramatically increased in each successive highway bill over the last two decades. In 1982, 10 demonstration projects were authorized, costing a total of \$362 million. In 1987, 152 demonstration

projects were created, costing a total of \$1.4 billion. In TEA-21, there are over 1850 demonstration projects that were approved at a total cost of over \$9 billion.

This report illustrates how the power of federal pork is over-riding local community concerns. In looking at the roads listed in this report, opposition is not simply isolated cases of citizen discontent. In many cases state highway departments are pushing massive road projects over significant local objections, while communities try to fend off the loss of farmland, natural areas and the negative economic effects on businesses that these roads cause. In fact, there are common themes and similar battles being fought in communities throughout the country.

In last November's elections there were about 240 local ballot measures — 72 percent passing — designed to address “quality of life” issues, such as protecting or improving parks, open spaces, farmlands, historic resources, watersheds, greenways and biological habitats. Many measures were advanced as part of programs and initiatives to enhance community livability and manage growth. Vice President Al Gore has picked up on this public sentiment and has made community “quality of life” a cornerstone of his stump speeches in his apparent campaign for President.

This year's *Road to Ruin* report identifies the 50 worst proposed new highway projects in 26 states. While the report's authors are not necessarily against all new roads, the roads named in this report would waste taxpayer money while hurting rural communities and small businesses, destroy farmland, diminish natural areas, and fuel sprawling development. The state of Michigan leads the list with five wasteful road projects, Pennsylvania and Virginia have four each, and California has three ill-conceived projects. If federal funding for all 50 proposed new roads was denied, it would save federal taxpayers \$17 billion.

The 50 projects represent a sharp increase from the 1997 *Road to Ruin* report, which highlighted 37 projects. The increase can be attributed to two factors: 1) A significant increase in federal funds in TEA-21 that state Departments of Transportation can use for new road projects; 2) Growing citizen awareness and concern about the role new roads play in their communities. Following the 1997 report, we received dozens of calls and letters from communities around the country asking that their proposed road project be added to the list.





How the Top 10 Were Selected

The 50 highways in the report were all nominated by local citizen organizations and individuals, then researched by Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) and Friends of the Earth (FOE) staff in consultation with local and national transportation advocates. All 50 projects are unneeded, all have serious problems, all face significant local opposition and none should be built. They are presented in no particular order.

The two report authors, TCS and FOE, selected the Road to Ruin Top 10 list from the 50 proposed highways in the report. This list represents the most wasteful and environmentally harmful highways in the U.S. We ranked the proposed roads by using three major criteria and four minor criteria. The three major criteria are as follows:

- **Cost to taxpayers** High ranking went to those roads with the highest overall cost to federal taxpayers, and/or the highest cost per mile.

- **Impact on the environment** High ranking went to those roads that would be built through national parks or impact national marine sanctuaries. We also considered other impacts, including: building through national forest land legislated to remain forever roadless and wild; impact on wild and scenic rivers; impact on national wildlife refuges; built in national forest; and, built in state parks.
- **Induces sprawl** Proposed roads that feed sprawl development in suburbs and areas far from downtown cores.

In addition, extra ranking was also given to those proposed roads that met one or more of the following minor criteria: contributes significantly to the loss of farmland; cuts through historically designated areas and undermines efforts for historic preservation; worsens regional air quality problems; and undermines existing local businesses by routing traffic away from downtowns and thriving business corridors.

The Road to Ruin Top 10

1 Corridor H (WV) This proposed 100-mile four-lane highway cuts through the mountains of West Virginia. It has an outrageous overall federal cost of \$1 billion. This proposed highway would fragment the George Washington National Forest and cut through the Monongahela National Forest — one of the largest roadless areas on the East Coast. It would also bulldoze Civil War battlefields and induce sprawl development in West Virginia to the detriment of area farmers and merchants. Despite these flaws, Corridor H receives special treatment in transportation bills because of its powerful patron, Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV).

2 Stillwater Bridge (MN) This oversized and overpriced bridge would harm a federally protected river. The proposed plans for a new Stillwater Bridge at a total estimated cost of \$120 million far surpasses what is needed for this small town. Even worse, the new bridge would cross the St. Croix River; a Congressionally designated Wild and Scenic River protected by the National Park Service. Furthermore, the proposed Stillwater Bridge would encourage jobs and development to sprawl into neighboring Wisconsin.

3 Route 710 Highway (CA) This proposed highway would cost \$311 million per mile, giving it a higher cost per mile than the Los Angeles subway. Rt. 710 also has a staggering federal price tag of \$1.12 billion. Furthermore, this proposed highway would raze 1,300 homes and businesses and destroy 70 historic properties over six districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Finally, it would worsen southern California's already serious clean air problems.

4 I-69 Highway Extension (IN) Upgrading existing highways would cost far less than the \$1.1 billion it would cost to build this brand-new highway across 140 miles of precious Indiana farmland. Not only would the proposed road duplicate existing interstates, I-69 would destroy 5,000 acres of land and go through the Patoka National Wetlands and Wildlife Refuge, home to various endangered species. Finally, it would induce sprawl as it would render prime farmland open to unneeded and unchecked development.



5 Grand Parkway (TX) The Grand Parkway's \$1.8 billion cost to federal taxpayers is the highest in the report. In addition to being a fourth beltway around Houston, the Grand Parkway would slice through a number of state parks. Furthermore, the project would invite a significant increase in sprawl as plans for a number of residential communities, commercial malls, and landfills have already been announced to coincide with the building of this proposed highway. Finally, the Grand Parkway and its secondary impacts would worsen Houston's already serious clean air problems.

6 U.S. 1 (FL) This 20-mile proposed project, with an estimated cost to federal taxpayers of \$136 million, would impact the Coral Reef Ecosystem of the Florida Keys, the only coral reef in the continental U.S., as well as Everglades National Park and the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary. Furthermore, the major widening of the current U.S. 1 would induce sprawl in the Upper Keys as the area would become more accessible to development and short-term visitors, thus making evacuations during hurricanes more difficult and dangerous.

7 U.S. 23 (MI) This unneeded freeway would force a record loss of wetlands in Michigan. This proposed 100-mile freeway extension, with an estimated cost to federal taxpayers of \$640 million, parallels the existing U.S. 23 which is already being widened to four lanes. The proposed extension would devastate local businesses by bypassing existing communities. It would consume farmland for construction and related sprawl development. Finally, the proposed road would greatly compromise state and national forest lands, and cause the "largest single wetlands loss within Michigan," according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

8 Denali National Park Second Access Road This proposed 80-mile project would construct an unneeded second access road through pristine and protected wilderness in the Wonder Lake area of Denali National Park, one of America's premiere national parks. Not only is this area already served by an existing road and bus system, but the \$84 million cost of the project would be paid entirely with federal taxpayer funds through the National Park Service budget. This road is expensive and duplicative, and would compromise the very wilderness that is supposed to be protected from sprawl and developers' interests.

9 Western Transportation Corridor (VA) Although the state of Maryland has canceled its involvement in the proposed project, the Virginia Department of Transportation continues to push the Western Transportation Corridor. With several existing north-south corridors and others under construction in the region, the proposed 50-mile road, with a total estimated cost of between \$1 and \$1.5 billion, would be redundant. The proposed project would encourage sprawl and traffic while exposing rural areas to increased development levels that would overwhelm the area's existing infrastructure and destroy acres of farmland and wetlands.

10 Legacy Highway (UT) This 120-mile project has a staggering estimated total price tag of \$2.76 billion, with federal taxpayers responsible for \$1.4 billion. Part of the largest road construction program in Utah's state history, the proposed Legacy Highway would parallel most of I-15 which is currently being expanded as part of infrastructure preparation for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by Salt Lake City. This duplicative road would bisect countless acres of farmland, leaving them vulnerable to sprawl development. The proposed highway would also cut through a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network Site that millions of shorebirds depend on for secure and pristine wetlands.

There is some good news

There is some good news. There have been some victories and significant signs of progress attributed primarily to citizen efforts. These victories have saved taxpayers over \$500 million.

Victories

Red Rock Crossing (AZ) Funding was dropped for a highway and bridge at Red Rock Crossing that would have cost \$30 million. The proposed bridge would have crossed U.S. Forest Service land. Local opposition was high as the bridge and road would have disturbed the rural atmosphere and tranquillity of the area. The adjacent Cathedral Rock is world-renowned for its scenic beauty, and has appeared in more than 40 featured films.

I-287 (NY) This unnecessary expansion in West Chester County would have cost approximately \$500 million for a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane designed to reduce traffic. The HOV lane was a short-term solution, and strongly opposed by the community. Traffic could be reduced 35 percent through offering transit options, and retrofitting ramps and interchanges. This project was cancelled in 1998.

Barney Circle (DC) In December 1996, citizen pressure forced Washington, D.C.'s City Council to reject



Cathedral Rock's scenic beauty would have been marred by the Red Rock Crossing project PHOTO BY DAVE GANCI

construction of this \$200 million project. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) declared Barney Circle dead on March 4, 1997. TEA-21 officially cancelled the project, and reprogrammed the money to road maintenance, construction and beautification projects.

Signs of progress

Route 50 Corridor (VA) The Virginia Department of Transportation wants to expand this two-lane highway to six lanes in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties. In addition, the agency would construct bypasses around Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville, citing congestion and safety as justifications. There is a growing effort to promote a

low-cost, traffic calming, alternative to the bypasses, which is gaining momentum. Senator John Warner (R-VA) included \$13 million for traffic calming in TEA-21. Traffic calming controls speeding and aggressive driving with medians, traffic circles, raised intersections and pedestrian crossing.

There are 17 new road projects included in this year's report

Juneau Access Road (AK)
Super 7 Expressway (CT)
U.S. 1 (FL)
U.S. Route 20 (IL)
Route 219 (MD)
Page Avenue Extension (MO)
Manchester Airport Access Road (NH)
Route 219 Freeway (NY)

I-81 Interchange Connector (PA)
Route 202 Expressway (Section 700) (PA)
Quonset Access Freeway (RI)
Legacy Highway (UT)
Bennington Bypass (VT)
Circumferential Highway (VT)
Cross-Base Highway (WA)
North Spokane Freeway (WA)



About this report

Federal funds

This report includes only proposed highway, road and bridge projects for which federal funds have been or may be sought.

Alternatives

It is important to note that alternatives have been suggested for almost all of these projects. While this report does not necessarily endorse any specific alternatives, it recommends that they be considered where appropriate.

Savings

Estimates represent an approximate savings of federal taxpayer money. In cases where project boosters have sought federal money, the price tags are well known. Cost estimates do not yet exist for other projects.

Contacts

The people and organizations listed at the bottom of each page are knowledgeable sources of information on the respective project. However, such contacts do not necessarily endorse the particular article in which they are listed or the report in its entirety.

Maps

The maps for each project are illustrative, intended only to show the general location of the proposed project.

Why Groups Support This Report

In compiling this report, the 50 worst road projects were identified by a coalition of taxpayers, environmentalists and community activists seeking to stop new road projects that waste money, damage the environment and harm local communities. Different groups support this report for different reasons:

■ **Taxpayers** support this report to ensure that their tax dollars are used wisely, rein in pork-barrel politics and stop wasteful projects.

Much of the federal spending on highways is paid for through the Highway Trust Fund, which is funded by 18.3 cents per gallon of the federal gas tax. Supporters of the federal highway program point out that the Highway Trust Fund finances a large part of the spending - as if that should exempt it from oversight and reasonable priorities.

Gas tax revenues should be spent wisely as should all tax dollars. But TEA-21 was written with airtight restrictions on how money can be spent. Money is being allocated for roads around the country, regardless of whether the roads are needed or wanted by the local community. In effect, Congress has put highway spending on autopilot — with little oversight or accountability. Taxpayers care less about budget technicalities than whether the government is using their money in the best way possible.

■ **Environmentalists** support this report to preserve clean air, improve energy use, control urban sprawl and prevent destruction of habitat. Increasingly, environmentalists also advocate subsidy cuts in order to link environmental and economic goals.

Environmentalists are concerned about the problems caused by America's growing reliance on the automobile. The growth in new road funding is fueling sprawl development around the country, which is paving over open spaces, polluting the air, and building through farmland. These new mega highways are being pushed by developers, encouraging people to live farther from where they shop, work and eat.

Sprawl development leads to increased driving and a greater devotion to fossil fuels, both of which contribute to a decline in air and water quality. Equally important is the damage new roads inflict on habitat in national and state parks and other federally and state protected lands. Often, this dramatically disrupts wildlife and unique natural communities.

■ **Local Community Groups** support this report to protect the quality of life in their neighborhoods, preserve their local economies, have a voice in determining their future, and more transportation options.

Citizens in communities around the country are concerned about new roads that force many homes and businesses to be destroyed or are significantly affected. New roads have effectively transformed many rural communities by fueling suburban sprawl - attributed with consuming 1.5 million acres of farmland each year. In addition, new roads undermine the tax base of existing cities and towns by encouraging residents to relocate elsewhere.



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48 Corridor H	WV	58
49 Loop Road Paving Project	WY	59
50 Darien Gap Link (not pictured)	Panama	60



Juneau Access Road

Southeast Alaska

\$232 million

Unneeded Road Hurts Alaskan Wildlife



Proposal and savings

Deny funds for the proposed Juneau Access Road which has an estimated cost of \$232 million and instead improve the current ferry connection. Do not amend Title 23 USC, Section 218 to allow the Juneau Access Highway to become part of the Shakwak Project Area — the area covering the portions of the Alaska highway system that run through Canada. Amending this statute would allow the Juneau Access project to receive federal funds without requiring the usual 20 percent state matching fund for toll roads and siphon off funds meant to reconstruct other Alaska highways.

Background

The proposed 65-mile Juneau Access Road would connect Juneau, Alaska’s capital, to Skagway. Currently these two towns are linked by ferry service.

Status

The State of Alaska released its Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) in 1997. A Final EIS and Record of Decision are expected in 1999.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The road would be an expensive and ineffective replacement for the ferry currently running between Juneau and Skagway. While the ferry now runs during inclement weather, the road would be forced to close during hazardous weather conditions, eliminating all service between Juneau and Skagway. According to the DEIS’s avalanche studies, many of the 58 avalanche paths located along the road are powerful enough to force a vehicle off the roadway and into the water. The EIS states that “the proposed Juneau road would have the highest avalanche risk of any road in the entire United States”. More reliable and cost-effective alternatives include maintaining and upgrading current ferry services.

Local Community Concerns The local governments of Haines and Skagway oppose the road because of concern over adverse socioeconomic effects on their communities. By eliminating the most economically viable ferry line in the region, the road will force communities to depend on remaining ferry lines which will require large government subsidies to operate consistently. The majority of comments on the DEIS from Alaskans opposed the road and supported improved ferry service.

Environmental Concerns The proposed road would cut through the heart of Berners Bay in the Tongass National Forest. This area has been designated by Congress as a Legislated LUD II Area — an area to remain forever roadless and wild in character — and an Aquatic Resource of National Importance by the Environmental Protection Agency. Berners Bay supports a large population of wildlife including salmon, moose, deer, bear, mountain goats and the endangered humpback whale. The road would also affect the Gran Point Sea Lion Haul Out, which is considered a critical habitat by the National Marine Fisheries Service.



Contacts

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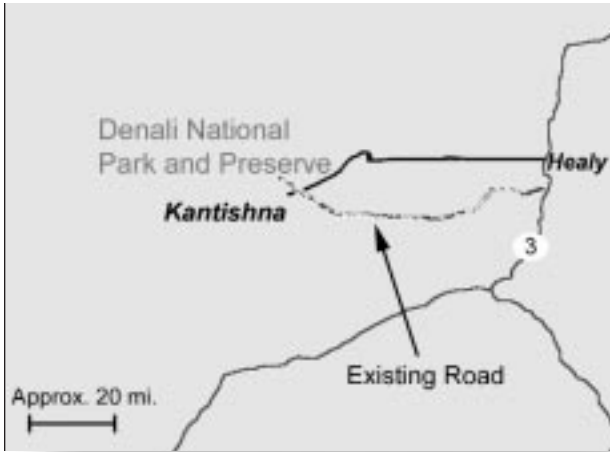


Second Access Road to Denali

Denali National Park, AK

\$87 million

Unneeded Road Through National Park



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed second access road or railroad to Denali National Park and Preserve. Road construction would cost between \$87 and \$100 million, while the proposed rail line is estimated to cost \$136 to \$214 million. Both sections of the project would likely be paid entirely with federal funds out of the National Park Service (NPS) budget.

Background

Construction of an 80-mile second access road from Healy, Alaska to the Wonder Lake Area of Denali National Park and Preserve has been intermittently proposed for years by development interests. An amendment in the Fiscal Year 1995 Interior Appropriations bill directed the NPS to study the feasibility of a northern access route into Denali.

Status

While finding such a project technically feasible, the NPS study also detailed its high costs and conflict with park values and management plans. Senator Murkowski's addition to the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21) authorized the project and \$1.5 million to begin construction of the "North Denali access route" into Denali National Park. Construction could now begin without environmental planning or public consent.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The proposed road is unneeded. The Wonder Lake area is already served by the existing Denali Park road and a bus system. Neither of the two recently completed major development plans for Denali, including one for the south side of the park developed jointly by NPS and the State of Alaska, mention a second northern access route as a priority to improve and expand park access.

Local Community Concerns Construction and maintenance of the road would divert funds away from other park needs. For the cost of the proposed road, all of the improvements currently recommended in publicly adopted plans for Denali and other national parks in Alaska could be funded.

Finally, neither of the two major trade associations which represent the Alaska tourism industry have made the project a priority.

Environmental concerns Conservationists argue that the proposed second access route would harm the high-quality wildlife and wilderness that the park was created to protect. Also, the project would likely spur destructive large-scale development on private lands located within park boundaries, near Wonder Lake.



Contacts

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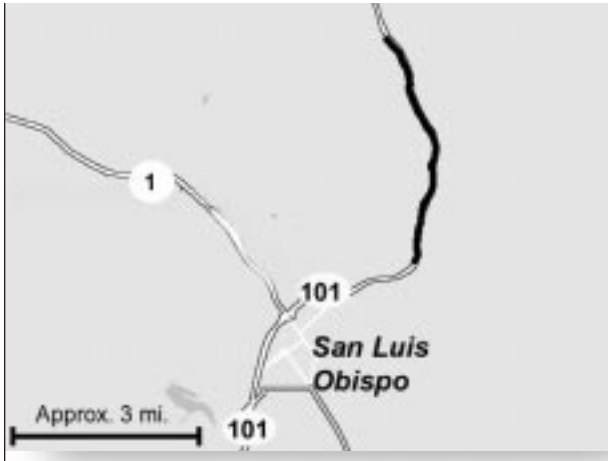


Cuesta Grade Widening

San Luis Obispo, CA

\$33 million

\$33 Million to Save 3 Minutes



Proposal and savings

Reject the proposed widening of the Cuesta Grade section of Highway 101 to six lanes. The estimated total project cost is \$41 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) originally proposed major reconstruction of the three-mile long Cuesta Grade section of Highway 101 north of the city of San Luis Obispo in the 1960's. The current proposal would widen Cuesta Grade by adding a truck lane in each direction, two large retaining walls, and substantially broader shoulders. Congested conditions currently exist on the grade during peak commute hours.

Status

The Federal Highway Administration has reviewed and certified the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Local entities, including the City and County of San Luis Obispo and the County Air Pollution Control District, have written comments opposing the FEIS.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The widening would not achieve Caltrans' stated goal of relieving congestion. The DEIS refutes this justification for the project, stating that the savings in commute time over Cuesta Grade "will be only one to two minutes ... by the year 2000 and between two to three minutes ... by year 2020."

Local Community Concerns San Luis Obispo, the region's largest city, questioned the DEIS's adequacy, stating that less costly alternatives need to be fully explored before a final decision is made. Although Caltrans cites improved safety as a rationale for the widening, Caltrans says that current accident rates on Cuesta Grade are lower than on similar highways. Local activists believe that the project would make the road more dangerous by increasing the speed differential between cars and heavy trucks and by expanding the number of lanes that cars on intersecting roads must cross over. Furthermore, effective transportation solutions such as demand system management and tolls during peak traffic hours were not given proper consideration.

Environmental Concerns Widening Cuesta Grade would fuel sprawl development north of San Luis Obispo by making lengthier commutes more acceptable.

The region is already a non-attainment area for state air quality standards, and increased automobile traffic would only exacerbate the problem.

The project would disturb a very unstable ridge that is subject to landslides and cause erosion and siltation of the Reservoir Creek watershed. Furthermore, the project would increase noise levels.



Contacts

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Hatton Canyon Freeway

Carmel, CA

\$38 million

County Agency Votes to Transfer Funds Elsewhere



Proposal and savings

Reject funding for the Hatton Canyon Freeway project. Estimated total project cost is \$48 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

Hatton Canyon is a scenic area near Carmel, California. The freeway project would provide an alternate route around the town, bypassing the existing Route 1. Area traffic volume is high and the alternative route is proposed to ease congestion. To build this new road, the state is required to replace wetlands destroyed by the project with others in the vicinity that can support the same habitat. Mitigation efforts, including the enhancement of existing wetlands and the construction of new wetlands, have been unsuccessful in recent attempts.

Status

Although the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), had hoped to begin construction in Spring 1999 and petitioned for wetland permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County voted in March to transfer funds reserved for the Hatton Canyon project to needed safety improvements on U.S. 101. The California Transportation Commission is scheduled to review this transfer in June.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The project is unnecessary and too expensive since alternatives exist that would ease congested areas. Under the current plan, congestion will remain at the key intersection of Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Rancho Blvd.

Local Community Concerns According to California Highway Patrol statistics, between 1982 and 1996, only five fatal accidents occurred on this section of Route 1. Meanwhile, 76 deaths occurred on U.S. 101 from Russell Road/Espinosa Road to the San Benito County line. High fatality rates also occurred on Highway 1 near Moss Landing, U.S. 101 from Salinas to the south county line, and Highway 156.

Under California State law, monies are to be spent for safety before congestion relief. But this project devotes millions of dollars to an area with relatively few deaths, while less money is available for the more deadly area further north.

Environmental Concerns In 1996, a Federal Court of Appeals ruled that state and federal transportation agencies failed to conduct proper environmental review of the project. The construction and subsequent traffic would effectively destroy the thriving bird population of the area.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement states that construction in the canyon would destroy 14,000 endangered Monterey Pine Trees, 10,000 oaks, 160 acres of scenic wildlife habitat, and about 12 acres of wetlands, as well as affect an 845-acre watershed.



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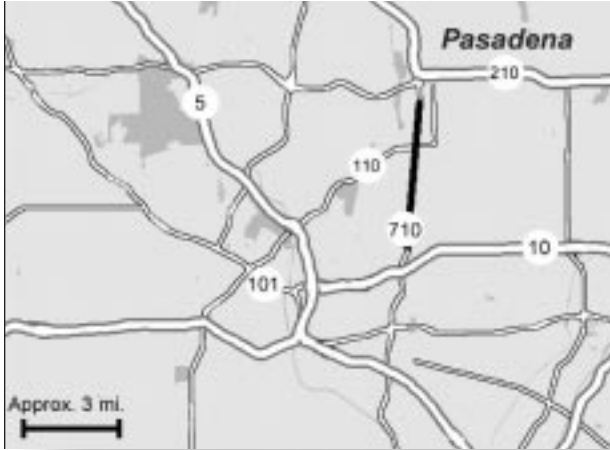


Route 710 Highway

South Pasadena, CA

\$1.12 billion

Costs More Per Mile Than L.A.'s Subway



Proposal and savings

Delete Route 710 from the National Highway System. Total project costs are around \$1.4 billion — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

State Route 710 was first planned in 1949 as one in a series of freeways serving Los Angeles County, California. In 1973, the freeway was halted by a federal court injunction pending an adequate Environmental Impact Statement by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). This 4.5-mile, eight-lane urban freeway has a price tag of \$1.4 billion and would divide historic neighborhoods and destroy thousands of mature trees.

Status

In 1996, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council filed a lawsuit charging state violations of the federal Civil Rights Act and federal environmental justice laws. In April 1998, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) signed a Record of Decision giving conditional approval to the project. Since then, local organizations have been fighting the project through a series of lawsuits. The Southern California Association of Governments (the local metropolitan planning organization) has extended the implementation date to 2020. Therefore, construction would not begin for more than 20 years.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns At \$311 million per mile, this project is more expensive per mile than most urban freeways and the Los Angeles subway system. Many national, state, and local groups support a less expensive, non-free-way alternative to the \$1.4 billion project. The Multi-Mode/Low Build Alternative advanced by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in conjunction with the City of South Pasadena would only cost an estimated \$120 million. A local joint powers authority representing the citizens of both L.A. and Pasadena favors constructing a \$804 million light rail project that would serve the same commuter need as the freeway. Furthermore, the project is duplicative as it would parallel the \$2.2 billion Alameda Corridor, which will serve freight movement from the Ports of L.A. and Long Beach.

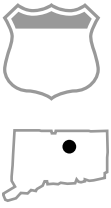
Local Community Concerns The freeway would traverse established, historic neighborhoods in Pasadena, South Pasadena and the largely Hispanic community of El Sereno in Los Angeles. The project would destroy 1,300 homes and businesses — relocating over 4,000 people, 70 historic properties, and six districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Environmental Concerns The freeway would cause the loss of thousands of mature trees, many more than 100 years old. The proposed project would also encourage more vehicular traffic and thus increase emissions and air pollution.



Contacts

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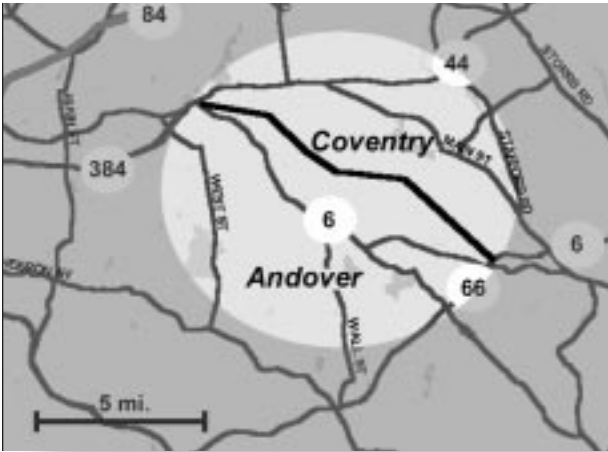


Route 6 Expressway

Eastern Connecticut

\$350 million

Upgrading Existing Rt. 6 Makes More Sense



Proposal and Savings

Reject the proposed Route 6 Expressway, which would cost federal taxpayers at least \$350 million.

Background

The Route 6 Expressway is a proposed 12-mile road along a new route in eastern Connecticut. The project began as an interstate highway connecting Hartford, Connecticut with Providence, Rhode Island. Rhode Island canceled its section of the road after an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) showed that the highway would cut through Scituate Reservoir, the source of most of the state’s drinking water. Connecticut, having started construction, decided to connect the two completed sections.

Status

In 1989, the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) denied the state a construction permit because of environmental impacts and the state’s failure to evaluate alternatives. The state then proposed “Alternative 133A,” which was essentially the same route previously rejected by the Corps and opposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). In July 1998, the Corps rejected the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s (ConnDOT) Alternative 133A, saying it would damage sensitive resources. Alternate proposals are now being considered.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Taxpayers should not have to pay \$350 million for a project that is unnecessary. For less than half the price of the proposed expressway, upgrades and minor changes on the existing route could adequately address safety concerns and handle expected traffic volumes.

Local Community Concerns The proposed expressway does not adequately address the safety problems along the existing Route 6. Connecticut’s *Manchester Journal Inquirer* has editorialized, “Why not improve and widen the road that now exists and beef up law enforcement?” The Connecticut Fund for the Environment, Citizens for a Sensible Six, Sierra Club, Town of Coventry and others presented to the Corps a preliminary design for an upgrade alternative of the existing Route 6. A qualified engineering firm provided the design.

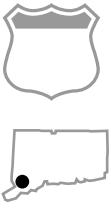
Environmental concerns Even the most benign alignment contemplated by ConnDOT would fill over 50 acres of wetlands, bisect 167 acres of connected forest blocks, cross two major rivers, and generally destroy the character of the area.

In 1995, the EPA stated that “an upgrade of the existing Route 6 would meet both safety and efficiency while causing significantly less environmental damage than any of the freeway alternatives under consideration.”



Contacts

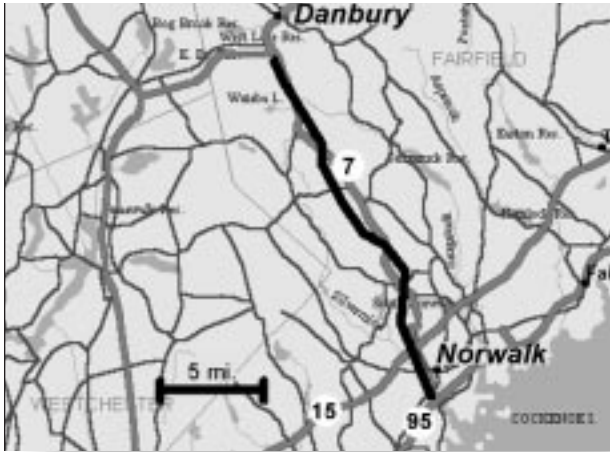
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Super 7 Expressway

Southwestern Connecticut **\$1.12 billion**

Road Justified by Inflated Traffic Projections



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the proposed Super 7 Expressway. Project costs are \$1.4 billion — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

For four decades, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has been aggressively pushing for the completion of Super 7, a 19.2-mile long expressway. This expressway would be built on land covering almost 1,000 acres that the state purchased for this project. Since completion of the first 1.2-mile segment in 1971, the Super 7 project has experienced numerous delays due to lawsuits, funding problems, and an incomplete Environmental Impact Statement. The project was halted at one point when the Army Corps of Engineers determined that the State was disregarding environmental standards by moving heavy equipment into sensitive wetlands.

Status

In spite of the feasibility of widening the existing road and upgrading service on the Danbury Rail Road Line that parallels Route 7, the state is still determined to build the next segment of the expressway.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The state has rationalized the need for the expressway based upon traffic projections that have been proven to be seriously flawed, and has inflated its numbers by more than 250 percent. Spending \$1.4 billion on the project is excessive when more cost-effective alternatives exist, such as expanding the Danbury Rail Road Line to serve intra-state travel or upgrading the current Route 7.

Local Community Concerns Connecticut's greatest traffic volume and congestion is on highways running east-west. Super 7 will have minimal impact on congestion since it runs north-south.

Residents of Wilton, Ridgefield, and Redding are concerned that Super 7 will impact the quality and quantity of water in their wells, and that it will decrease the use of the Danbury Rail Road Line.

Environmental Concerns Super 7's construction will result in the destruction of more than 64 acres of wetlands and endanger four major aquifers that serve as the region's water source. The highway will also cut through the habitat of a wide array of birds. The open wet meadows that construction would disturb are of high quality and contain uncommon wetland species such as orchids and gentians. They also provide a home to invertebrates such as sponges, snails, butterflies, moths, mayflies, ground beetles, tiger beetles, and spongilla flies. Barred owls and wood turtles would also be effected.



Contacts

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U.S. 1 Florida

\$136 million

Widening Road Invites Sprawl and Hurts Coral Reef



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the U.S. 1 South Project. Estimated project costs are \$170 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The project would widen a 20-mile section of U.S. 1 from Key Largo to mainland Florida to a four-lane road bed, alternating between three and four paved lanes. The stated goals are to improve hurricane evacuation and highway safety.

Status

Although the Florida Department of Transportation (F-DOT) has obtained some of the necessary building permits, the Monroe County Board of Commissioners has withdrawn its support for the project, requesting that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, called for by the Army Corps of Engineers, be completed.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The hurricane-evacuation justification is spurious and highway safety could be improved more cost-effectively. Ironically, the project's purported contribution to hurricane safety would allow authorities to increase development and population in the Florida Keys, making evacuations more difficult. The method used to calculate evacuation rates produced a 20 percent error by counting vehicular movement during an hour when traffic was stopped for ten minutes by an open drawbridge. During evacuations the drawbridge is never raised. The Keys evacuation for Hurricane Georges in September 1998 was flawless and there was unused capacity, further blunting the hurricane evacuation theory. Under current plans, a high-crash area would be left virtually unimproved. Claims of reduced vulnerability to flooding are weakened because the project would be built at the same elevation as the existing road.

Cost-effective and safety-enhancing alternatives to the project include replacing the drawbridge with a two-lane fixed-span bridge, repaving with wider shoulders and implementing strict speed controls.

Local Community Concerns Easier access to and from the mainland would attract increased development and more short-term visitors, thus increasing wastewater effluents and exacerbating nearshore water and the coral reef water quality problems. Increased volume and higher speed traffic would worsen the already bad traffic safety within the Keys.

Environmental Concerns This project would impact one of the most sensitive environments in the nation, which is comprised of the National Crocodile Lake Wildlife Refuge, Everglades National Park, Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, and the only coral reef in the continental U.S. Construction would destroy approximately 150 acres, including high quality seagrass beds, wetlands, tidal wetlands, and mangroves. Numerous threatened and endangered animals are expected to be affected by the project including, but not limited to, manatees, sea turtles, American crocodiles, key deer, lower keys marsh rabbits, piping plovers, and Shaus' swallowtail butterflies.



Contacts

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Georgia Route 400

Fulton County, GA

\$160 million

Road Would Violate Clean Air Act



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the construction of a collector-distributor system along 3.8 miles of Georgia Route 400. Total project cost is at least \$200 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

In an effort to relieve traffic congestion, the Fulton County and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) officials have devised a plan to construct a collector-distributor system that would create a series of through and local traffic lanes parallel to a 3.8 mile stretch of Ga. Rt. 400 between Hammond and Spalding Drives. This project would result in the widening of Ga. Rt. 400 to as many as 18 possible lanes.

Status

Although the project would be ineligible for federal funding due to Clean Air Act violations, GDOT has discovered a “loophole” that enables the project to be grandfathered and receive federal monies. Under a negotiated agreement with the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), GDOT may proceed with right of way acquisitions, but is prohibited from seeking design or construction authorization until Atlanta has a conforming air quality and Regional Transportation Plan, which may not occur until 2001.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns \$200 million is an excessive price for a duplicative road project since it will be located next to a new, heavy rail Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) station. This station was conceived with the same purpose of relieving congestion in the area and is already under construction.

Local Community Concerns Northern Fulton County has become a major area of metropolitan growth and sprawl over the past several years. The possible 18 traffic lanes created by the project will not only increase congestion as the area continues to be developed at an unchecked pace, but will also further overwhelm connected secondary roads that cannot address current traffic levels. Many local residents are concerned that the collector distributor design is an example of transportation investments dictating land-use decisions.

Environmental Concerns Although the project may relieve short term congestion, the widening of Route 400 to possibly 18 lanes will increase traffic volume, noise pollution, and vehicle emissions, which will further degrade Atlanta’s poor air quality.

Stating that the project would further degrade Atlanta’s already poor air and water quality by increasing vehicle capacity and exhaust fumes, the EPA objected to the proposal in a revised Environmental Assessment released in 1997.

This project will also demolish every tree between I-85 and the MARTA Northsprings station.



Contacts

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I-285 Expansion

Atlanta, GA

N/A

10 More Lanes at \$83 Million Per Mile



Proposal and savings

Cancel funding for the proposed expansion of the Northern Arc of I-285 in Atlanta, Georgia. The total project cost is \$500 million with the federal share unknown.

Background

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) plans to build an additional 10 lanes on a six-mile stretch of the Northern Arc of I-285. Touting safety and operational improvements as justifications, GDOT proposes to expand I-285 from Riverside Drive in Fulton County to Chamblee-Dunwoody Road in Dekalb County.

Status

Due to complications with the Clean Air Act, as well as local and state opposition, the proposed expansion of the Northern Arc is presently delayed. But the plans still exist. New intersecting overpasses currently being built on I-285 are designed to accommodate the eventual expansion of the highway by 10 additional lanes.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The proposed I-285 expansion project is extremely expensive at \$83 million per mile. GDOT has already been allocated \$13 million (80 percent of which is federal money) for preliminary engineering studies on the proposed project.

Cheaper alternatives exist that would address the region's traffic problems, including mass transit options. According to an April 1997 *Atlanta Constitution* editorial, "The region's leaders must think in terms of a mix of all workable options to cut down traffic jams and airborne pollutants. They can no longer put all their eggs in a concrete basket, as the DOT wants to do."

Local Community Concerns There is significant local opposition to the project. Area residents have collected over 1,400 petition signatures opposing the project in an effort to get GDOT to examine all of the transportation alternatives, including a light rail system.

Local residents fear that the project would spark commercial development that would overburden the area's infrastructure. According to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, "North Dekalb homeowners and area legislators worry that widening I-285 will only worsen congestion by bringing more cars to the Perimeter Center area."

Environmental Concerns The I-285 expansion would increase air pollution in a region that is already under non-attainment status under the provisions of the Clean Air Act. Furthermore, Atlanta is under a federal order to reduce ground-level ozone (produced by auto emissions) in 13 counties by 1999.

The proposed project would exacerbate urban sprawl in a metro area that already covers over 20 counties.



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I-85 Sugarloaf Parkway

Atlanta, GA

\$24 million

Fourteen Lane Folly



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the third and last phase of the proposed I-85 Sugarloaf Parkway. Estimated project costs are \$30 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

This project is the third part of a three-phase construction effort to build 3.2-mile, three-lane, collector distributor roads that would lie on either side of I-85 and expand the road to 14 lanes. The plans also leave space for two extra lanes to be built in both directions which would allow for 18 lanes on four separate roadways.

Status

Because of Clean Air Act Violations, the federal government decided that Atlanta's air is too polluted for the city to receive funds for new road construction. However, the project would still receive federal monies since it was approved prior to the decision. The first phase of the project, including a 21-lane bridge carrying I-85 over Sugarloaf Parkway, is complete and the second phase is well under way. Although an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) review recommended denying a rezoning request generated by phase three of the project, Gwinnett County still approved the measure.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Adding ten lanes to a few isolated freeway segments does not make sense when the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and ARC have not presented a plan for how the full system could be completed or what would result if it was. More cost-effective alternatives exist for addressing area congestion, such as building a commuter rail system, and expanding high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and bus service.

Local Community Concerns Many local residents feel that the ARC and GDOT are allowing land use decisions and sprawl to dictate transportation projects that will adversely affect their communities. Residents complain that the project was not accurately represented to them, especially given rezoning approvals for over five million square feet of offices and hotels and a 1.7 million square foot mall. These will increase traffic, pave wetlands, and intrude on once-peaceful neighborhoods.

Environmental Concerns The Environmental Protection Agency has already determined that Atlanta's air quality fails to meet minimum standards to receive federal highway funding. This project will make Atlanta's pollution worse as it will increase traffic volume and resulting ozone emissions. Atlantans already drive 30 percent more than the national average and more than any urban population on Earth.



Contacts

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Peoria to Chicago Highway

Peoria, IL

\$480 million

Developers' Desires Dictate Unneeded Road



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed Peoria to Chicago Highway and accompanying Eastern Ring-Road around Peoria. Estimates for the project range from \$600 million to \$1 billion, including \$398 million for the Eastern Ring-Road — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

Peoria area development interests want a four-lane highway from Peoria to either I-55 or I-80, both of which run to Chicago. The Eastern Ring-Road would be a four-lane highway from southeastern Peoria connecting to the Peoria to Chicago Highway. Peoria drivers currently can choose between several two- and four-lane highways to reach interstate routes to Chicago.

Status

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has completed a corridor study for the Eastern Ring-Road and chosen the B-5 corridor, which would destroy 440 acres of farmland, 261 acres of wooded area, 45 homes, 2 businesses, and a church at a cost of \$398 million.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Federal taxpayers should not pay for a road that is motivated by the economic developments desires of local businesses, rather than transportation needs. As the *Peoria Journal Star* has editorialized about the project, “The Illinois Department of Transportation normally lets transportation needs — traffic counts, access and safety — determine where it puts highways. The case for the Peoria-Chicago link rests on economic development, and that’s a tougher sell.”

Finally, IDOT justifies construction of the Eastern Ring-Road to handle traffic from “a potential new highway linking Peoria to Chicago” — a road that has not been built.

Local Community Concerns The County Boards and Farm Bureaus for both Woodford and Livingston Counties, as well as District 50 Schools and the City of Washington, oppose the project due to its negative impact on communities and farmland. Project proponents promote the highway as a source of economic growth. But more than 13,000 local residents have signed petitions opposing the project, arguing that it would have little economic benefit, while physically dividing their communities, and stunting residential growth.

The project would take needed money away from maintenance of existing roads, many of which are in disrepair, and the badly needed reconstruction of I-74.

Environmental Concerns The project would increase noise, air and garbage pollution and harm wildlife by fragmenting its habitat. The corridor for the Eastern Ring-Road would endanger federally protected plants and grasses, destroy family farms — some 75 to 100 years old — and exacerbate an existing storm water flooding problem.



Contacts

Larry Schaeer, Communities Against Ring-Road Encroachment, (309) 698-4889.



U.S. Route 20

Illinois

\$280 million

Freeway Harms Agriculture and Tourism



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the proposed U.S. Route 20 Freeway. The freeway would cost approximately \$350 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) originally examined modernizing the existing U.S. 20 in 1963 but abandoned the plan in 1969 due to a reorganization of funding priorities and changes in federal environmental regulation. With the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991, the study was resumed and a proposal called for a new road to be built, leaving the old highway as is. The purpose of this proposed new roadway would be to provide access to interstate routes and improve east-west traffic service.

Status

The Freeway Watch Committee, along with its engineer, has recommended expanding the existing U.S. 20 into a four-lane expressway which would destroy less land and cost less money than the larger proposed freeway. IDOT is currently considering two freeway routes, in addition to the expressway and no-build options. IDOT will announce its preferred alternative in spring 2000.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns More cost-effective alternatives exist. The Freeway Watch Committee's alternative plan for a four-lane expressway would upgrade and expand the existing U.S. 20, which is in need of repair. The freeway proposal would require costly interchanges covering 60 to 70 acres of land each while interchanges for an expressway would require a much smaller amount of land, if even necessary.

Local Community Concerns The proposed freeway would not solve the safety problems associated with the current U.S. 20 and would strain the already overloaded law enforcement and emergency service systems. Although parallel to the existing U.S. Route 20, the freeway would not serve local traffic and would bypass town centers. The proposed building routes would use 100 percent new land, adversely affecting both agriculture and tourism, the two leading industries in the area. One of the proposed freeway routes threatens a 6,800 acre resort and development in Galena Territory.

Environmental Concerns Both of the proposed freeway routes would destroy prairies, farmland, forests and wetlands. Runoff from a large freeway would pollute local watersheds including Lake Galena. The Natural History Survey found that plants and animals from approximately eight different endangered species would be harmed by the freeway as well.



Contacts

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I-69 Highway Extension

Southwest Indiana

\$600 million

\$600 Million to Save 10 Minutes



Proposal and savings

Reject funding for new terrain I-69 Highway Extension project with an estimated cost of over \$1.1 billion — 80 percent federally funded. Instead choose the cheaper alternative of upgrading existing Highway 41 and I-70 at a total cost of \$500 million.

Background

This proposed 140-mile I-69 extension would extend from Indianapolis to Evansville, Indiana. The Indianapolis-to-Evansville highway is one segment of the proposed 1000-mile “Mid-Continent Superhighway” linking Canada with Mexico, which would cost taxpayers \$6-10 billion, and would unnecessarily duplicate existing interstates.

Status

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is currently preparing a supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In April 1998, I-69 was featured as a “Fleecing of America” on NBC Nightly News, which was followed three months later by an “It’s Your Money” segment on ABC World News Tonight. In May 1998, Congress passed a six-year transportation funding bill which provided only \$27 million for I-69. In November 1998, INDOT, while still favoring the new terrain route, announced a two-year delay while it studies alternatives.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Although touted as an “economic development” project for four counties, it would create only four jobs per year in each of them, at a cost of \$1.5 million per job. An independent economic analysis found that the highway’s costs would exceed its benefits by \$115 million, with every dollar spent yielding only 81 cents in benefits.

The alternative plan of upgrading existing roads would save taxpayers \$600 million, and travel time would be only 10 minutes longer than on the new road.

Local Community Concerns An unprecedented coalition of Indiana farmers, conservationists, local businesspeople, elected officials, and taxpayer groups are opposed to the project. Numerous Indiana newspapers — including those in Indianapolis, Gary, South Bend, Muncie, and Terre Haute — have editorialized against it.

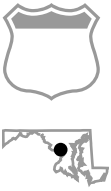
In September 1998, one of Indiana’s largest Amish communities pleaded with Governor Frank O’Bannon to cancel the project, which would split the Amish settlement.

Environmental Concerns The project would destroy 5,000 acres, including 1,000 acres of forests and 3,000 acres of farmland, and lead to sprawl development. Indiana is already losing prime farmland faster than any other state except Texas. The highway would also bisect the new Patoka National Wetlands Project and Wildlife Refuge, home to bald eagles and other endangered species.



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Inter-County Connector

Montgomery County, MD

\$880 million

\$1 Billion Highway Drives Maryland Sprawl



Proposal and Savings

Reject the proposed Inter-County Connector (ICC). Estimated project costs are \$1.1 billion — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The ICC is a proposed 18-mile highway of between 6 and 12 lanes running from I-270 near Gaithersburg, Maryland to U.S. Route 1 near Laurel, Maryland.

Status

Since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in 1997, local, state and federal decision-makers have criticized the ICC. In 1997, the Montgomery County Planning Board refused to endorse any of the official ICC routes. The County Council recommended a “Network of Improvements,” which would still include major road construction. In March 1998, Governor Parris Glendening established a new Transportation Solutions Group (TSG) to take a “fresh look” at the options. The TSG will issue recommendations in July 1999. Meanwhile, the Consolidated Transportation Program for Maryland includes at least \$27 million for ICC right-of-way acquisition over the next six years. The State Highway Administration has spent roughly \$19 million purchasing rights-of-way since July 1998.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The ICC would cost over \$1 billion to build, not including the widening of local roads into feeder roads. It would also trigger suburban sprawl, forcing taxpayers to pay for expensive new infrastructure and services.

Local Community Concerns The ICC would destroy dozens of homes and devalue thousands of others. It would cut through dozens of communities, bringing air and water pollution, noise, and increased congestion. The ICC would be part of a sprawling “spider web” of highways around Washington, D.C. According to the DEIS, the ICC would serve less than 10 percent of area commuters and actually increase congestion on main commuter routes.

Environmental Concerns The ICC would destroy some of the region’s finest remaining forests and wetlands, with clearcuts across numerous creeks and watersheds. The ICC threatens at least 24 rare plant species, trees that pre-date the Civil War, and fast-disappearing wildlife habitat, including forest habitat for many migratory song bird species.

The toxic run-off, air pollution, and destruction of forests and wetlands caused by the ICC would undermine regional efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay, and the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. Indirect impacts will further harm the region’s air quality by triggering sprawl and encouraging increased automobile traffic.



Contacts

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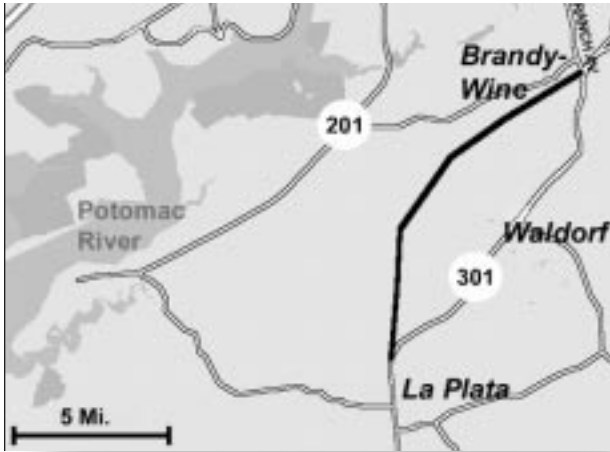


Waldorf Bypass

Southern Maryland

\$363 million

Project Revives Part of Rejected Eastern Bypass



Proposal and savings

Reject funding for the proposed Waldorf Bypass and consider cheaper alternatives. Total project costs are around \$454 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The Waldorf Bypass is part of a larger upgrade of U.S. Route 301. The Bypass would begin in Prince George’s County, Maryland at Brandywine and would rejoin Route 301 above La Plata in Charles County. Waldorf, Maryland is dominated by bedroom communities and a regional mall, served by an overburdened Route 301. In 1990, state governments pushed for bypasses on the eastern and western sides of Washington, D.C. These would, together with other projects under consideration, constitute an Outer Beltway. These bypass proposals were defeated by overwhelming citizen opposition. However, government and business advocates returned a few years later with a segmented approach toward the same goal. The Waldorf Bypass would be a new road alignment essentially equivalent to the Eastern Bypass proposed in 1990.

Status

The Environmental Impact Statement process cannot begin until the Charles County Commissioners choose whether to upgrade existing Route 301 or build the Bypass.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns It would be cheaper to improve conditions by enhanced planning, making safety and access improvements on the current alignment, and by building overpasses at congested major intersections for through traffic.

Local Community Concerns While advocates of a new highway alignment publicly state that the purpose of the Bypass is to alleviate local traffic, its true function would be the same as the previously rejected Eastern Bypass: to alleviate traffic in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. If the Waldorf Bypass were built, Waldorf would suffer disinvestment in its urban core. This new highway proposal would spur growth and pull tens of thousands of jobs from Washington D.C. and its inner suburbs, replacing forest and farmland with new subdivisions.

Environmental Concerns The Waldorf Bypass would significantly affect the Mattawoman and Port Tobacco Creeks and Pages Swamp. The Mattawoman is already under great development pressure, and it is the most productive spawning creek in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay system.

The highway would also accelerate sprawl in Southern Maryland, which is projected to receive 40 percent of Maryland’s growth in the next 20 years. The sensitive nature of Southern Maryland’s productive wetlands, steep slopes and erosion prone soils make it doubtful that the area would be able to support this large portion of projected growth.



Contacts

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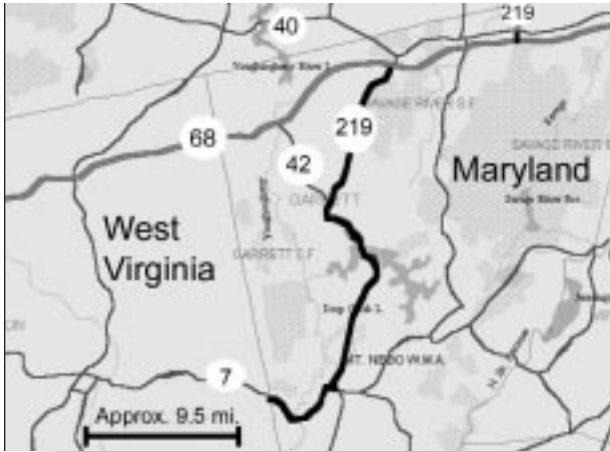


U.S. Route 219

Maryland

\$240 million

Economic Benefits Are Questionable



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed expansion of U.S. Route 219. This project will cost approximately \$300 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The proposal calls for either extending the current U.S. Route 219 through Garrett County, Maryland in compliance with four-lane interstate standards, or creating a parallel highway that would run through the mountains. It is intended that this proposed 36-mile highway be incorporated into a larger project, known as Continental One which, if built, would run from Toronto to Miami. Since the area has the highest unemployment rate in Maryland, local proponents justify the highway as a tool for economic growth.

Status

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) included \$700 million for the entire Continental One corridor.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Garrett County’s economic problems have not been linked to the lack of such roadway expansion, nor has it been proven that the building of such a roadway would increase jobs. I-68, which runs east-west through the northern part of Garrett County, was built in 1987 with similar economic justifications and little development has resulted. The Continental One highway may never be built, and would not be completed until approximately 2019. Thus, any short-term economic benefits would have to be regional rather than a result of the section’s place in Continental One corridor.

Local Community Concerns Opponents of the proposed roadway seek to preserve the rural area of Garrett County that currently provides escape from the noise, traffic and pollution that an expanded highway would bring. This project would destroy valuable homes and businesses in the Oakland (the county seat) and McHenry (Deep Creek Lake) areas. It would ruin family farms, at least one of which has been in the family since before the Civil War.

Environmental concerns The expansion of U.S. Route 219 would negatively impact the Mount Nebo Wildlife Management Area, which has been identified as an ecologically sensitive habitat, as well as the Garrett State Forest. In addition, the Youghiogheny River, designated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources as a state scenic river, and several of its tributaries are located in the project area. Many of the waterways in this system have been designated as Use III Natural Trout Streams. These rivers support diverse fish populations including Blacknose Dace, Creek and River Chub, Rock Bass, Johnny and Fantail Darter, Mottled Sculpin and Pumpkinseed Sunfish.



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Petoskey Bypass

Petoskey, MI

\$56 million

Alternative Preserves Threatened Farmland



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed Petoskey Bypass which would cost \$70 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The planned 9.5-mile, four-lane highway would bypass the resort city of Petoskey on the northwest coast of Lower Michigan. The Bypass would leave U.S. 131 south of Petoskey and proceed east, bisecting a thriving dairy and row crop farm community, and rejoin U.S. 131 north of the city.

Status

Congress authorized \$28 million for the road as a “demonstration project” in 1987. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), granted the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) \$1 million for the Petoskey Bypass. This money will be used for right-of-way purchasing and to study an alternative proposed by local townships. The alternative proposal mostly follows existing roads and goes along property lines, causing less damage to farmland.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The need for the Bypass is unsupported. The stated intent of the road is to reduce congestion in Petoskey and give travelers a faster way to reach destinations farther north. However, the Bypass would loop in a lengthy route around Petoskey, potentially increasing travel times. Rising traffic counts on U.S. 131 are mostly attributed to peak tourist season traffic. It is unlikely that the Bypass would reduce traffic for local residents on U.S. 131.

Local Community Concerns In a countywide survey, the vast majority of residents said the preservation of rural valleys, farms, and scenic views was “extremely important.” Critics fear the Bypass would destroy these very attributes and accelerate sprawl.

Residents have been particularly opposed to the Bypass because it would devastate a historic agriculture district that produces \$10 million in farm products every year.

One township affected by the project is working with consultants to develop an alternative transportation plan. The township favors upgrading existing roads and investigating less expensive alternatives that would minimize damage to prime farmland and sharply reduce the number of homes that would have to be moved.

Environmental Concerns The primary environmental concerns include loss of prime farmland and open space and degradation of wetlands and two world-class trout streams. Emmet County has one of the highest rates of farmland loss in the state. Erosion from road construction and runoff would endanger freshwater marshes in the Bear River and Tannery Creek watersheds, largely undeveloped rivers that empty into Lake Michigan in Petoskey.



Contacts

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South Belt Freeway

Grand Rapids, MI

\$296 million

Freeway Alternatives Were Never Studied



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the construction of remaining phases of a new, four-lane, 20-mile long beltway south of the city of Grand Rapids. Project costs are at least \$370 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

First conceived during the earliest days of the interstate highway system, the South Belt Freeway was originally viewed by transportation engineers as a major east-west corridor bypassing Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city. In 1979, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) viewed the proposed highway as a component of the state trunk-line system in order to relieve congestion in the rapidly growing suburbs. In 1993, an Environment Impact Statement was completed, and the Federal Highway Administration signed the Record of Decision to build the highway.

Status

The state has released \$11 million for right of way acquisitions and Governor John Engler announced that \$43 million from Michigan's general fund would be used to start construction of the South Belt. Construction has begun on the first phase of the project, I-96 to M-37.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns A study by MDOT found that the South Belt Freeway's revised purpose — to connect Lake Michigan shore communities with Lansing in order to ease congestion on the downtown Grand Rapids freeway — was not justified.

The total cost of the South Belt has ballooned from its original estimate of \$100 million to at least \$370 million. Cost effective alternatives have not received proper consideration. Although money was earmarked to consider "all reasonable alternatives including, but not limited to transportation system management, improvements to existing roadways and expansion of public transportation," only two alternatives were thoroughly analyzed. Those were, a.) Build the South Belt, or, b.) Do not build it. Improving existing east-west routes or using alternative corridors may prove less expensive and more practical.

Local Community Concerns Local residents have expressed opposition to the project, arguing that alternatives — including comprehensive planning, public transit and improvements to existing roadways — would better serve community needs.

Environmental Concerns The West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC), has warned that the highway would degrade wetlands, cause storm water runoff problems, chew up hundreds of acres of prime farm land, and promote sprawl.

Traffic on the South Belt would exacerbate air pollution problems in a region that already falls below air quality levels set by the Clean Air Act.



Contacts

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Traverse City Bypass

Traverse City, MI

\$240 million

Costly Bypass Around Downtown Business



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed Hartman-Hammond Bridge/Traverse City Bypass. Total cost would be \$300 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The planned 33-mile, four-lane highway is designed to speed traffic around Traverse City, the business and financial center of Northwest Michigan. The Grand Traverse County Road Commission has applied for \$12.5 million in federal funding for the Hartman-Hammond Bridge, an essential component of the bypass.

Status

The Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be complete in early 1999. However, the Coalition for Sensible Growth has released a proposed alternative.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Federal funding guidelines have created distorted incentives that encourage the building of a more expensive project than is necessary. The Grand Traverse County Road Commission argues that in order to receive federal funding, it must replace the one-lane Cass Road Bridge through the Boardman River Valley. A new four-lane bridge with new quarter-mile connecting roads would cost \$15.7 million.

Local residents propose a less expensive and less damaging alternative — upgrade the current bridge from one to two lanes at a cost of \$1.8 million.

Local Community Concerns Many local residents are concerned that the project would contribute to sprawl. Family-owned, downtown businesses worry that the Bypass would invite more national chain stores and mall developers into the region, undermining the compact and successful city center. Area residents worry that the highway would become a beltway strip mall, and increase traffic in what is now thinly populated rural farm and recreational areas including undeveloped state forest land.

Environmental Concerns Local citizens contend that the Bypass design process fails to comply with environmental laws and ignores the effects the new road would have in opening up farmland to development. Businesses, local governments, and environmental and conservation groups have criticized the project as a threat to air, water, and forest resources. The proposed four-lane bridge across the Boardman River would require filling in approximately 10 acres of wetlands.

Construction and heavy vehicle use would cause erosion and degrade the Boardman River, a blue-ribbon trout stream which flows into Grand Traverse Bay, the source of Traverse City's drinking water. The proposed route would cut through the Pere Marquette State Forest, slicing across the Vasa Trail, a summer hiking trail and winter cross-country course that hosts an annual, nationally renowned ski race.



Contacts

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U.S. 131 Expansion

Northwest Michigan

\$400 million

Traffic Counts Don't Justify Project



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the expansion of U.S. 131 between Cadillac and I-75 and a connector highway to I-75. The total project cost is \$500 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

U.S. 131 is a major north-south route running from Indiana to the northern Lake Michigan coast. The road is the primary access route to the relatively unspoiled regions of northwest lower Michigan. These are prime recreation and vacation areas for nearby cities. U.S. 131 has been planned as a four-lane, limited-access freeway since the 1950s. The freeway portion now ends at Cadillac, with the 90 miles of road north to Petoskey a two-lane highway.

Status

An \$86.5 million bypass around Cadillac is under construction and expected to be completed by 2001 or 2002. After completion, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to begin the Manton segment, despite a traffic study finding the traffic in the expansion area north of Mancelona has decreased in recent years.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The MDOT scoping documents clearly state that traffic concerns do not justify expansion. Traffic counts are well below state average, as are accident and death rates, even in the worst locations. Alternatives, including improving local roadways and upgrading existing U.S. 131, would be more than adequate to address motorists' concerns.

Local Community Concerns The MDOT scoping documents also indicate that communities along the existing roadway can expect many unwelcome effects as a result of expansion.

Small businesses and residents fear a four-lane, limited-access freeway would drain the local economy and reduce quality of life by making the area less attractive to tourists and seasonal residents.

The U.S. 131 Development Authority, a collection of business enterprises and economic groups, supports the highway expansion. But many residents continue to publicly argue for improvements to the existing roadbed instead of new construction.

Environmental Concerns The four-lane freeway would affect acres of wetlands, bisect large tracts of undeveloped state forests, and divide important agricultural lands. Moreover, it would traverse and degrade state and federally designated natural and wild and scenic rivers, including the Boardman River, which is a blue ribbon trout stream. Three proposed alignments would fragment sensitive portions of the Boardman River Watershed; two would affect areas designated as "wild and scenic."

Local residents, businesses, and environmental groups, such as the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), support alternatives that have significantly fewer detrimental effects.



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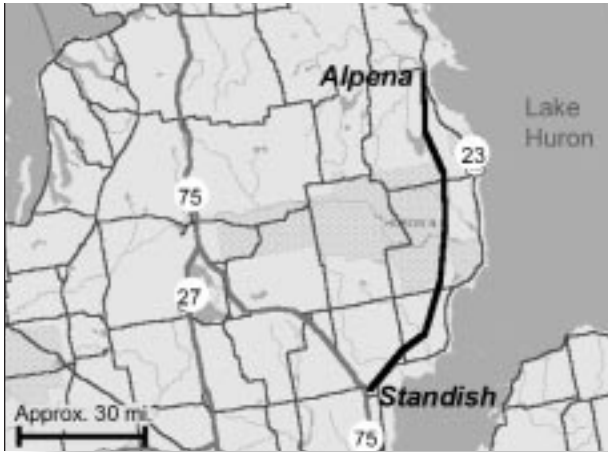


U.S. 23 Extension

Northeast Michigan

\$640 million

Unneeded Highway Hurts U.S. 23 Business



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for this proposed northeast Michigan freeway extension. The total project cost is \$800 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The planned 100-mile freeway extension would connect Alpena on the Lake Huron shoreline of northeast lower Michigan with the I-75 freeway near Standish. The extension would roughly parallel the existing U.S. 23 highway, which follows the coasts of Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron in a sparsely populated area of the state. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to construct the freeway in three phases, with a \$194 million price tag for the first 36-mile segment.

Status

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been completed and will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration in 1999.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Traffic counts on the existing U.S. 23 do not justify the construction of a freeway extension. The existing highway has been renovated to a four-lane roadway in parts, and is under construction in others, rendering the new freeway extension unnecessary. While the primary impetus for this project is to encourage economic growth, promises of economic benefits from the extension are vague and unsubstantiated.

Local Community Concerns Businesses dependent upon existing U.S. 23 traffic volume would be devastated. Bypassed communities would be undermined, as investment and activity shift to new development at freeway interchanges. Traditional land-use patterns would be disrupted, and a significant amount of prime farmland would be consumed by freeway construction and related development.

Environmental Concerns Environmental groups, as well as state and federal resource agencies, have concluded that the project would have significant effects on the unique natural environment of relatively undeveloped northeast Michigan. Phase I of construction would transect large undeveloped tracts of forested wetland in the Saginaw Bay watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service observed that the initial phase of the project would result in the “largest single wetlands loss within Michigan.” Phases II and III would severely compromise state and national forest land, protected wildlife habitat, coastal wetlands and the Au Sable River Corridor. The *Detroit Free Press* editorialized, “The proposed freeway route...looks as if it were drawn by trucking firms to shave every possible minute off delivery times, regardless of how many Michigan fields, trees and swamps would disappear.”



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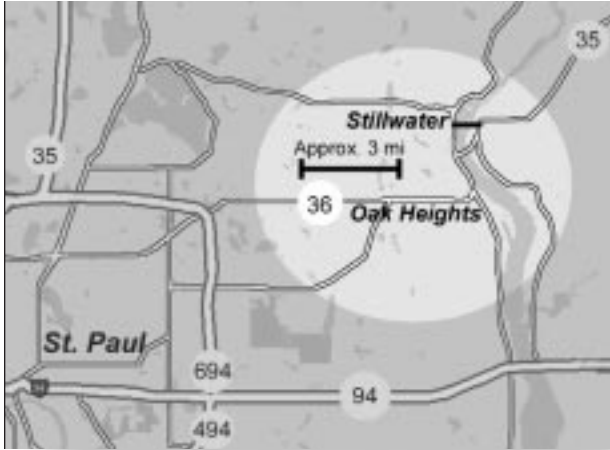


Stillwater Bridge

Minnesota

\$96 million

Wild and Scenic River Should Be Protected



Proposal and savings

Reject the Stillwater Bridge including the alternative project proposed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) in October 1998. Estimated total project costs are \$120 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The proposed four-lane, mile-long Stillwater Bridge would be built across the St. Croix River between Oak Park Heights, Minnesota and Houlton, Wisconsin, just east of Minneapolis-St. Paul. It would replace an existing, narrow two-lane drawbridge that has 5 to 15 years of useful life left, but causes traffic congestion problems that will eventually need some solution. The Stillwater Bridge is more than a simple replacement, and would include a six-mile highway upgrade of Minnesota Highway 36 and Wisconsin Highway 64.

Status

In 1996, the National Park Service (NPS) ordered that no federal permits be issued for the project. MNDOT opposed the NPS decision in the courts and Congress. In October 1998, the NPS, the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOTs, and the Federal Highway Administration agreed in principle and pending environmental review, to proceed with a shorter, lower-speed bridge in a slightly different alignment.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns A major new bridge as proposed is unneeded because the expanded I-94 bridge crosses the river only a few minutes south of the site of the proposed new bridge. Furthermore, the \$120 million price tag of the proposed Stillwater Bridge is excessive considering that expanding and renovating the I-94 bridge only cost \$28 million.

Local Community Concerns The bridge is unnecessary, heavily criticized, and could hurt the local economy. According to a *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* editorial, “the four lane span would encourage the exporting to Wisconsin of people, tax base, jobs, and economic growth that should be kept in Minnesota.”

Environmental Concerns The project is still a major intrusion on the river since it would involve cutting into undisturbed bluffs and placing large piers in the river. The bridge would adversely affect the St. Croix River, the only river in Minnesota to be designated Wild and Scenic, and set a bad precedent for similar rivers nationwide. The NPS said that the proposed bridge would have a “direct and adverse effect on the scenic and recreational values of the...Riverway.” The bridge would destroy five wetlands and 130 acres of farmland. Also, the bridge and its associated upgrade would accelerate sprawl into western Wisconsin, resulting in increased polluted runoff in the area, and negative impacts to scenery, water and wildlife habitat.



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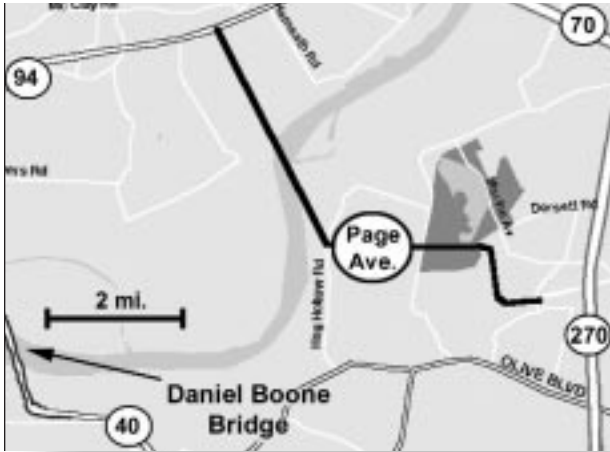


Page Avenue Extension

St. Louis, MO

N/A

Won't Solve Long-term Congestion



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed Page Avenue Extension. Total cost estimates range from between \$550 million to \$1 billion, with federal taxpayers responsible for 80 percent.

Background

The proposed project would expand the current four-lane Page Avenue into ten lanes for three to five miles through Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park in St. Louis County. The project has faltered and lost federal funding twice when its use of parkland and poor mitigation plans were discovered to be in violation of federal laws regulating the usage of public lands. Despite these setbacks and various court challenges, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) continues to push project plans and has released a Supplemental Environmental Impact Study.

Status

A petition circulated by Taxpayers Against Page Avenue Freeway gathered some 45,000 signatures to require a full ballot referendum on whether to build the expressway through the park. In November 1998, underfunded highway opponents lost a heated campaign when voters in St. Louis County approved going through the park. In February 1999, MODOT awarded a \$173 million contract for the bridge.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The project is excessively costly and will not solve the long-term congestion that the St. Louis region faces. Projections show that even if the extension were built, it would reach maximum traffic volume by 2015 due to project-related development and sprawl. More cost-effective alternatives exist, such as creating high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, increasing capacity on the Daniel Boone Bridge, and expanding Metrolink light rail service in St. Charles County.

Local Community Concerns Area residents contend that mitigation land being offered as compensation for parkland claimed by the extension is of a lesser quality and located on land that is slated for future road development. Over 20 municipalities have passed resolutions condemning the extension as area residents fear that the project would spread sprawl, create pollution, and reduce property values.

Environmental Concerns The projected increase in traffic volume made possible by the extension would result in increased noise pollution and vehicle emissions in an area with questionable air quality. The Missouri Coalition for the Environment has filed a lawsuit charging that the Environmental Protection Agency has failed to enforce the Clean Air Act in the St. Louis area. The project may encourage more wetland and floodplain development that could result in future flood problems.



Contacts

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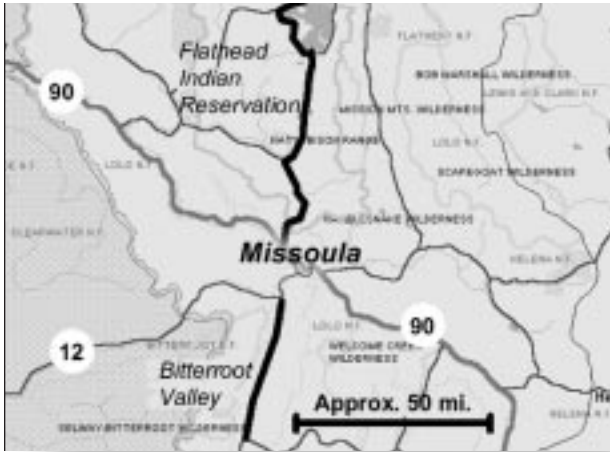


Highway 93 Widening

Western Montana

\$30 million

“Super” Two-Lane Alternative Is Cheaper



Proposal and Savings

Reject the proposed Highway 93 Widening project that would cost approximately \$135 million — 80 percent, or \$107 million, federally funded. Instead, pursue the “super” two-lane alternatives that would cost about \$70 million.

Background

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) proposes to widen a 34-mile section of Highway 93 south of Missoula running through the Bitterroot Valley (\$35 million), and a 56-mile section north of Missoula, running entirely through the Flathead Indian Reservation (\$100 million). Records of Decision have been signed for both segments of the project. However, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) ruled that because of opposition by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the legitimacy of their environmental and cultural concerns, the northern section cannot go forward until the Tribes and state reach agreement on lane configuration.

Status

In the southern section, Friends of the Bitterroot and the Highway 93 Citizens’ Coalition filed suit in federal court against the FHWA and MDT over inadequacies in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including erroneous safety and capacity analyses and failure to consider regional impacts.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns More cost-effective proposals exist to meet safety and traffic demands. “Super” two-lane alternatives with improved public transit and access management plans in the southern and northern sections would save almost \$7 and \$30 million, respectively.

Local Community Concerns Many residents, several elected officials, three local papers, conservation organizations, and several local businesses oppose MDT’s current plan. Recognizing the project’s threat to the cultural survival of the Tribes and the historic and environmental landscape of the area, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Flathead reservation one of America’s 11 “Most Endangered Historic Places” in 1997.

Project opponents argue that report language accompanying the FY99 Transportation Appropriations bill urged the FHWA to reverse its position and authorize construction of the four-lane road.

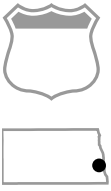
Local groups have pointed to numerous federal and professional papers, including studies commissioned by the MDT and FHWA, showing that undivided four-lane roads often have accident rates higher than improved two-lane designs.

Environmental Concerns Environmentalists argue the project would exacerbate uncontrolled development and sprawl in the ecologically crucial Northern Rockies. The project would impact ground water quality, nationally important wetlands, and habitat for numerous endangered species, including grizzly bears.



Contacts

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I-29 Overpass

Fargo, ND

N/A

\$5 Million to
Save 5 Seconds



Proposal and savings

Deny federal funding for the proposed I-29 overpass project in Fargo, North Dakota. The estimated total cost is \$5 million with the federal share unknown.

Background

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) plans to construct an overpass of I-29 at 17th Avenue South in the Westside area of Fargo, North Dakota. The project also includes improvements to 13th Avenue South, I-29, Main Avenue, 42nd Street, 1st Avenue North and 45th Street. Relieving traffic congestion on I-29 and 13th Avenue South is NDDOT's justification for the project.

Status

Construction for the 17th Avenue grade crossing at I-29 is scheduled in the Transportation Improvement Program to occur around the year 2000. No environmental, social, or property value statements have been completed.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The proposed project is unnecessary because cheaper alternatives exist that would address traffic problems in the area. According to a report released by consultants hired by NDDOT, the \$5 million grade crossing would save the average person only five seconds while travelling in a four square mile area. I-94, which is located four blocks away from the proposed project area, leads to the same destinations.

Local Community Concerns There is significant local opposition to the proposed project. Over 720 residents signed a petition opposing the project.

The project would increase traffic in residential areas, raising safety concerns. The proposed project would also negatively impact neighborhood churches, a high school and a grade school. The roadway would also lead to high maintenance costs, which, under Fargo municipal practice, would be assessed to the neighborhood.

Residents argue that roads damaged during the April 1997 floods deserve attention before the proposed overpass is considered.

Environmental Concerns The I-29 overpass project would increase noise pollution as more vehicles would pass through the area. It would also negatively impact nearby parklands.



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Manchester Airport Access Road

Manchester, NH

\$49 million

Cost Per Mile Is Excessive



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the new Manchester Airport Access Road and examine alternatives. Estimated project costs are \$61 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The new access road would be a two-mile, four-lane highway and bridge across the Merrimack River, connecting the southern entrance route of the airport to the F.E. Everett Turnpike. Improvements would be made on the turnpike, U.S. Route 3 and New Hampshire Route 3A. In combination with airport expansion and plans for an industrial park, the road is meant to improve access to the airport, ease traffic congestion, and spur industrial development in areas south of the airport.

Status

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH-DOT) expects to issue a Final Environmental Impact Statement soon, as well as obtain wetland permits for the area south of the airport.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Taxpayers should not pay for the construction of an unnecessary road when alternatives, such as upgrading existing access routes, have been given only minimal attention. According to NH-DOT studies, 7 out of 13 intersections along the new road would be congested by the year 2015 while only one or two intersections would be congested if existing roadways were upgraded.

Local Community Concerns Twenty-two homes and twelve businesses would need to be relocated to make way for the new access road while 36 acres of farmland, six acres of the fish and game club, and 23 acres of Reeds Ferry State Park would be damaged or destroyed by its construction. Developing land south of airport would place further infrastructure demands on the surrounding towns. Public transportation access remains virtually nonexistent.

Environmental Concerns The Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and numerous State Senators have all expressed concerns with the environmental effects of the highway. The proposed road would destroy roosting and perching habitat for 21 wintering bald eagles, currently a threatened species. The roadway would damage 1,000 acres of wildlife habitat south of the airport, 18 acres of floodplain, a stream bottom forest, and seven acres of a tree farm, affecting a total of 22 known species. Several types of animals depend on the uplands adjacent to the wetlands for survival, especially turtles, which use these corridors to find suitable nesting.



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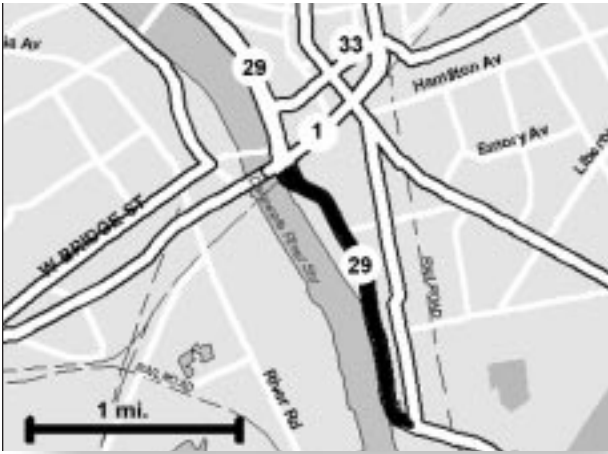


Route 29 Completion

Trenton, NJ

\$8 million

Highway on Trenton's Last Riverfront



Proposal and Savings

Cancel plans to build the final link of Route 29 in Trenton, New Jersey. The project would cost \$85 million — \$8 million from federal taxpayers.

Background

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has begun construction of 1.7 miles of new highway along the last remaining area of Trenton's Delaware River waterfront which is not obscured by highway. In 1995, NJDOT finished a massive complex of highway connections south of Trenton that caused the greatest loss of wetlands in New Jersey history. That complex greatly increased car and truck traffic on local roads in south Trenton along the Delaware River waterfront.

Status

In 1980, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) rejected the proposed project design due to increased traffic, safety concerns, and excessive cost. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) local office has claimed that NJDOT is not required to supplement the EIS because the four-lane design would be less environmentally harmful than the original six-lane route. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has issued all permits, and the right-of-way has been cleared of vegetation. South Trenton residents and environmental groups have an appeal pending in federal court in Philadelphia.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The project's estimated \$85 million cost is extremely expensive for 1.7 miles. The original 1980 EIS rejected the current route and design alternative as not prudent or feasible. The design includes below-water structures that would be subject to deterioration and flooding.

Local Community Concerns Trenton residents were opposed to this project until other projects increased car and truck traffic on local streets. While NJDOT claimed that the only solution is to build this link, it refused to route traffic elsewhere or employ traffic calming techniques on local streets until recently, as part of its construction traffic mitigation plan.

The EIS is 19 years old and a reevaluation document is inadequate. Neither document adequately addresses the issues of pedestrian safety, waterfront access, air quality, induced trip demand, single-occupancy vehicle travel, or demand management measures. Traffic is projected to increase 25 percent in 2020 over 1996 levels with the link built.

Environmental Concerns The project would increase pollution by attracting more traffic, including increased truck traffic. The project would prevent water's edge access and disrupt important wetlands and the habitat of an endangered species. NJDOT has failed to adequately investigate the project's environmental concerns by refusing to officially supplement the EIS.



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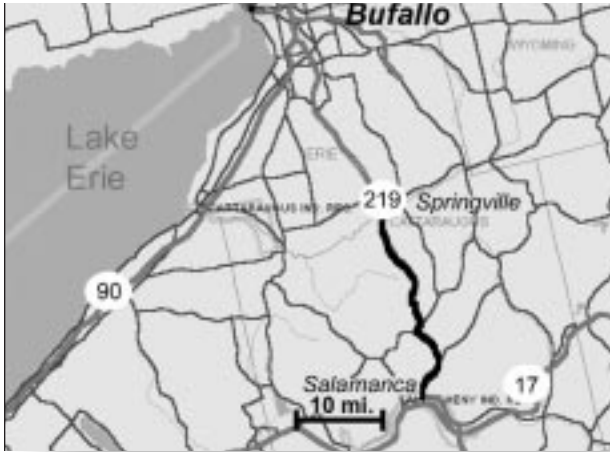


U.S. Route 219 Freeway

New York State

\$400 million

Half a Billion to Widen Country Road



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed U.S. Route 219 Freeway project. Estimated total project costs are \$500 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has proposed expanding a 28-mile portion of U.S. Route 219 between the towns of Springville and Salamanca into a four-lane freeway. NYSDOT plans that the proposed freeway will be incorporated into a larger project known as Continental One which, if built, would run from Toronto to Miami. Continental One boosters claim that the project will increase local and international commerce by offering truck traffic a new north-south route.

Status

While the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been released for the project, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has yet to be produced. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) included \$700 million for the entire Continental One corridor.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The expenditure of half a billion dollars to widen and expand a country road on the basis of questionable future commerce and arbitrary traffic growth projections is not justifiable. The Continental One highway may never be built, and would not be completed until approximately 2019. This is especially true because the state of Pennsylvania is not interested in expanding its segment of U.S. Route 219.

Local Community Concerns Area residents are concerned that the project and its related sprawl will disturb or demolish 20 farms that are eligible for the National Historic Registry, and cut off the commercial center of Ellicottville.

The Seneca Nation of Indians, from whom land was taken for Route 17 and the Kinzua Reservoir, face losing more. They demand land in lieu of any lost to U.S. Route 219. Such land would likely come from New York's renowned Allegany State Park.

Environmental Concerns The project would cut a 28-mile, 500-foot wide swath through farmland, wetlands, and forest, as well as clear cut 1.2 square miles of timber.

Besides increasing auto travel and resultant air, water and noise pollution, this project would cut off a thousand acres of black bear habitat, penetrate important deer wintering yards, and disrupt habitat known to contain osprey and bald eagles without conducting a proper field study. Several trout streams would be compromised and scenic Cattaraugus Creek would be bridged unnecessarily. No mitigation has been offered for lost forest or farmland.



Contacts

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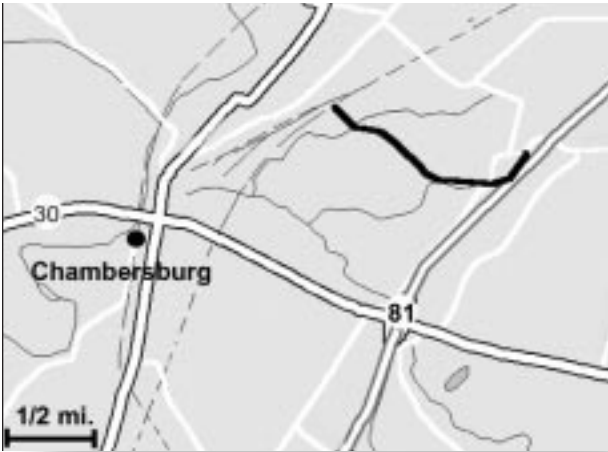


I-81 Interchange Connector

Franklin County, PA

\$6 million

Township Never Asked for Road



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the building of a new interchange near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The estimated project cost is between \$8 and \$10 million— 80 percent federally funded.

Background

First proposed in the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, this new I-81 Interchange is touted by Rep. Bud Shuster (R-PA) as necessary to relieve traffic congestion on Route 30 and encourage development in Chambersburg. The proposal, also referred to as Exit 7, consists of an interchange with exit and entrance ramps.

Status

The favored site of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in Greene Township had to be revised due to the number of area sites eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Thus, PennDOT advocates using the area of Franklin Farm Lane as the location for the interchange. This route involves the construction of a costly new bridge and the demolition of the present one.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns According to the *Harrisburg Patriot News*, spokesperson Greg Penny of PennDOT “acknowledged the interchange wouldn’t be very high on PennDOT’s priority list if it wasn’t being . . . paid for by federal money. He said proponents of the project are over-emphasizing any potential relief it would give to traffic along Route 30.”

Local Community Concerns The construction of the proposed interchange and the traffic it would generate would damage nearby historic structures that are sensitive to dust, dirt, and vibrations. Of particular concern is the Gass House that is on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and was the boyhood home of Sergeant Patrick Gass, the chief diarist for the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Furthermore, Greene Township never requested the interchange.

Environmental Concerns A major route would pass over the east branch tributary of one of the most impressive limestone trout streams in the eastern United States. This stream, known as Falling Spring, is used as a trout hatchery and is very sensitive to traffic pollution. The proposed interchange would result in the condemnation of prime farmland registered in two Agricultural Security Areas.



Contacts

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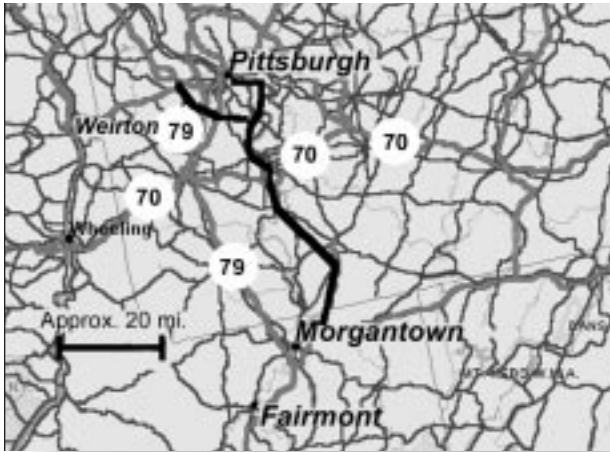


Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway

Southwest Pennsylvania

\$500 million

Huge Funding Shortfall Would Hurt Taxpayers



Proposal and Savings

Deny federal funding for the \$3.2 billion Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway projects.

Background

The Mon/Fayette is a 70-mile, four-lane turnpike planned from I-68 at Cheat Lake, West Virginia to I-376 at Monroe and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Southern Beltway is a 35-mile sister artery that runs from the Mon/Fayette (10 miles north of I-70) west to the Pittsburgh International Airport at Route 60. These related projects have been divided into seven sections covering roughly 105 miles.

Status

The projects currently receive \$40 million per year from the Pennsylvania state gas tax and \$28 million per year from annual driver registration fees. Even by bonding these state revenue sources to the maximum level, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission can only generate roughly \$1 billion for the projects. Proponents of the project had requested \$500 million in federal funds from the recently passed 1998 Transportation bill (known as TEA-21), but received only \$25 million.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Since 1992, cost estimates for these projects have ballooned from \$2.2 billion to a projected \$3.2 billion in 2002, leaving a huge funding shortfall that federal taxpayers will be asked to help subsidize.

Local Community Concerns According to *Potholes and Politics 1998*, a report by the Surface Transportation Policy Project and the Environmental Working Group, 82 percent of Pittsburgh's roads are "not in good condition." For the entire state, 85 percent of roads fall under "poor," "mediocre," or "fair." Fixing and maintaining existing roads is considerably cheaper than new road construction. The scope and size of these projects have left many residents and businesses uncertain about future planning decisions, traffic congestion, decreased property values, and increased taxes. Members of the community are concerned about the necessity of home and business relocation, and the destruction of thousands of acres of century-old farms. Many residents fear that the roads would pull jobs out of Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle region, a thriving urban area with over 140,000 jobs within walking distance of homes and shops, to undeveloped rural areas located along the projects' 135 mile corridor.

Environmental Concerns Hundreds of miles of farmland, forests, streams, lakes, riverfront and natural habitat would be destroyed by these projects. A five-mile section of pristine forests, watersheds and natural shoreline along the Monongahela River would look like a strip mine.



Contacts

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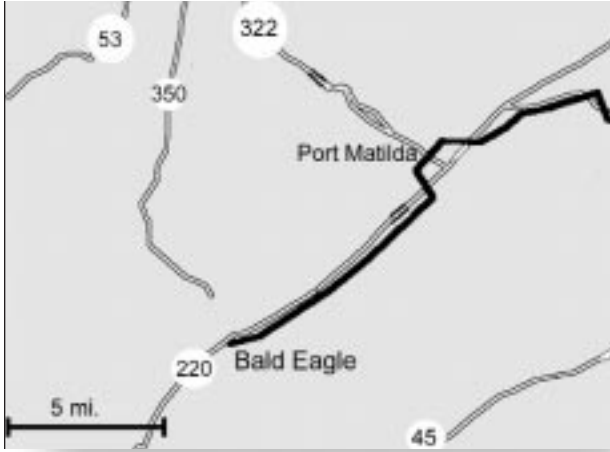


U.S. Route 220/322

Centre County, PA

\$363 million

Project Costs Have Quadrupled



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the proposed U.S. Route 220/322 project. The estimated project costs are \$454 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The proposed project involves extending U.S. Route 220/322 into a four-lane highway that would link Port Matilda to Interstate 80. The total length of the roadway included in the project is approximately 17 miles. Designated in the 1960s as an Appalachian Regional Development Corridor, U.S. Route 220 has been viewed as a major North-South route through the center of Pennsylvania. With 462 accidents (18 of which were fatal) in six years, safety is a key justification for the project, as well as relieving Philipsburg of truck traffic and stimulating economic growth. A related justification is better accessibility to Pennsylvania State University and State College.

Status

The controversy continues as the favored proposed alignments do not meet interstate trucking needs. Although the Army Corps of Engineers has not issued the necessary permits, construction is slated to begin in late 1999.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Even before construction, the costs for the Route 220/322 improvements have nearly quadrupled from \$120 million to \$454 million. In the early 1970s, a major study of improvements on Route 220 between Bald Eagle and Centre County concluded that the project was too expensive and was abandoned due to lack of funds.

More fiscally responsible alternatives exist that would address safety concerns. Two-thirds of the accidents involve trucks, so improving the quality of existing traffic lanes or rerouting truck traffic during peak hours would deter accidents. Heavy traffic only occurs during rush hour and in conjunction with events held at Pennsylvania State University. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Route 220 is 8,400 Vehicles Per Day (VPD). This is below the Federal Highway Administration's recommended standard of 10,000 VPD for a four-lane road.

Local Community Concerns The proposed project would claim 10-15 homes and would destroy historic farm sites and promote the use of heavy truck travel through a residential neighborhood that will claim 10 to 15 homes. This increase in truck traffic would lead to further congestion on the Mt. Nittany Expressway.

Environmental Concerns Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior oppose the proposed alignment's impact on the environment. The project would harm wildlife preservation efforts, disrupt water supplies, fragment forests, increase noise levels, and increased traffic emissions. The project would also harm the Spring Creek Watershed and Buffalo Run Headwaters.



Contacts

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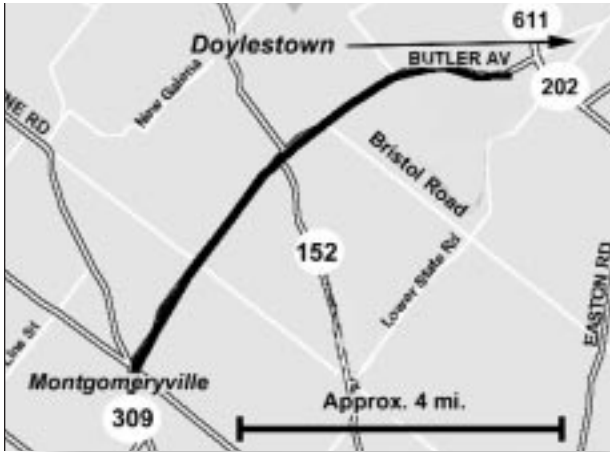


U.S. Route 202 Expressway (Section 700)

Southeast Pennsylvania

\$184 million

Road Will Increase Traffic



Proposal and Savings

Deny funds for the proposed U.S. Route 202 Expressway. The estimated project cost is \$230 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

Located in the northern Philadelphia suburbs of Bucks and Montgomery Counties, Section 700 is a proposed nine-mile bypass of U.S. Route 202. The project is intended to relieve traffic congestion, improve safety, and provide a link between regional expressway systems. Thirty years ago, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) planned to build a 60-mile outer ring expressway to bypass Route 202. Responding to opposition, PennDOT divided the corridor into eight sections (100-800) and widened the road one section at a time. Only sections 600, 700 and 800 remain as two-lane highways.

Status

Both the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Federal Highway Administration's Record of Decision (ROD) have been issued.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Taxpayers should not pay such excessive costs for a questionable road project, especially when more cost-effective alternatives exists, such as upgrading current roadways, implementing computerized signals, and improving intersections and public transportation. Specifically, Bristol Road, an intersecting roadway, can be extended through its intersection with U.S. Route 202 and turn lanes can be created on nearby Route 152.

Moreover, construction of the expressway will force the construction of Section 800. The land acquisition costs alone in that 11-mile section could exceed the cost of the entire Section 700 expressway.

Local Community Concerns According to studies done by Sensible Highway Alternatives to Protect the Environment (SHAPE), the expressway would actually increase traffic and negatively impact neighboring communities. Furthermore, SHAPE, a coalition comprised of several civic, environmental and conservation groups, opposes the increased noise, urban sprawl, and destruction of farmland that would result from the project, as well as the damage to Central and Dark Hollow Parks.

Environmental Concerns Fifteen acres of wetlands would be paved to construct the expressway and a total of 200 acres would be directly affected by the road's construction, according to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. These wetlands are inhabited by bog turtles, which are candidates for the endangered species list. In addition, 100 million gallons of stormwater runoff would increase the potential for the Neshaminy Creek to flood.



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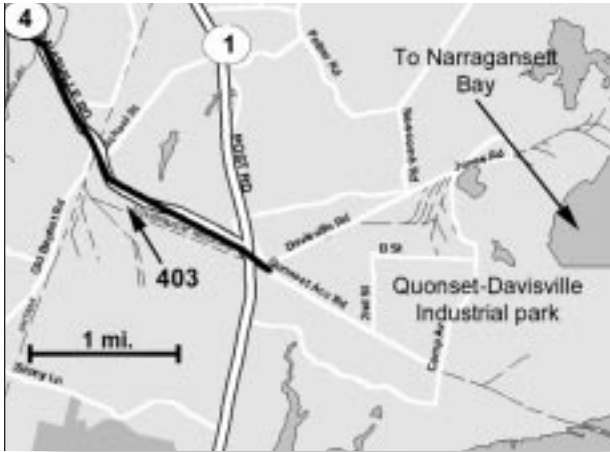


Quonset Access Freeway

North Kingstown, RI

\$98 million

Reconsider Freeway Along with Port



Proposal and Savings

Cancel plans to build a new freeway between Route 4 and the Quonset-Davisville Industrial Park. The estimated project cost is \$123 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

Rhode Island has long sought to redevelop the Quonset region, formerly a naval base. The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) believes industrial reuse of the base can be better marketed if a four-mile freeway connecting the Route 4 expressway to Quonset is constructed. The existing two-lane, 2.4-mile connection, Route 403, has good shoulders and no stop signs or traffic signals. A slightly longer connection using Routes 402 and U.S. 1 is four lanes, but needs intersection improvements. Despite gaining approval for the project, the state has delayed construction of the Quonset Access Freeway due to cost.

Status

With more federal funding available under the new federal transportation law (TEA-21), the state's next three-year transportation plan allocates \$50 million to build the first phase of the highway.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Since the 1995 Final Environmental Impact Statement, the project's cost has risen from \$71 million to \$123 million. Also, voters already approved in 1996 a huge, \$124 million public investment in improving freight rail service to Quonset.

Local Community Concerns The EDC also plans a massive new port at Quonset involving filling hundreds of acres of Narragansett Bay. This development would subject Rhode Island to increased truck traffic, and would worsen the already poor air quality. With weak existing land use controls, the project would promote sprawl throughout the remaining semi-rural areas of southern Rhode Island. Responding to widespread opposition to the port, the Governor convened a stakeholder's process to study the issue. Activists advocate including the entire Quonset project in the study and making no decision about the highway until this process concludes.

Environmental Concerns The project would destroy about 33 acres of forest, 13 acres of farm/succession habitat, and fill 2.42 acres of wetlands. There is concern that the project is to be built over the Hunt-Annaquatucket-Pettaquamscutt Aquifer that provides water for East Greenwich's municipal needs. For these reasons, the state's Environment Council (a coalition of environmental organizations) unanimously passed a resolution opposing freeway construction.

The EDC plans 57 acres of free parking in the industrial complex while merely promising a future study of transit services. The related port project has many serious environmental problems such as fishery impacts, dredge materials, and import of exotic species.



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Grand Parkway

Houston, TX

\$1.8 billion

\$1.8 Billion for a 4th Houston Loop



Proposal and savings

Cancel the Grand Parkway project. Estimated total project cost is \$2 billion — 90 percent federally funded.

Background

The Grand Parkway, Houston's fourth outer freeway loop, would have a circumference of 177 miles and would be extremely distant from the city's center. Recently proposed to be part of the National Highway System, the proposed Parkway is also supported by a group of private real estate interests. This redundant highway would promote sprawl development around Houston, cost federal taxpayers \$1.8 billion, and slice through important wildlife habitat.

Status

The entire highway project is divided into eight parts, which means that funding statistics and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the entire project will not be released. The EIS for the eastern segment (Segment I) was released in the summer of 1997. The Segment C (through bottomland wetlands and floodplain) EIS is expected to be completed in early 1999.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The highway is redundant. Houston already has two freeway loops and a third, almost-complete loop. In some sections the proposed fourth outer freeway loop would come within six miles of the third outer loop.

Local Community Concerns Citizens of the rural areas that would be urbanized by the Parkway are concerned they will lose their rural quality of life. Additionally, rural infrastructure may not be adequate to meet the new urban demands. The next proposed segment (I) would traverse near rural Beach City, located east of Houston.

According to the Mayor of Beach City, the Parkway will continue the trend of sprawl away from the inner city. The project will thus take money away from the urban area and continue to pull the city's residents and tax and job base into the suburbs.

Environmental Concerns The proposed project would slice through wildlife habitat in Lake Houston State Park, Brazos Bend State Park, and the bird-rich Katy Prairie, as well as destroy some of the last wetlands and bottomland hardwoods near Houston.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service states that the Grand Parkway will result in "tremendous secondary impacts through induced commercial and residential development." Major malls, two huge landfills, and numerous planned communities have been announced along the planned route.

The Houston area is already a carbon monoxide/ozone non-attainment area and its poor air quality scores nearly rival those of Los Angeles. The Grand Parkway would only aggravate this problem.



Contacts

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State Highway 161

Texas

\$360 million

Highway Would Sacrifice Parkland



Proposal and Savings

Deny the \$450 million needed for the 10.8-mile extension of State Highway 161 — 80 percent of which would be federally funded.

Background

The project would connect Texas 183 to I-20, while cutting through Grand Prairie. Originally planned as the western segment of an outer belt around Dallas, the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) claims the highway is crucial for opening a north-south passage in Dallas and Tarrant counties and relieving area traffic congestion. In 1980, the western leg of the loop was shifted east in order to avoid residential areas, and now cuts through Waggoner Park.

In 1985, Association Concerned About Tomorrow (ACT) obtained a federal injunction preventing the construction of the highway through northwest Grand Prairie based on the environmental effects of the project, including the taking of parkland.

Status

TXDOT has supplemented its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Although the U.S. Attorney's office recently obtained removal of the injunction, thus allowing construction, ACT has filed an appeal with the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Less costly, less intrusive, and equally effective alternatives exist. Expanding existing roadways such as the Belt Line Road or MacArthur Blvd. to "superstreets" or making improvements to the existing freeways of I-30, loop 12, and loop 360 have yet to be fully explored. In addition, no mass transit alternatives have been explored to ease traffic concerns.

Local Community Concerns As a result of the project, northwest Grand Prairie property values would decrease by 10 to 30 percent. Furthermore, 59 houses, 13 businesses, 7 apartment complexes and 2 churches would be destroyed. In addition, SH 161 would actually run through the "natural area" portion of Waggoner Park while increasing noise and decreasing access to the rest of the park.

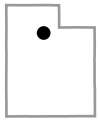
ACT, a non-profit group comprised of homeowners in Grand Prairie, is concerned with the destruction of Waggoner Park, the noise impact of SH 161 on the surrounding community, and the lack of public involvement allowed in the project.

Environmental concerns By cutting through the park, the project is in violation of Section 4(f), 49 U.S.C. § 303 (c) of the Federal Aid to Highways Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition to taking parkland, the project would increase air pollution. The Federal Highway Administration has violated the Clean Air Act by approving construction of SH 161 without a demonstration that the construction of the ultimate 8- to 10-lane SH 161 will not cause the Dallas/Fort Worth area to exceed ozone limits.



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Legacy Highway

Utah

\$1.4 billion

Redundant Road Costs Billions



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for this 120-mile highway that has an estimated total cost of at least \$2.76 billion for construction alone. At least half of this would be federally funded, however the exact percentage is unknown at this time.

Background

Legacy West Davis Highway, proposed by Governor Mike Leavitt, would be a 120-mile highway from Brigham City to Nephi, up the west side of Utah Lake, around the Great Salt Lake and finally connecting to I-15 at Brigham City. This route is the farthest west of the several alternatives presented for this area. Its purpose is to accommodate what the state has projected to be a doubling in traffic over the next twenty years.

Status

Utah's Department of Transportation (UDOT) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in October 1998. The Army Corps of Engineers is planning its own public comment period and hearing for the controversial wetlands permit. If UDOT secures either a wetlands permit or approval of its DEIS, opponents of the project may file a lawsuit against UDOT.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns Building the Legacy Highway is a duplicative use of taxpayer money as it would parallel I-15, which is being expanded from six to twelve lanes as a part of infrastructure preparation for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

Local Community Concerns An alliance of farmers and environmentalists opposed to the project say it would cause urban sprawl and damage surrounding farmlands. Legacy Highway would cut through five counties, dividing much of Utah's last 1.2 million acres of productive farmland. Many residents fear that the project would facilitate developing low-density subdivisions on the few remaining farms in these counties.

New roads tend to fill to congestion level, propelling a vicious cycle of highway construction. Therefore, mass transit options such as commuter rail, light rail, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and express buses may be more viable and cost-effective alternatives.

Environmental Concerns The highway would cut through wetlands internationally noted for their biological importance as a habitat and breeding site for three million ducks, 500 wintering American Bald Eagles, and 11 pairs of mating endangered Peregrine Falcons. As a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network Site, millions of shorebirds also depend on these wetlands.

Utah, due to its surrounding mountain ranges, already has near-dangerous air quality levels. A highway in such close proximity to the mountains would exacerbate the region's air quality problems, according to Sierra Club.



Contacts

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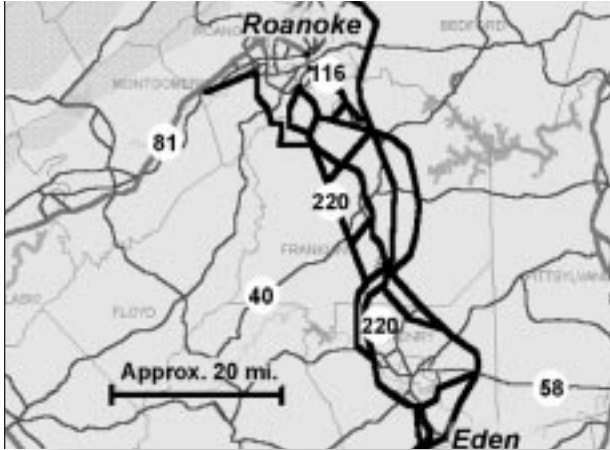


I-73

Southwest Virginia

\$800 million

Spreading Sprawl In Scenic Counties



Proposal and Savings

Reject plans to construct a 75-mile, new-terrain segment of I-73 from Roanoke, Virginia to North Carolina. According to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), this segment of I-73 is projected to cost \$1.04 billion — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

This proposed segment of I-73 is part of a bigger scheme. I-73 has been identified in the National Highway System as a high priority corridor beginning north of Detroit, Michigan and extending to Charleston, South Carolina. Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board members selected a seven-mile wide corridor for study. The project will generally follow U.S. 220 south of Roanoke City to Greensboro, North Carolina. Commonwealth Transportation Board members are expected to choose a preferred alternative in February 2000 after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is released.

Status

The recently passed federal transportation law (TEA-21) allocates \$6 million for study of the corridor. The consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff is currently conducting location and biological surveys.



Problems with the Project

Taxpayer Concerns The enormous price tag of the project would consume critical highway maintenance funds as a new-terrain I-73 would require duplication of tax-supported infrastructure and maintenance costs for both U.S. 220 and I-73. Alternatives exist such as improving existing roads and widening existing U.S. 220. A Transportation System Management option is also available under federal regulations.

Local Community Concerns The beautifully scenic rural counties of Franklin and Henry, where a new-terrain I-73 would traverse southwestern Virginia, have few local land use ordinances, and would suffer sprawl development as a result of the project. A new-terrain highway would also segregate neighbor from neighbor and destroy family farms.

Furthermore, Roanoke City and Martinsville would suffer depletion of tax base and capital as middle class residents and businesses flee to new sprawl suburbs.

Environmental Concerns The rural counties that would be crossed by a new-terrain I-73 possess some of the richest wildlife habitat in the U.S. Eyewitness reports of bobcats and bears are common in the area west of U.S. 220. The Blackwater River flows eastward and is the nesting site of blue heron and other aquatic birds. Wild turkey and deer are plentiful throughout the region and attract sport hunters in great number. According to the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage, the corridor has not been comprehensively surveyed for endangered species. A new-terrain I-73 would impair the region's pristine mountains and valleys.



Contacts

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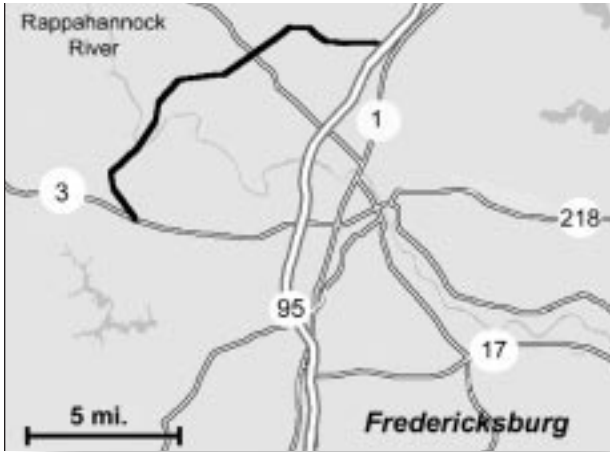


Outer Connector

Fredricksburg, VA

N/A

Feds Fault State's Environmental Studies



Proposal and Savings

Deny funding for the proposed Outer Connector. Estimated cost of the first of four segments would be over \$100 million, coming from state and federal highway funds.

Background

The Outer Connector is a controlled access circumferential highway. The first segment is planned to connect State Route 3 in Spotsylvania to a proposed I-95 interchange in Stafford County in an effort to relieve regional traffic congestion. Seeking to construct an entire beltway around Fredricksburg, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has divided the project into four segments.

Status

The Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of the Interior, and National Park Service have all deemed the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) done by VDOT as insufficient. The Federal Highway Administration has required VDOT to complete a supplemental EIS which examines alternative routes for the project. The Coalition for Outer Connector Alternatives (COCA) is currently examining the legal issues surrounding compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Cheaper alternatives exist, including synchronizing traffic signals, constructing road “fly-overs” across Route 3, improving current roads, expanding the region’s transit system, and utilizing existing bridges. VDOT’s own traffic models show that because of the expected commercial and residential growth caused by the highway, by the year 2020, the Outer Connector would contribute significantly to increased congestion in the region.

Local Community Concerns The Outer Connector would cut through the regional water supply that provides drinking water to well over 100,000 residents. The highway would also cut through sections of Civil War battle sites, Colonial and Native American settlements, and the Fredricksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park. Noise generated by the project would disturb a major camping area. Fredricksburg residents are concerned about the effects that urban and suburban sprawl would have on the quality of life in the region. Sprawl would also leave the only remaining farmlands of Stafford County vulnerable to development.

Environmental Concerns Under VDOT’s current plan, the Outer Connector would cross the Rappahannock River with four new bridges. This precious Virginian natural resource is renowned as a state designated scenic area and major tourist attraction due to its natural beauty and recreational advantages. The river is a natural wildlife corridor that is home to bald eagles, blue herons, hawks, deer and other wildlife.



Contacts

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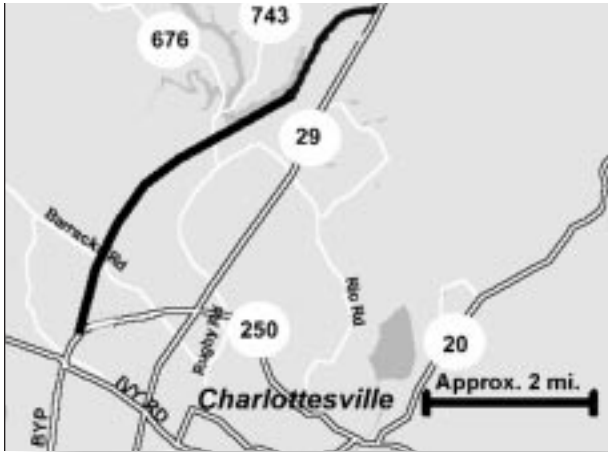


U.S. Route 29 Charlottesville Bypass

Charlottesville, VA

\$101 million

County Supervisors Are Unanimously Opposed



Proposal and savings

Terminate funding for the U.S. Route 29 Charlottesville Bypass project. Estimated project costs are approximately \$180 million — 56 percent federally funded.

Background

The proposed Charlottesville Bypass is a six-mile, four-lane, limited-access highway intended to upgrade a portion of the Route 29 corridor. Route 29 was designated as a Highway of National Significance in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for enhancing interstate arterial traffic and economic development. Easing arterial traffic congestion is Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) justification for the Bypass.

Status

About \$31 million has been spent on right-of-way acquisitions, preliminary engineering and other preparatory costs. While the Commonwealth Transportation Board has voted to proceed with final design and right-of-way acquisition, the Southern Environmental Law Center, representing the Sierra Club and the Piedmont Environmental Council, has sued to stop this road on six environmental counts.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The proposed Bypass is expensive, at almost \$30 million per mile. The proposed road is planned to carry about 15,000 Vehicles Per Day (VPD) in 2015. But studies have been conducted that show that in 2010 the estimated north-south through-traffic (VDOT's main concern) would only be 2,200 VPD. More fiscally responsible alternatives exist.

Local Community Concerns The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors is unanimously opposed to the project. The Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization has refused to approve federal construction funds until certain information on costs and impacts is established and a previously agreed to sequencing of local road construction is followed. Public comments opposed any Bypass by 3,212 to 51 in 1990 VDOT hearings. The proposed Bypass goes through six neighborhoods, impacts five schools, and eliminates more than thirty residences. Public comments overwhelmingly opposed the Bypass by seven to one (7,105 to 1,101) at a February 1997 public hearing. A Bypass Design Advisory Committee composed of citizens has also voted against this road.

Expected traffic noise caused by four to five percent grades over a mountain cut is a major concern. Local activists are concerned that the state failed to follow the results of its own \$3.7 million study and its agreements with the community.

Environmental Concerns Danger to the community's largest drinking water impoundment is the greatest concern. Reservoir siltation, runoff pollution and hazardous spills are major concerns. The Environmental Protection Agency has raised similar concerns. An endangered species has been found in the proposed corridor.



Contacts

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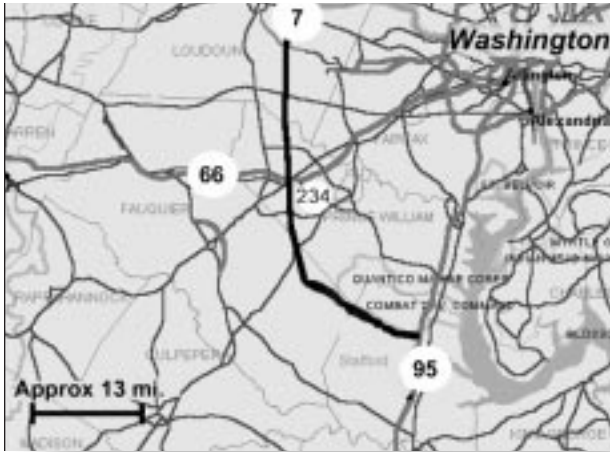


Western Transportation Corridor

Northern Virginia

N/A

Costly Road Triggers Traffic and Sprawl



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the proposed Western Transportation Corridor in Northern Virginia. The total project cost is estimated to be between \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion. The federal share has not been determined.

Background

The currently proposed Western Transportation Corridor (WTC) would run mostly through rural land from the Rappahannock River near Fredricksburg, Virginia to the Potomac River near Leesburg for a total distance of approximately 50 miles. Originally proposed as a Washington Bypass by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the purpose of the project changed when Maryland canceled its participation.

Status

VDOT completed a Major Investment Study (MIS) for the proposed corridor. In September 1997, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) authorized an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the new highway corridor. In January 1998, the Virginia General Assembly directed VDOT to continue the MIS in cooperation with federal resource agencies, which have expressed serious concerns about the MIS. VDOT will start the EIS process in mid-1999.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The WTC would be a redundant road without sufficient traffic demand. The region already has several north-south corridors and others are under construction or being planned. VDOT’s own studies show that an upgrade and linkage alternative could handle the projected traffic at far less cost.

Local Community Concerns The proposed corridor would bring unnecessary urbanization, inconsistent with the counties’ comprehensive development plans, and severely disrupt established land use patterns.

A major highway pushed through rural areas would encourage sprawl development and compound traffic problems. By encouraging the construction of new residential development, the corridor would feed additional traffic into the already overcrowded east-west access routes in the region.

Environmental Concerns The WTC would encourage sprawl development, severely impact wetlands, and put agricultural rural lands at risk. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the WTC, in comparison to the upgrade and linkage alternative, “has the potential to directly impact up to 10 times the wetlands areas, [and] cross 10 times the flood plain area.” The Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service have expressed concerns about the proposed highway’s impact on wetlands and nearby national parks.

The WTC would put at risk rural and productive agricultural lands in Fauquier, Loudoun and other Piedmont counties. According to the American Farmland Trust, the Virginia Piedmont is the second most endangered prime farmland area in the country due to sprawl development pressures.



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Bennington Bypass

Bennington, VT

\$96 million

Project Bypasses Bennington Businesses



Proposal and savings

Cancel plans to build the Bennington Bypass. Estimated project costs are \$120 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

First suggested in 1958, the Bennington Bypass is a ten-mile highway that would be constructed around the town of Bennington (pop. 11,000). Project interest was revived in the 1980s as it was promoted as a means of stimulating industrial growth. The project has three segments: a Western Connector, from Route 9 in New York to Route 7 North in Vermont; an Eastern Connector from Vermont Route 7 to Vermont Route 9 West; and a Southern Connector from Vermont Route 7 South to Vermont Route 9 East.

Status

Due to a grandfather clause, the project escaped scrutiny under Vermont’s ACT 250, which is Vermont’s regulation that screens projects for environmental impacts. The Western Connector is included in the state’s transportation plan and will likely receive funding from the state legislature this year. The entire project must still obtain permits for possible wetlands and water table damage.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Economically, a 1988 Bennington Chamber of Commerce study found that the Bypass might cause area businesses to lose nearly 30 percent of revenue from tourists. Also, the project would contribute to urban growth and sprawl on the outskirts of town, thus causing the decline of the downtown commercial center.

Local Community Concerns Alternatives have not been seriously considered. In a six hundred page Environmental Impact Statement, only three pages are dedicated to Bypass alternatives. These include developing a public transportation system (which Bennington does not have), working with the infrastructure already in place, and designing smaller, less obtrusive truck routes.

Environmental Concerns The Bypass threatens sensitive wetlands, and it would also damage prime agricultural land, 21 archaeological sites, and seven state historic buildings. One of the archaeological sites that will be impacted by this project has been documented by the University of Maine as an important Native American site — with a two thousand year history. Altogether, about forty buildings will be razed for this project. Many parts of the proposed route have been documented as wildlife habitat for uncommon species, as well as deer habitat.



Contacts

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Circumferential Highway

Burlington, VT

\$66 million

City Council Opposes Beltway



Proposal and Savings

Cancel plans to complete the Chittenden County Circumferential Highway. Estimated project costs are \$82 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The Circumferential Highway was conceived in the 1950's as a ring road, then proposed again in the early 1980's as a two-lane, low-speed road. Today the Circumferential Highway is designed as a 16-mile, four-lane beltway. The project was intended to ease traffic in Essex Jct. and around Burlington, Vermont, and would link Interstate 89 in Williston with Interstate 89 in Colchester; a Colchester-Burlington expansion was added to the design later. A four-mile section has been constructed, with about 12 miles remaining. About 97 acres of right-of-way remain to be purchased in Colchester, including school property, open land, and farm land.

Status

In June 1998, the Burlington City Council voted not to support the project. However, the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization approved \$32 million for the project in July 1998. According to state estimates, the remaining sections would cost at least \$82 million.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns According to an editorial by the *Burlington Free Press*, the highway “threatens to siphon businesses and shops from Burlington’s downtown ... [and] will promote far-flung development on open lands and perpetuate more of the strip development that is sapping the vitality of historic town centers.”

Local Community Concerns Anticipation of the highway has already led to construction of a large shopping center in a farm field; areas along the proposed route have been rezoned commercial growth areas. According to the Conservation Law Foundation, “The loop road, if built, will spur sprawl and loss of hundreds of acres of farmland, destroy rare sandplain habitat ... and divert scarce transportation dollars from higher priorities needs such as public transportation and fixing current roads and bridges. All for what? So commuters can save a few minutes driving between home and work.”

One portion of the project would destroy trails in a natural wooded area where school sports teams train and people walk, mountain bike, and cross-country ski.

Environmental Concerns The highway would run through an area with 160 acres of sandplain ecosystem. Once plentiful Vermont sandplain communities have largely been destroyed by development projects. According to former State Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Barbara Ripley, “the few minutes saved on the commute home might lead to the disappearance of some species from Vermont for all time.”



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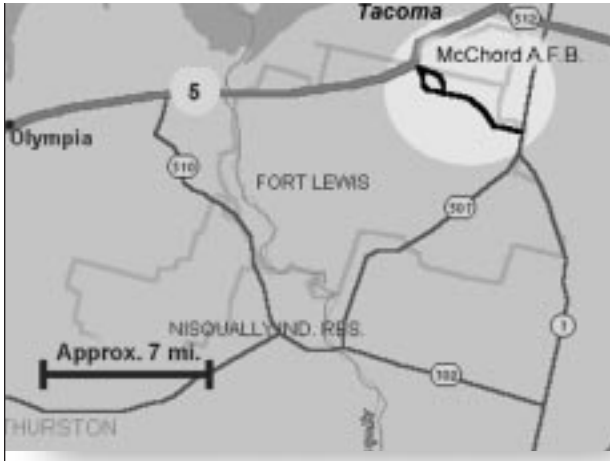


Cross-Base Highway

Washington State

\$60 million

Fixing Current Roads Is More Important



Proposal and Savings

Deny federal funding for the Cross-Base Highway project. The estimated cost is \$75 million, and if the project is considered as part of the interstate highway system, federal dollars could pay up to 80 percent of its cost.

Background

Since 1984, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Washington Department of Transportation (WashDOT), and Pierce County have been trying to fill a “missing link” in the County transportation system with a highway to provide Lakewood with easier access to Interstate 5. The preferred site for this “missing link” runs east-west between McChord Air Force Base and the Fort Lewis Army Base in Tacoma Washington, south of Seattle. Like many military bases, these contain important wildlife habitat and preserve the last oak savannah in western Washington. The highway would bisect this area, reducing the habitat of the state threatened western gray squirrel and other sensitive species.

Status

In June 1998, WashDOT issued the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for public comment. Despite negative review by the public and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), WashDOT and Pierce County are pushing the project.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns This project serves only local needs, and should not be funded with federal tax dollars. Furthermore, the state has higher priority transportation needs, such as maintaining existing roads and bridges, for which the state is considering increasing the gas tax to provide additional funds.

Local Community Concerns One end of the Cross-Base Highway would surround and isolate American Lake Gardens, a low-income community in Pierce County, so it raises questions of fairness and social justice.

Local citizens have developed a more cost-effective alternative that protects the wildlife habitat, and moves traffic nearly as well. However, WashDOT still wants to build the Cross-Base Highway to fill in the “missing link.”

New projects, such as the Cross-Base Highway, drain funds away from repairing numerous potholes, fixing crumbling bridges, and making culverts and stream crossings safe for salmon.

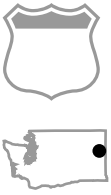
Environmental Concerns According to the EPA, the project would increase the fragmentation of rare and regionally significant oak woodland and prairie habitats, which are home to threatened, sensitive, and candidate plant and animal species.

The project will encourage sprawl in central Pierce County as bedroom communities and services develop.



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North Spokane Freeway

Washington

\$700 million

Unaffordable Road Ignores Key Regional Needs



Proposal and Savings

Cancel plans to construct the North Spokane Freeway (NSF). Project costs are estimated to be at least \$875 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

Since 1946, highway planners in eastern Washington have considered building the North Spokane Freeway (NSF), a 13.5-mile project connecting I-90 with U.S. 2 and U.S. 395. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WashDOT) is looking for ways to accommodate future traffic and lessen congestion north of Spokane. WashDOT estimates the project will cost at least \$875 million, which is half the state's \$1.65 billion annual transportation budget. Outside observers estimate the project could cost up to \$2.2 billion.

Status

In April 1997, WashDOT issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) recommending a route for the NSF. WashDOT is currently seeking funding for the project.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The NSF would serve only local needs and does not merit special federal support. The state presently dedicates a portion of gas tax receipts to this project, but still cannot afford the NSF.

Local Community Concerns The project ignores the Spokane Valley region, an area of communities in Spokane County east of Spokane City. This area is expected to see the largest economic growth and increase in traffic volume but is not directly served by the NSF, according to the FEIS. WashDOT concedes this project does not meet all of the region's transportation needs.

The NSF places neighborhoods at risk, which is at odds with Spokane's Land Use Plan. The NSF will displace over 500 housing units and over 100 businesses. Of these, many are in the East Central neighborhood, one of the few neighborhoods in Spokane with a significant minority population.

Spokane County engineers are developing an alternative proposal for inclusion in the County's Transportation Capital Improvement Plan that would ease congestion for a small fraction of the price of the NSF.

Environmental Concerns WashDOT prematurely rejected alternatives, such as encouraging carpools, expanding mass-transit, and improving surface streets, that do not involve building the NSF. The FEIS is biased toward serving the automobile and meeting parking demands. The Environmental Protection Agency has recently reclassified Spokane from a "moderate" to a "serious" violator of federal carbon monoxide standards. Automobiles are one of the largest sources of carbon monoxide pollution. Despite this, WashDOT's plans and the NSF would increase driving and put more cars on the road.



Contacts

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North-South Transportation Corridor

La Crosse, WI

\$72 million

City Voters Nixed Paying for Project



Proposal and Savings

Reject funding for the proposed La Crosse North-South Transportation Corridor. The total estimated project cost is \$80 million — 80 percent federally funded.

Background

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) plans to construct a limited-access highway, which would include various intersections and would modify existing streets to allow for free flow of traffic. The proposed project would be a north-south highway extending from I-90 on the north end of La Crosse, through downtown to near the intersection of 7th Street and South Avenue. WisDOT, which favors the 5.5-mile long alternative, 5B-1 (Harvey Street Alignment), claims that the project would improve congestion and safety.

Status

In November 1998, La Crosse voters approved by a two-to-one margin a two-year binding prohibition against the city's paying any local cost share for the road.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Federal taxpayers should not pay for a project that city residents don't want to pay for. The proposed project is unnecessary and cheaper alternatives exist, including restructuring several existing intersections to increase operational efficiency and safety.

Local Community Concerns Several members of the La Crosse Common Council oppose the WisDOT proposal. The Council voted 12-4 in favor of funding a study of project alternatives. Furthermore, the project would destroy 56 homes, 16 businesses and 24 acres of high level urban marshland. Also, WisDOT estimates that more crashes will result from more and faster vehicles traveling through the neighborhoods.

Long range comprehensive land use and transportation planning that reduces sprawl, directs growth to new mixed-use growth centers and urban infill areas with transit oriented developments would help eliminate the need for the North-South Transportation Corridor.

Environmental Concerns The project would impact wetlands in the area that are important for flood retention, habitat, recreation and tourism dollars. A number of animal species in this area are listed as threatened or of special concern by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



Contacts

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U.S. Highway 12

Dane County, WI

\$90 million

County Supervisors Endorsed Alternative



Proposal and savings

Deny funding for the proposed U.S. Highway 12 expansion project. Estimated project costs are \$130 million — \$90 million federally funded.

Background

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has proposed a four-lane, 42-mile expansion of Highway 12 from Madison to Wisconsin Dells at the intersection of I-90/94. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and WisDOT have divided the project into three sections for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) purposes. With a traffic volume of 11,000 to 20,000 vehicles a day, moving more vehicles and large trucks faster is foremost in the arguments of four-lane supporters.

Status

Because WisDOT failed to estimate secondary sprawl impacts, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required WisDOT to complete a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which was deemed flawed. The EPA then hired Argonne National Laboratories which found the DEIS “unacceptable ... inappropriate, methodologically flawed, and inconsistently applied...” However, FHWA signed the Final EIS days before the Argonne review was released.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns Safety concerns can be addressed at a fraction of the cost by upgrading existing lanes. A “Super Two” alternative would have 10-foot paved shoulders, center guard rails, right- and turn-out lanes, and provide accident reduction features equivalent to a four-lane highway.

Local Community Concerns Thirteen Dane County Board of Supervisors support the “Super Two” alternative. Similarly, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted to call WisDOT’s recent DEIS inadequate, thus ensuring that the project remains deleted from the local Transportation Improvement Program. Many local farmers, residents and business owners are opposed to the project. Dane County held a hearing to assess the feasibility of the Highway 12 expansion and 96 percent of comments opposed the project.

Environmental Concerns Widening Highway 12 would spread sprawl into Dane County farmland and the Baraboo Hills National Natural Landmark, which the National Park Service has designated “threatened” because of the proposed four-lane highway.

The project would generate more car and truck traffic, forcing a new bridge and bypass (Section II) around Sauk City that would cut through bald eagle wintering habitat.



Contacts

Safe Highway 12 Now Coalition, c/o Wisconsin’s Environmental Decade, (688) 251-7020; Brett Hulsey, Dane County Board Supervisor, (608) 238-6070.

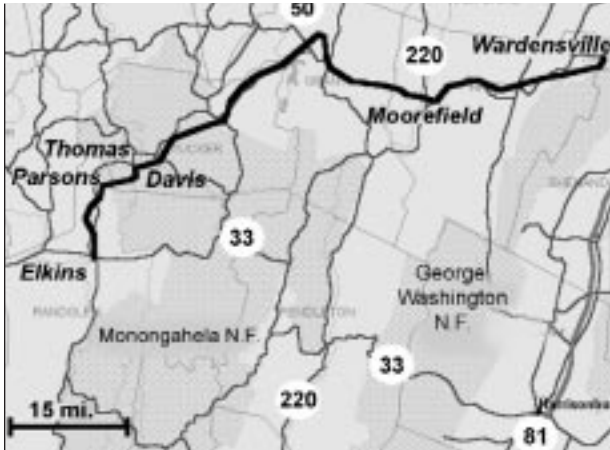


Corridor H

West Virginia

\$1 billion

Highway Received Special Treatment in 1998 Highway Bill



Proposal and savings

Cancel the Corridor H project, saving federal taxpayers approximately \$1 billion.

Background

Corridor H is a proposed 100-mile four-lane federal highway intended to open up the state for economic development. The highway was originally slated to run between Elkins, West Virginia and I-81 at Strasburg, Virginia, but Virginia's 1995 cancellation of the easternmost 14 miles forces the highway to terminate near the state line. The project cost could reach \$1.6 billion, or about \$16 million per mile.

Status

A federal appeals court has agreed with opponents that the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) must complete its studies of historic sites before any construction can begin. The injunction halted construction on a 5.8-mile segment of Corridor H in Randolph County. WVDOT has agreed to enter mediation on changes to avoid sensitive sites.

Opponents declare they will sue over any construction that threatens natural and historic sites. About \$2.2 billion was authorized over six years for the entire Appalachian Corridor system in the federal transportation funding bill passed in 1998, known as TEA-21.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns This and other Appalachian highways have received special treatment from Congress, which has created a separate Appalachian corridor funding program in addition to West Virginia's regular spending allocations. There are better ways to boost the state's economy. The current and original directors of the Appalachian Regional Commission have both stated on the record that Appalachia needs funding for education and job training, not more roads.

Bulldozing 3,000- and 4,000-foot mountains is expensive — at least \$16 million per mile. The Federal Highway Administration admits that improving existing roads would be considerably less costly. Specific problems could be fixed without having to construct a new highway, since traffic in the area is projected by WVDOT to fall well below the 10,000 cars a day that engineers use to justify a four-lane highway.

Local Community Concerns The project encourages sprawl development at the expense of forests, farms, and traditional "Main Street" merchants. It would lessen the state's tourist appeal by marring West Virginia's natural, recreational, and historic attractions.

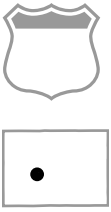
Environmental Concerns The new road would damage pristine wilderness areas, cross forty streams, cut through the George Washington National Forest, and fragment the Monongahela National Forest — one of the largest roadless areas in the Eastern United States. Scenic America named the existing east-west Routes 55, 93, and 219, in a corridor running near Corridor H, as one of the "Ten Most Endangered Scenic Byways."

Finally, it would impact numerous historic sites including Civil War battlefields at Moorefield and Corricks Ford, which are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



Contacts

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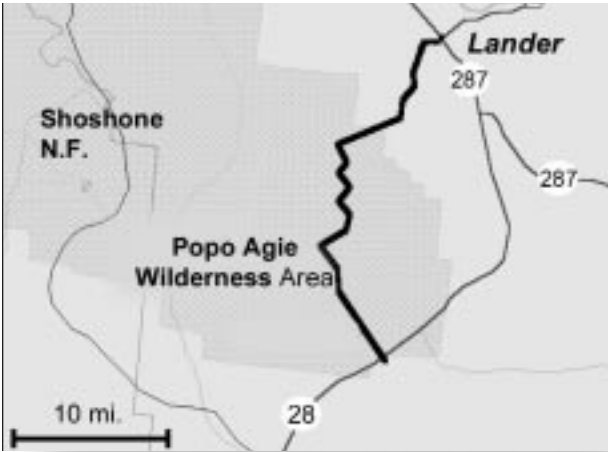


Loop Road Paving Project

Wyoming

\$7 million

Sticker Shock at \$1 Million Per Mile



Proposal and Savings

Cancel U.S. Forest Service plans to pave a segment of the Louis Lake Road, or Loop Road, in Fremont County, Wyoming, saving more than \$7 million. If the entire road is paved, the savings will be approximately \$30 million in federal money.

Background

The Loop Road paving project would rebuild and relocate the Louis Lake Road, a 28-mile dirt and gravel mountain road through the southeastern corner of the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming. The upgraded road would only be open during the summer months.

Status

In summer 1996, a 1.6 mile section of the road near the Shoshone National Forest Boundary was rebuilt. Now the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Forest Service are considering rebuilding the next 7.1 miles. The agencies are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement and are taking public comments. The cost of the project would be paid by using federal forest highway funds.



Problems with project

Taxpayer Concerns The \$1 million per mile price tag makes the project a significant waste of taxpayers' money. This will be a very expensive road due to hairpin-turns, steep grades, and environmental considerations.

Local Community Concerns Local residents oppose the paving project. Seventy percent of the 1,000 local residents responding to a call for public comments on the project said they did not want major reconstruction on the road. Many area residents advocate appropriate improvements such as turnouts, widening certain places, and improved maintenance. This would be considerably less expensive.

The Loop Road, although bumpy and dusty, has not had any serious accidents. Also, residential neighborhoods would be negatively impacted by increased traffic from the project.

Environmental Concerns Paving would dramatically increase traffic volume on the Loop Road. The increased traffic would pass through and impact Sinks Canyon State Park, which has been rated as one of the best state parks in America by National Geographic.

It would damage water quality and threaten wildlife, the nearby Popo Agie Wilderness, wetlands and meadows. Elk migrating over the road from their summer to winter ranges would be at a much higher risk of getting hit by a fast-moving car or recreational vehicle. Paving the Loop Road would cause increased levels of soil erosion and stream sedimentation, ruining water quality and fish habitat.



Contacts

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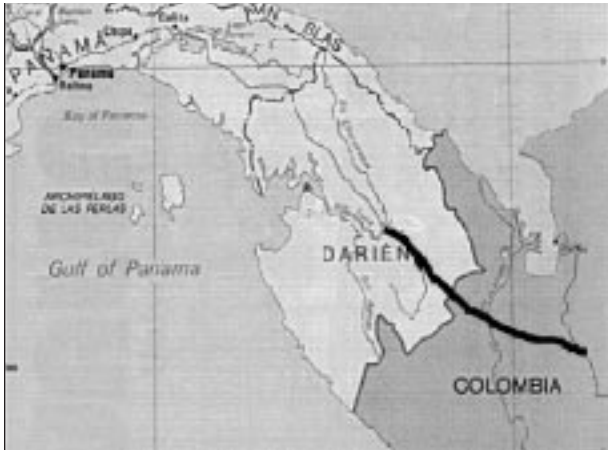


Darien Gap Link

Panama/Colombia

N/A

Road Through Two National Parks



Proposal and savings

Cancel plans for construction of the Darien Gap link, saving U.S. taxpayers two-thirds of the project's cost. Total costs are unknown.

Background

The Pan-American Highway runs from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego but deliberately has one small gap. Known as the Darien Gap, the area includes about five million hectares of rainforest along the border of Panama and Colombia, which includes national parks in both nations. While the Darien Gap link would complete the Pan-American Highway, the most likely route would cut through the center of the region, paving 262 kilometers of dirt road and constructing 110 kilometers of new road in the Darien National Park. A U.S. court blocked the involvement of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the 1970s.

Status

The Presidents of Panama and Colombia have signed agreements to not build the road through the Darien National Park, but both countries continue to prepare for the project's possible completion — Panama by paving the 262 kilometer dirt road, and Colombia by funding feasibility studies for the project.



Problems with the project

Taxpayer Concerns The U.S. signed a 1971 treaty to pay two-thirds of the total project cost, but times have changed in the last three decades and the treaty should be canceled or at least reviewed.

Local Community Concerns Indigenous peoples have passed numerous resolutions rejecting the road and demanding legal recognition for their claim on the land. The project is also opposed by the Asociacion Nacional la Conservacion de la Naturaleza (ANCON) in Panama and Fundacion Natura in Colombia.

The highway would pass through a region in Colombia known as a center for guerilla activity and cocaine trafficking. Many in Central America fear that construction of the highway would lead to the violence spreading throughout the isthmus.

Environmental concerns Connecting the North and South American ecosystems could encourage the passage of malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases. The Darien National Park in Panama and the Katios Park in Colombia were created to preserve the region's rainforest and to serve as a buffer against the spread of hoof and mouth disease, which has been eradicated in North America.

The road would cut through the region's rainforest. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Darien National Park a Biological and Cultural World Heritage Site in 1981 and a Biosphere Reserve in 1983.



Contacts

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