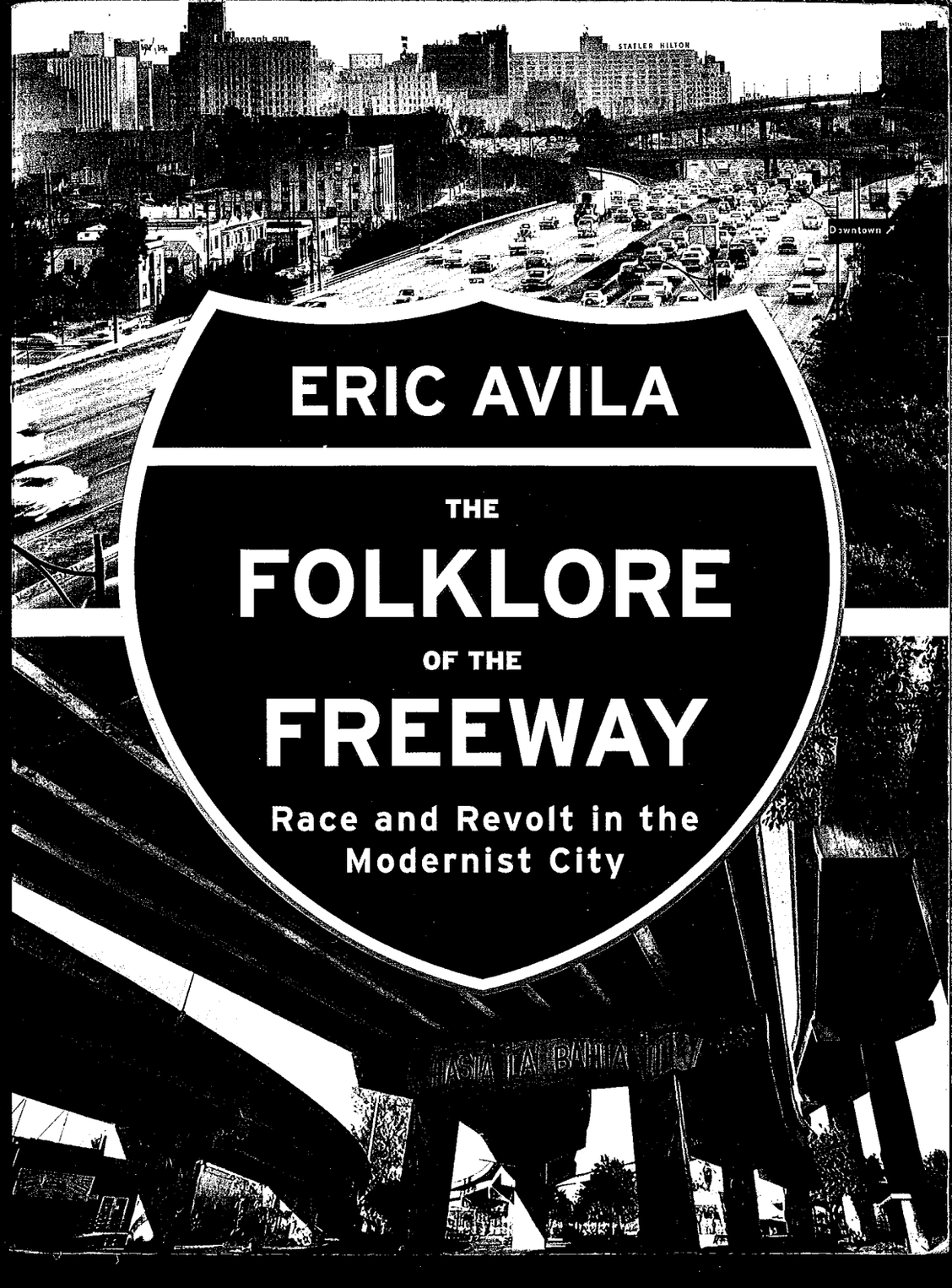
STATLER HILTON
Downtown ↗
ERIC AVILA
THE
FOLKLORE
OF THE
FREEWAY
Race and Revolt in the
Modernist City

remain underemployed and underserved. This scenario resurfaces in the following pages, rendered through a set of words and images that assert the unique significance of diverse communities, histories, and identities and inspire new forms of community organization. They are the unexpected consequences of building the modernist city, whose creators planted the seeds of their own destruction.

1 The Master's Plan

The Rise and Fall of the Modernist City

The American city was in crisis after World War II. The suburbanization of business, retail, industry, and home ownership depleted the urban core of the riches it had hoarded over the past century or so. Against this backdrop, public officials at federal, state, and local levels, many reared within the managerial cultures of the Progressive Era and the New Deal, prescribed massive interventions to remedy what they diagnosed as an urban crisis. They confronted a conundrum of their own making. To counter the consequences of policies that promoted the decentralization of employment, consumption, and home ownership, they implemented bold measures to rescue the city from the threat of irrelevance.

History has made it clear that these efforts—urban renewal, public housing, slum clearance, and highway construction—produced their own urban crisis with lasting consequences; the effects persist today. Yet this approach to the American city was not conceived willy-nilly. Rather, it inherited a weighty tradition of thought and practice, from eighteenth-century Europe to twentieth-century America, fueled by the trans-Atlantic thrust of modernity and its twin engines, urbanization and industrialization. From Charles Fourier to Henri de Saint-Simon, Baron Haussmann to Otto Wagner, Ebenezer Howard to Daniel Burnham, Le Corbusier to Robert Moses, powerful new ideas emerged about the modern city and how to guard its successive explosions of wealth and population against the ever-present threat of total anarchy.

These ideas and the practices they inspired wrought the modernist city,

a European invention that marked a concerted effort to *design* a rational social order through the aggressive reorganization of urban space. It reflected the state's effort to manage the crises induced by capitalist urbanization and to advance society through enlightened architecture and planning. It enthroned the machine, not ambulatory human beings, as the arbiter of urban spatial design, and it claimed the authority of reason and science, promising to rescue humanity from its self-destructive attachments to history, community, and identity. A technical elite of men from Europe and America, mandarins within the maturing disciplines of architecture, city planning, civil engineering, and public administration, built this new civilization on the rubble of the old, exporting bits and pieces of the modernist city to the rest of world.[1]

The human circulation that streets provide has been an essential ingredient of urban life since its earliest forms, but the nineteenth century introduced a new scale of movement in the city. Mechanized systems of mass transportation demanded broader thoroughfares, introducing the boulevard as a new urban realm. The mass adoption of the automobile in the twentieth century demanded more extreme solutions, like the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, which implemented a national highway system both within and between major metropolitan areas. City officials and their partners in the private sector welcomed freeways to their cities, seeing them as job creators, slum destroyers, and all-around growth generators. To that point, no city in human history had been subject to such an audacious road-building scheme. Its construction exacted the ruthless destruction of the urban fabric, uprooting hundreds of thousands, vastly enlarging the scale of metropolitan life, and delivering new experiences of space and time.

To contextualize the following chapters' exploration of the folklore of the freeway, this chapter lays out the momentous cultural shifts that ensued during the age of the interstate, from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. This epoch witnessed the rise and fall of the modernist city and the experts who built it. It also introduced stringent new demands for social justice among women, blacks, and other minority groups who shared a deep suspicion of state power and its abuse by bureaucrats and technocrats. Many of these groups defended the neighborhoods that grounded their identities against

the destructive work of highway construction. In this moment, the freeway revolt leveled a forceful challenge not just to planned segments of the interstate program, but also to the cultural ideals of progress that accompanied this monumental effort. Yet successful protests in some neighborhoods exacted a toll in others, especially those that lacked access to resources, connections, and the spotlight of media attention. In many American cities, a new highway infrastructure, built above or depressed below the surface of everyday life, presided over the birth of the modern ghetto and barrio. Just as old social divisions toppled under the force of civil rights struggle, the interstate highway program put new ones in place, recasting the age-old barriers of race and class into a stark new set of concrete lines.

Of Myth, Mystique, and Magic: Building the Interstate Highway System

In hindsight, the interstate generation of highway engineers had easy justification for their work. "We were building freeways; we weren't saving the world." This is how one highway engineer, who wished to remain anonymous, described his thirty years of service to the California Division of Highways. Fair enough, but such modesty obscures the paradox of his profession's achievement. On the one hand, history could judge this work as right for its time. Under the Pax Americana that lasted for some twenty years after World War II, the national highway program greased the wheels of national prosperity. It brought jobs to millions of American workers, who built new roads and new communities. In turn, their work spawned new markets for jobs and consumers, unifying the nation around a national highway network built on a scale unprecedented in human history. This was a monumental and lasting achievement, ranking with the transcontinental railroad, the motion picture, the Panama Canal, the internal combustion engine, Hoover Dam, and Sputnik—game-changing feats that furthered modernity's imperative to annihilate space through time.[2]

On the other hand, this work brought massive destruction to the cities, laying waste to communities built across generations through the toil of migrants and immigrants. During the thrust of the interstate highway program,

in the decade between 1956 and 1966, highway construction demolished some 37,000 urban housing units per year, displacing hundreds of thousands in cities across the nation. Other public and private redevelopment schemes compounded the havoc that highway construction had wrought on the American city, grinding distinctive neighborhoods and communities into dust, creating severe relocation problems in some neighborhoods, and leaving a legacy of environmental damage. Highway construction sapped cities of their human vitality, replacing bustling pedestrian life with dead and useless space. It depleted investment from mass transit programs and fueled the public's addiction to cars, oil, and gasoline. Yet as this and the following chapters consider, this program helped restructure the socioeconomic geography of the city by imposing new barriers along the lines of race, class, and gender.[3]

The California highway engineer was right: he and his cohort of state and federal engineers "weren't saving the world," but instead, they adopted a narrow outlook that precluded accountability for the consequences of their work. His reductive logic depended in part on the homogeneous ranks of his profession at midcentury. In most American cities, state highway engineers assumed responsibility for building the interstate highway system, with oversight from federal engineers in the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). This professional group was made up almost exclusively of young to middle-aged white men, many from the rural Midwest, from middle- to lower-middle-class backgrounds. Many had served in one or both of the world wars, where they built bridges and roads for military operations. They did not enjoy the prestige of their colleagues working in Washington, D.C., or in private firms, and they made considerably less money. They worked in large organizations, often in teams, and were not encouraged to question their duties. They shunned publicity, avoided controversy, and had little tolerance for ambiguity. Their single mission was to build freeways to serve traffic; to let other considerations influence their work was anathema to their profession.[4]

Science provided a mantle of authority and the essential rationale. These men operated within a professional culture founded on the ideals of technical expertise and scientific objectivity. At the outset of the twentieth century, when automobiles were still playthings for the rich, roads were built haphazardly, through untested processes of trial and error. The Progressive Era, however, brought a new efficiency to road-building programs, led by a new set of technical experts who specialized in road construction and design. This culture of technical expertise took shape through the establishment in 1919 of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, which was a division first of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, then of the U.S. Department of Commerce, before its reincarnation as the Federal Highway Administration in 1966 (Figure 1.1).[5]

From the Progressive Era through the interstate era, the BPR was the sole arbiter of federal highway policy, largely through the leadership of Thomas H. MacDonald, who served as bureau chief between 1919 and 1953. From his post as a state highway engineer in Iowa, MacDonald took the helm of the BPR to forge a national highway policy that culminated with the National Interstate and Highway Defense Act in 1956, solidifying the authority of the engineer in the process. Eschewing the moral overtones of Progressive-Era reformers who invented modern public administration, MacDonald justified roadwork in strictly economic and technical terms, adopting the narrow view that "roads should be built by experts to serve cars."[6]

Under MacDonald's leadership, the BPR made highway construction and design a science, wrought from sophisticated research facilities that produced the hard data that shaped policy. Through its official journal, *Public Roads,* the bureau disseminated its research findings in a wide variety of areas, including research into the testing of building materials and soil composition, the visibility of highway signs, and the efficient utilization of mechanized construction equipment, as well as economic research on matters of fiscal policy and highway taxation. The Highway Research Board (HRB), established in 1919, became a clearinghouse for highway research, expanding its activities in subsequent decades through a Byzantine hierarchy of committees and subcommittees.[7]

Working with IBM in the 1930s, the BPR and the HRB developed methods for quantifying traffic flow, which provided an empirical basis for identifying principal traffic routes. The traffic survey captured the number of automobiles passing through a certain point within a given time frame. The points in the city with the most traffic indicated ideal vicinities for new

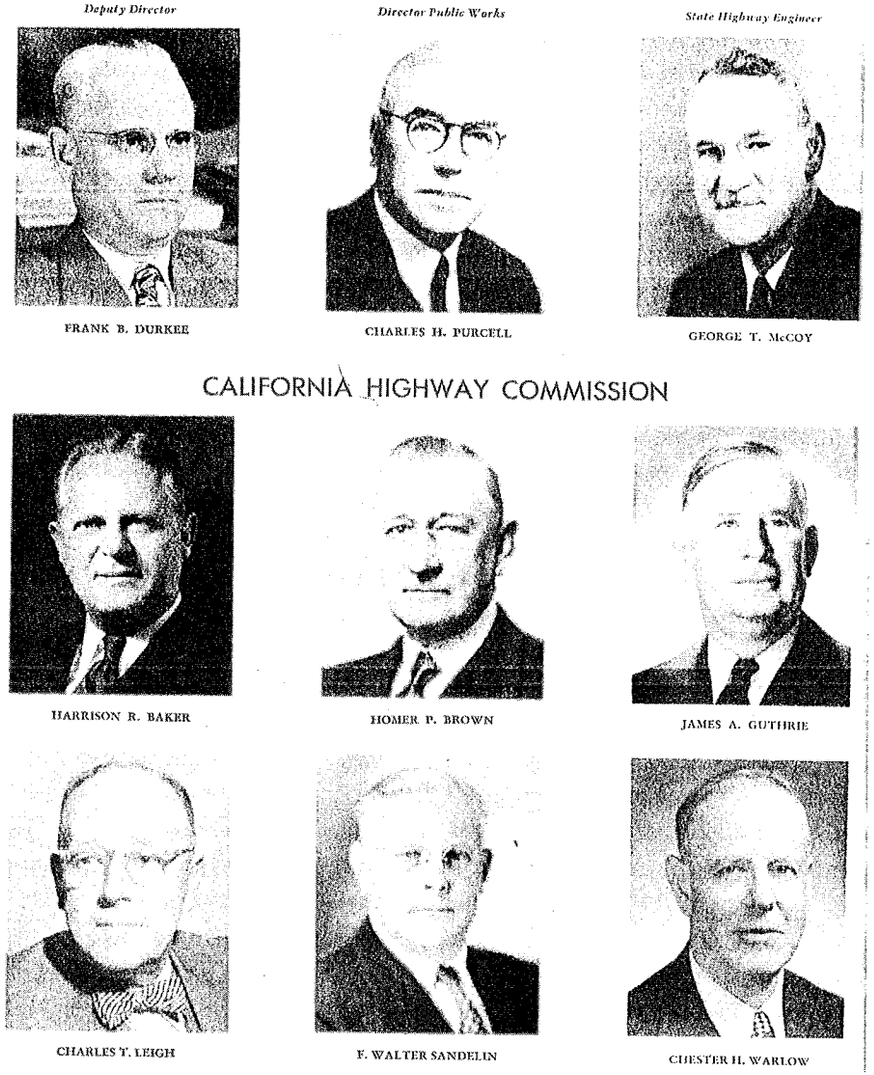

FIGURE 1.1. The highwaymen: California Highway Commission, 1950. From *California Highways and Public Works* 29, nos. 9–10 (1950): 2.

highway construction. Also, origin–destination surveys located the areas that generated the most traffic, which supplied the data for desire-line maps, which charted the ideal routes of traffic in the city. These measurements became a professional jargon among highway planners and engineers, unintelligible to the lay public. The historian Bruce Seely argues that the algorithms and mathematical formulas that dictated the work of highway engineers generated a "scientific mystique" that insulated the profession from public accountability.[8]

Armed with hard data, state and federal highway engineers presented themselves as men of science, justified in their bold interventions into the urban fabric. Their authority rested not only on massive investment, empirical data, and centralized command but also on the heft of professional associations such as the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), founded in 1914 to promote the legislation of a national, interurban highway system.[9] The AASHO's Standards Committee, chaired by MacDonald himself in the early 1920s and by senior BPR officials in subsequent decades, established a uniformity of measurements, materials, and procedures in standards for pavement, alignment and grading, intersections, grade separations, sight distances, signage, and passing zones. G. Donald Kennedy, AASHO president in the early 1940s, emphasized the centralized command of national highway policy and practice, noting that through AASHO's Standards Committee, MacDonald "determined geometric and structural design standards of the highway system in America, believe you me, and nobody else."[10]

Highway planners and engineers, though confident in their claims to rigor and objectivity, did not operate outside the play of political, economic, and cultural forces. They enjoyed the unanimous support of Congress, which passed the National Interstate and Highway Defense Act of 1956, the single largest federal investment in infrastructure in American history. This act increased federal excise taxes on gasoline, diesel fuel, motor vehicles, and tires; established the Highway Trust Fund to safeguard revenue exclusively for highway purposes; and made construction of the interstate system the centerpiece of the federal highway program. Consequently, federal highway spending more than quadrupled between 1955 and 1960, and the federal

share of all capital spending on highway construction rose from 13 to 46 percent. The highway program became the single largest source of federal aid to the states by 1958, a distinction that lasted until the initiation of Great Society legislation in 1966. In urban areas, federal aid authorizations for interstate highway construction soared from $79 million to $1.125 billion between 1956 and 1960.[11] Such massive infusions of federal capital reflected a mandate for highway construction, elevating highway engineers to the peak of their profession.[12]

Highway engineers also drew support from a powerful cultural mythology that upheld their work as icons of progress and modernity. On the eve of the National Interstate Act, for example, Disneyland opened its Autopia Ride, one of the original thirteen attractions included in the park's opening in 1955. These were miniature gasoline-powered cars that ran along a one-mile-long multilane track, modeled after future freeway systems. This was in a theme park that strategically situated itself alongside the burgeoning route of Interstate 5, still making its way from San Diego to Los Angeles. The Autopia Ride centered automobiles and freeways within a utopian fantasy of the modernist city, which found mythic expression in the Tomorrowland section of the theme park (Plate 1).[13]

Autopia inherited the spectacular success of Norman Bel Geddes's Futurama exhibit, which debuted in 1939 at the New York World's Fair. As the BPR solidified its power during the 1930s, Futurama, a model of a city of one million people, enticed the public with previews of the expressway world: a moving panorama of experimental homes, industrial plants, dams, bridges, and office towers, linked by ribbons of high-speed highways. After waiting in a long queue to enter the exhibit building, visitors would sit in one of six hundred "moving sound chairs," gliding above a 36,000-square-foot model of the "city of tomorrow." "These are the express highways of 1960," a voice narrated over hidden loudspeakers. "Notice there are five different lanes, for various speeds, up to 100 miles an hour."[14]

Bel Geddes elaborated on this design in his 1940 book *Magic Motorways,* which offered "a dramatic and graphic solution" to the need for a national highway infrastructure. Somewhere between science fiction and rational planning, *Magic Motorways* outlined Bel Geddes's vision for a transcontinental highway system that would link major urban centers. In the tradition of modernist orthodoxy, Bel Geddes stressed the hierarchical separation of traffic channels through top-down renderings of urban freeways, enabling a God's-eye perspective of the city. This perspective, as chapter 4 argues, entailed its own rhetorical force that bolstered the case for an interstate highway system. By reducing the city's complexity to a Cartesian caricature of rectilinear lines, the God's-eye perspective, or what Jane Jacobs later criticized as "the Olympian view," made a visually compelling yet overly simplistic case for the modernist city.[15] Bel Geddes, a set designer by trade, packaged this perspective in treatises like *Magic Motorways* and in thrilling spectacles like Futurama. Even senior highway officials recognized the way the showman's "magic" mobilized national demand for a nationwide highway system. Frank T. Sheets, chief highway engineer of Illinois, recognized that "of every 100 people who are fed . . . into that awesome chamber of highway prophecy, 100 . . . exit with a very positive conviction that some heroic measures are needed, both in engineering, planning, and financing, if tomorrow's needs are to be met."[16]

That General Motors sponsored Futurama and Atlantic Richfield sponsored the Autopia Ride illustrates the corporate underpinnings of midcentury highway mythology. Highway planners and engineers worked closely with the executives of corporate America, who had organized themselves into a powerful highway lobby. The anchoring of corporations within the parameters of the central business district tied highway construction to the high stakes of downtown redevelopment, which ran especially high in an age of rapid decentralization. Highways opened new suburban markets, draining the cities of commuters and consumers. They could also channel people into the city, but only if it could retain its staple amenities: jobs, merchandise, arts, and entertainment. To maintain the centrality of cities in the changing economic and cultural geography of postwar America, leading executives waged a form of business activism that took shape through chambers of commerce, or through secretive committees of the rich and powerful: the New York Merchants' Association, the Penn Athletic Club in Philadelphia, the Greater Baltimore Committee, Greater Los Angeles Plans Incorporated (GLAPI), San Francisco's Committee of Eleven, Pittsburgh's Alleghany

Conference, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Central Area Committee of New Orleans, Minneapolis's Downtown Council, the Cleveland Development Foundation, the Miami First Committee, and the Oakland Citizens' Committee for Urban Renewal (OCCUR). With close ties to city government, these elite coalitions pushed to build highways in the city. In the postwar logic of downtown redevelopment, freeways would not just ensure a steady influx of suburban workers and consumers; they would also help eradicate the blight that threatened downtown's imminent renaissance.[17]

Downtown elites were one constituent in a vast constellation of private interests that accrued around the construction of an interstate highway system. The automobile lobby, or "the Road Gang," included not only the usual suspects—automobile manufacturers and retailers, insurance companies, the producers of rubber, glass, and steel—but also oil companies, suburban retailers, housing developers, real estate associations, trucking companies, and powerful advocacy organizations like the Automotive Safety Foundation, the National Automobile Association, the American Association for Highway Improvement, the American Road Builders Association, and the Urban Land Institute. Yet the interstate program was not a conspiracy of the rich and powerful. It also enjoyed strong support from construction and trucking companies and from labor unions such as the Teamsters and the United Auto Workers, whose stake in building urban freeways contributed to an image of consensus around the interstate highway program. From elite downtown clubs to workingman's unions, the highway lobby put its trust in state and federal highway engineers as the agents of postwar redevelopment and modernization.[18]

Historical contingency added its own impetus to the national highway program. Although historians debate the martial impulse behind the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, the Cold War boosted rationales for the Federal Aid Highway Act. Its official name, the National Interstate and Highway Defense Act, resonated Cold War concerns about national defense. Two military men drafted the Highway Defense Act in its roughest form: Dwight Eisenhower, a former five-star general, and his ex-deputy Lucius Clay. During his travels in Germany, Eisenhower lauded the Autobahn as the "wisdom of broader ribbons across the land," and during his presidency he emphasized military

concerns in his support for a national highway system. The onset of the Cold War heightened the need for contingency plans in the event of an air attack or land invasion of the cities. After World War II, decentralization was as much a military strategy as it was a social policy and an economic program, and the interstate highway emerged as a "top national economic and defense priority" and the vital lynchpin in the sprawling new military–industrial complex of the Cold War era.[19]

In this context, expressways assumed a bold new posture in the landscape of the postwar American city. Gone were the niceties of the urban parkway, heir to the garden city movement of the late nineteenth century and the descendant of garden suburbs, cemeteries, and parks. With carefully contrived landscaping, ornate bridges, sweeping vistas, and winding curves, the parkways of the 1920s and 1930s fostered a fleeting communion with nature in the rush of city life. By the postwar period, however, with the onslaught of mass suburbanization, the mandate for the expedient and efficient construction of a new traffic infrastructure precluded such frills, yielding a new austerity in freeway design. The Interstate Highway Act imposed a new set of federal design standards that prioritized maximum traffic flow, demanding wider freeways with more lanes, elaborate interchanges, and straighter lines that cut incisively into the urban fabric, unlike the earlier generation of state and municipal highways that snaked their way through the city's older neighborhoods. Typical of midcentury public architecture, the interstate generation of expressways demonstrated scant regard for spatial context. With broad swaths of raw concrete jutting above or sinking below the urban landscape, interstate highway architecture of the late 1950s matched the brutalism of public housing towers and urban renewal projects. Their imposing monumentality repudiated the pedestrian scale of the urban built environment, symbolizing the postwar stature of the engineer and his technical expertise.[20]

On the eve of the interstate era, the culture of highway planning and engineering was firmly rooted in the centralized authority of the BPR, which upheld a core conviction that empirical data was the key to building better highways for bigger volumes of traffic. Between the highway acts of 1944 and 1956, state and federal highway engineers reached the height of their power,

becoming agents of infrastructural development, suburbanization, urban renewal, national security, and technological progress—technocratic elites whose "scientific mystique" won deference from congressmen, senators, and presidents. What began as a localized, fragmented, trial-and-error process had become by 1956 a project of national scope administrated by an elite corps of federal engineers who *disciplined* highway design and construction, applying science to new methods of research, organizing data, and establishing national standards through a far-reaching network of professional associations and trade publications.[21]

Highway engineers of the interstate era belonged to that body of experts who ruled American culture and society during the 1950s. Before the 1960s, Americans had put a great deal of faith in experts, who ended the Great Depression and brought the United States to an unrivaled position of global supremacy after World War II—why shouldn't they lead the way to a brave new world of jet travel, space exploration, multinational corporations, television, and nuclear power? Insulated within the mystique of science and the myths of popular culture, highway planners and engineers built a national highway system with the full confidence that their work was objective, impartial, and above the fray of social and political conflict. In hindsight, their expertise and their confidence—indeed, their very *objectivity*—were figments of their time. The mathematical formulas that dictated their work provided a ruse for the many political interests, public and private, that influenced the highway program, but in that moment, highway planners tore into the city fabric to implement a bold new geometry of superhighways. Science or no science, the job would get done. Never mind the social or environmental consequences, never mind the potential glut of automobiles or coordination with mass transit systems—the material goal was progress, at least until the 1960s, when that vague ideal died.

The Legend of Scrap Street

Napalm, the Bay of Pigs, the Watts riots, LSD, Las Vegas: in violent and ironic ways, these things induced a deep skepticism toward, or outright mockery of, the prospects of a utopian future, while *Silent Spring, One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, 2001: A Space Odyssey,* and *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* confirmed the basis of this doubt. The assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the murders of Malcolm X and Medgar Evers deepened a conviction that progress was dead. Everywhere, it seemed, the 1950s notion of a society advancing toward a more prosperous future died hard during the 1960s, leading to the 1970s, a decade of regret, doubt, and denial. The reigning ideals of progress could no longer justify their toll on humanity, at home or abroad.

In this cultural moment, the "highwaymen" lost their carte blanche to tear into the urban fabric.[22] The stirrings of what historians and journalists describe as the "freeway revolt" erupted in fits and starts during the 1950s and came to a head during the late 1960s and early 1970s, forcing a substantial revision of federal highway policy and administration. Despite its cachet, the term "revolt" is something of a misnomer, as it conjures an apocalyptic showdown that forced the state to its knees. That was not the case. In many cities—Boston, New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego—highway controversies were prolonged conflicts, escalating and de-escalating over long periods, often without clear resolution. Although these controversies yielded some modification of highway plans, freeways still punctured the urban core, linking downtown commuters to the spokes of a national highway network. The Highway Trust Fund, as well as the basic architecture of an interstate highway program, remained intact.[23]

Yet talk of a "freeway revolt" endures, not only for its market appeal but also for its heavy evocation of a particular moment in time. Its connotations of the grass roots—a "shout in the street"—suited popular idealizations of the 1960s as a decade of social unrest and challenges to authority.[24] Across the nation, citizens whose neighborhoods were threatened by the work of highway construction banded together, standing up to the bulldozers through an array of political strategies that drew public attention to the rampant destruction of urban neighborhoods. By forming neighborhood committees, leagues, and councils, by packing public hearings, by launching phone campaigns and petition drives, and by utilizing contacts in the media and city government, concerned citizens of disparate American cities made urban highway construction a public issue, drawing national attention to the

wanton destruction of community resources and historic landmarks. Theirs was largely a struggle for self-preservation, but the urban groundswell of public opposition to the federal highway project echoed some of the broader issues that defined the political culture of the 1960s.[25]

First, citizen opposition to the highway program reflected growing concerns about the environment and its sustainability. San Francisco's version of the freeway revolt, for example, included a strong overlap with a burgeoning environmentalist movement. In 1969, the rerouting of the Junipero Serra Freeway, or Route 280, which engineers wanted to run along the shoreline of the Crystal Springs Reservoir, signaled a major victory for Bay Area environmentalists, who aimed to protect the city's water supply and recreational use of the coastline area. Antihighway activism also received a strong boost in 1970 with passage of the National Environmental Policy Act, the signature legislative victory of the environmental movement, which required environmental impact statements for all federally funded projects. Additionally, the Clean Air Act of 1970 and the Clean Water Act of 1972 bolstered the environmentalist case against freeways, sparking numerous local controversies over new highways and their threat to the quality of urban air and water.[26]

Not only did environmentalism influence opposition to urban highway construction, but so did a nascent historic preservation movement, which, as chapter 3 argues, shared much in common with the freeway revolt. The destruction of the cities' historic landmarks incensed many city residents, who shared a heightened consciousness of the historical value of the urban built environment. Opposition to highway construction in San Francisco and New York included a strong emphasis on the preservation of historic landmarks, but the preservationist impulse was strongest in New Orleans, where local residents mounted an impassioned defense of the Vieux Carré, or French Quarter. Though this area of New Orleans had deteriorated after a century of neglect, the proposed incursion of the Riverfront Expressway sparked a wave of sentiment and nostalgia. In New Orleans as elsewhere, passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 fueled local opposition to highway construction and other urban renewal programs that threatened the physical integrity of neighborhoods and landmarks that some constituencies recognized as historically significant.[27]

The 1960s also witnessed a revaluation of the neighborhood as the basis of civic life. After decades of master plans for regional development, the 1960s generation of urban Americans turned toward their neighborhoods as primary units of political mobilization. In the cities, identities were rooted as much in the physical space of the neighborhood as in shared cultural traditions and political values. Black nationalists pursued strategies of neighborhood empowerment in Harlem and West Oakland, hippies and the counterculture claimed the neighborhoods of Venice Beach and Haight-Ashbury, and gay and lesbian activists struggled to create safe spaces within the precincts of Greenwich Village, the Castro District, and West Hollywood. Jane Jacobs valorized these strategies in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* asserting the neighborhood as the most fundamental unit of civic life, while the children's television show *Sesame Street* established a multicultural pedagogy around the street and vibrant, diverse neighborhoods. The 1960s witnessed a grassroots push to reverse the sociological shift from gemeinschaft to gesellschaft, asserting these intimate spaces as the foundation of cultural and political life.[28]

A dawning sensitivity toward the natural environment, old buildings, narrow streets, and quirky neighborhoods thus inspired mounting opposition to urban highway construction, fueling impetus for a burgeoning freeway revolt. During the late 1950s, many communities were caught off guard, defenseless against the onslaught of highway-building bulldozers, but in the course of the following decade, outbursts of opposition in one city spurred protest in others. The freeway revolt became a national movement through the efforts of well-known critics and scholars who could put their opinions into national circulation. Wolf Von Eckardt of the *Washington Post,* Ada Louise Huxtable at the *New York Times,* Lewis Mumford, William Whyte, Herbert Gans, Jane Jacobs, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Robert Caro—these authors showed little love for the suburbs. For the most part, New York was their home, and they brought their New York experiences and perspectives to bear on their critique of the federal highway program. Sharing their New York turf with the media, these writers helped *nationalize* the freeway revolt, fanning the flames of dissent in cities throughout the nation.[29]

Yet San Franciscans, not New Yorkers, fired the first shot. Even before

the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, San Franciscans balked at the proposed construction of the Embarcadero Freeway, a double-decked highway that would span the city's eastern waterfront before veering west toward the Golden Gate Bridge (Figure 1.2). Their determined opposition to this one freeway spurred broader citywide protests against the official master plan for a highway grid that would have blanketed San Francisco's relatively small and densely developed terrain. Though this plan had the support of the mayor, the governor, and leading businessmen, a powerful coalition of neighborhood associations, environmental groups, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* succeeded in convincing San Francisco's Board of Supervisors to exercise its unique authority to veto the entire freeway system. Ultimately, San Francisco's master plan for interstate highways was whittled down to a single link connecting Highway 101 to the Oakland Bay Bridge and a truncated Embarcadero Freeway, which stood between the city and the western edge of the bay for thirty-three years before its demolition after a powerful earthquake in 1995.[30] This stunning defeat of the interstate coalition ultimately inspired the civil rights activist Harvey Milk to declare San Francisco "a city that breathes, one that is alive and where people are more important than highways."[31]

San Francisco's freeway revolt established a template by which white affluent communities successfully challenged downtown and suburban interests to stop the freeway. In 1959, for example, the California Division of Highways laid out its plans for the Beverly Hills Freeway, which was to run through the heart of one of California's wealthiest communities. In the early 1960s, the Beverly Hills City Council hired four separate engineering consulting firms to reexamine the state's recommendation for a Beverly Hills freeway. Not surprisingly, their reports drew conclusions very different from those of the Division of Highways, emphasizing the unique and special character of Beverly Hills and disputing the need for a freeway. Facing such well-informed opposition, the state ultimately scrapped its plans for the Beverly Hills Freeway, clearing a path for what local citizens touted as the triumph of "community values."[32]

Similarly, I-95, the great Atlantic Coast Highway that was supposed to link Florida to Maine, loops to a dead end on its way from Philadelphia to

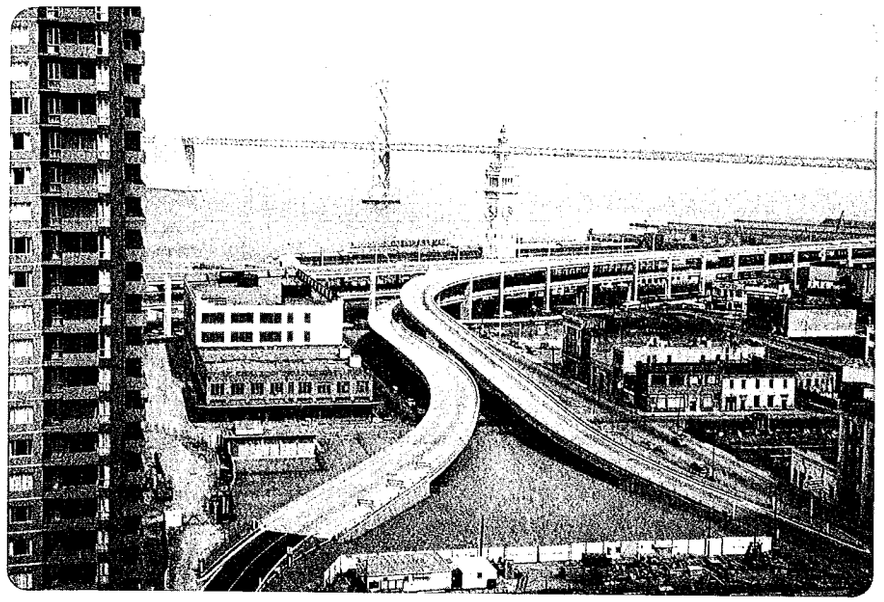

FIGURE 1.2. New ramps to Washington and Clay Streets from Embarcadero Freeway, San Francisco, August 15, 1965. From Charles W. Cushman Collection, Indiana University Archives, P14845.

New York. Federal plans for I-95 charted a straight line across central New Jersey, through the heart of Princeton, and into upper Manhattan via the George Washington Bridge, but in the 1970s, the residents of the New Jersey townships of Hopewell, Princeton, and Montgomery filed a lawsuit against the federal government to stop I-95, insisting that it would destroy the rural character of their communities. After much legal wrangling, the New Jersey Department of Transportation pulled its support for the missing link of I-95 in 1980, prompting federal cancellation of the project in 1982. This "victory for the people" left a yawning gap in I-95 and perennial congestion on the quaint roads of central New Jersey.[33]

In other cities, however, opposition to highway construction drew in broader segments of the population. Boston's version of the freeway revolt, for example, pitted the Massachusetts Highway Authority and Boston's downtown

establishment against Irish and Italian Catholic charity organizations, the Chinese Merchant's Association, women's clubs and leagues, and low-income advocacy groups. When controversy ensued in Cambridge over the proposed construction of the Inner Belt, umbrella organizations like the United Effort to Save Our Cities and the Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis (GBC) formed to block not just the Inner Belt but the entire Boston Master Highway Plan. The support of black Boston was key in this strategy because Massachusetts highway engineers planned to erect a massive highway interchange in the heart of Roxbury, Boston's black neighborhood. Kill the interchange, kill the master plan: such was the logic behind the GBC's solicitation of Roxbury's Black United Front (BUF), an umbrella organization of some forty community groups.[34]

With the BUF on board, Boston's freeway-fighting coalition impressed one *Boston Globe* reporter as a "Great American Melting Pot," but for black Boston, fighting freeways did not top the list of community priorities, even as Boston's Department of Public Works was claiming rights of way in the South End and in Roxbury by the mid-1950s. Rather, from the perspective of the BUF, including its leader, Chuck Turner, a dashiki-garbed professor from Northeastern University whose beat-up Saab sported a poster of Malcolm X, joining the GBC signaled an opportunity to press for issues more vital to black Boston: jobs, housing, tenants' rights, schools, police relations, urban renewal, and welfare reform. Yet even this grand coalition could not surmount Boston's age-old racial tensions. Representatives from Boston's white working-class neighborhoods resented the participation of "outside agitators" in the city's freeway-fighting coalition, and Irish Americans from Charlestown quit the GBC altogether, drawing charges of racism from Turner and other black participants in the coalition.[35]

Yet despite these frictions, the coalition strategy seemed to work, sort of. In 1970, Governor Francis Sargent (Figure 1.3), who, as Boston's commissioner of public works, had once advocated for building the Inner Belt, finally called a moratorium on all further highway construction in the Boston area, killing plans for the Inner Belt, the Southwest Expressway, and the Route 2 extension. Boston's fight against the freeway seems truer to the spirit of "community values" than the well-heeled rebellions of Princeton and Beverly Hills,

FIGURE 1.3. Governor Francis W. Sargent speaks to Inner Belt protestors on the steps of the Massachusetts State House, Boston, 1969.

but privilege and prestige played no small part in this story as well. It did not hurt the GBC's cause that the proposed route of the Inner Belt would impinge on the precincts of Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), two of the nation's most prestigious universities. Some saw nothing less than the fate of humanity at stake in the freeway's threat to these bastions of privilege and power. One MIT spokesman claimed that "the continuation of Western civilization itself might well depend on not interfering with any of these MIT facilities."[36]

In 1967, from his office in between Harvard and MIT, the assiduous mayor of Cambridge, Daniel Haynes, shrewdly enlisted the heavyweights of these powerhouse institutions, establishing the Mayor's Committee on the Inner Belt, which included John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard's economics department; Kevin Lynch, professor of city planning at MIT; Daniel Patrick Moynihan of Harvard and MIT's Joint Center for Urban Studies; the noted

urbanist Lewis Mumford; and Talcott Parsons, president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. These men brought to the people's fight against the Inner Belt not only their professional heft but also their technical proficiency, which at least matched, even surpassed the expertise of Boston's highway engineers and planners. The report drafted by the Mayor's Committee charged error and bias in the conclusions of the Department of Public Works, deflating the scientific mystique that empowered Boston's technocrats. According to some scholars of Boston's freeway revolt, this marked the first time that "highway planners confronted not just the affected households with their predictable concerns . . . but also a group of peers who could mount a challenge in professional terms."[37]

Yet the prestige of Harvard and MIT, as well as the prejudice of Boston's white working class, seem conspicuously absent from local interpretations of Boston's freeway revolt. Today, on the rear exterior wall of what is now a Trader Joe's in Cambridgeport, just off Memorial Drive, one finds the fading image of *Beat the Belt,* a mural painted by Cambridge artist Bernard LaCasse in 1980. This is Cambridge's *Guernica,* a portrait of a community under siege. On one side, a massive bulldozer is painted in a bureaucratic shade of grey, labeled "Federal Inner Belt I-95." The white man driving the bulldozer faces a band of diverse community members, whose defiant postures loom larger than the bulldozer itself. White and black, young and old, men and women—Cambridge's diverse citizenry raises fists and brooms against the bulldozer. The artist's use of color and scale underscore a narrative that has become local legend: the cancellation of the Inner Belt was a multiracial victory of working people who organized against daunting odds to hand Boston's technocrats a stinging defeat (Figure 1.4).[38]

Similar interpretations came from other communities organizing against freeways. In Greenwich Village, where community members pooled their talent and their connections to organize against Robert Moses's plan for the Lower Manhattan Expressway (LOMEX), local playwrights took their community's case to the stage. Robert Nichols, cofounder of the Judson Poets Theater and lead architect for the 1969 redesign of Washington Square Park, wrote *The Expressway,* a play that parodied the local fight against LOMEX. The play is about the plight of Scrap Street, a "distinguished ethnic commu-

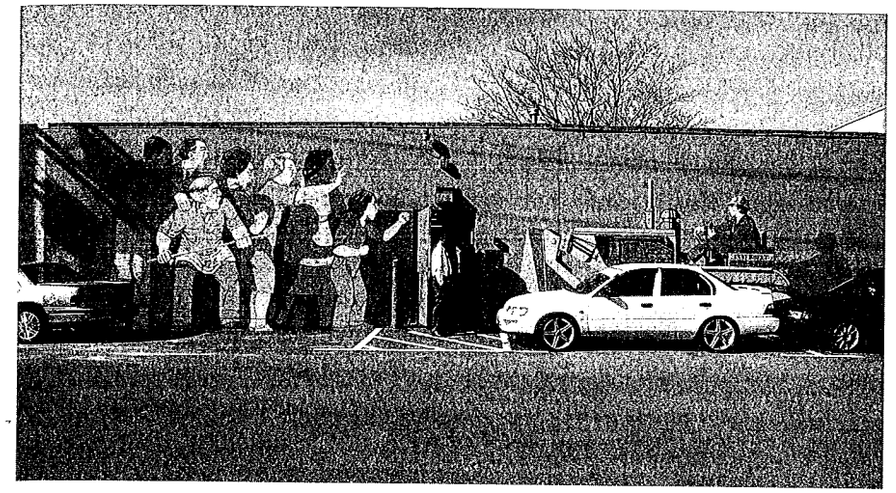

FIGURE 1.4. *Beat the Belt,* by Bernard LaCasse, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980. Courtesy of the Cambridge Arts Council.

nity" in the city of Metropole. Facing the looming threat of a proposed expressway, the citizens of Scrap Street concoct the Scrap Street Defense Plan, plotting to assassinate the mayor and other prominent supporters of the highway, including auto executives and union chiefs. They turn to two experts in civil resistance, an African and an African American. "Zip-Bakongo, Premier of the East African Republic of Senegal," explains to the people of Scrap Street how he united small villages in the fight against colonial rule. "Remember," he tells the people of Scrap Street, "you are their blacks. You can only free yourselves in this way." After that, "Joe Hill" comes to speak. A Freedom Rider from Alabama and a charter member of the Congress of Racial Equality, he gives the gory details of his fight for integration in the South and enjoins his audience to go "face to face with the real agents. Not a system, but a real person. You can't get a system to listen to you, but you can get a person to listen." In the final scene, the people of Scrap Street come up with a plan: as the mayor's motorcade comes to dedicate the new expressway, the citizens of Scrap Street throw themselves onto the roadway, and they all die. The motorcade moves on, ignoring the carnage in the street.[39]

For all its West Village quirks, *The Expressway* sheds light on the whiteness of the freeway revolt. The play pokes fun at the pomp of city officials, the bigotry of union leaders, and the media hype that surrounds the opening of new expressways, but it also reveals the desperation of local citizens who turn to two black "missionaries" who bring *soul* to an otherwise soulless struggle. This is a familiar relationship between blacks and whites in American cultural history: whites finding in blacks, or other people of color for that matter, a surrogate for authentic experience or a channel for emotive release. Or maybe the play just reflects the fashion of the time: a claim to political legitimacy in a dawning age of multiculturalism and rainbow diversity. With its downtown brand of dark humor, *The Expressway* presents Scrap Street as a parable for understanding the symbolic role of black people in a white community's fight against the freeway.

This vexing dynamic also had real-world parallels in the freeway revolt of Baltimore, a city notorious for its bitter history of racial segregation and conflict. There, public outcry over highway construction sparked fleeting illusions of black–white harmony. In August 1969, a diverse crowd of working-class and middle-class blacks and whites packed public hearings in Baltimore over the proposed construction of the East–West Expressway. One witness described the freeway controversy as "the greatest boon to race relations in years," and another angry woman told highway officials, "You did one good thing. You brought black and white together and this is a beautiful thing."[40]

Yet this instance of interracial unity in Baltimore was the exception, not the rule. It must have been amazing to see black and white citizens unite in opposition to the freeway, especially after the explosion of racial unrest in April 1968, which claimed six lives and left much of black Baltimore in ruins. In the racially polarized climate that ensued after the riots, the Relocation Action Movement (RAM) and the Movement against Destruction (MAD) brought blacks and whites together, creating a united front against highway construction. But this display of interracial solidarity came too late for black Baltimore, whose neighborhoods had withered under slum-clearance programs and plans for highway construction, on the books since the 1930s. Proposals for the East–West Expressway, for example, damaged black neighborhoods by inducing disinvestment and abandonment. Suddenly RAM and MAD come along in 1969, hailed as marvels of interracial solidarity, fighting to stop an expressway from eradicating the tattered remnants of black neighborhoods well in decline. At best, these freeway-fighting coalitions turned a blind eye to the long-standing isolation and deterioration of black Baltimore; at worst, they strove to defend a spatial status quo sanctioned by formal and informal patterns of racial segregation.[41]

The Paths of Least Resistance

Viewed in the broader context of the American city and its postwar transformation, the freeway revolt, as we know it, did not address, let alone alleviate, the increasingly separate and unequal geography of race in postwar America. The age of the interstate encompassed a mounting crisis in the cities, a crisis of race and poverty, and while white, affluent communities tapped into local political networks to fight the freeway and its place in the city, urban black and brown Americans found themselves trapped within the parameters of a new highway infrastructure. As the modern ghetto and barrio took shape, freeways added insult to injury, ravaging neighborhoods that were already bearing the brunt of disinvestment, deindustrialization, and decline.[42]

Highway planners, like others charged with the responsibilities of planning and managing cities, targeted not people of color but the spaces in which they lived. As far back as the 1930s, federal blueprints for urban expressways presumed a racial hierarchy of spaces, following precedent established by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the U.S. Federal Housing Administration (FHA). In 1939, for example, Thomas MacDonald issued *Toll Roads and Free Roads,* a master's master plan, the first comprehensive study ever made of the national highway system. This report synthesized the data amassed by the traffic surveys conducted by state highway departments, outlining the construction of a 26,700-mile freeway system that was to connect major urban centers.[43] The report emphasized the need for a Robert Moses–style intervention, asserting, "Only a major operation will suffice—nothing less than the creation of a depressed or elevated artery that will convey the massed movement pressing into, and through, the heart of the city." The authors of *Toll Roads and Free Roads* took a *noir* outlook on

the American city, advocating urban expressways as a means of erasing "the mean clutter of narrow streets" and the "decaying slum areas" that "embarrass the movement of twentieth century traffic." Whether or not these "indeterminate areas" supported stable, cohesive communities did not concern BPR engineers; what mattered was the potential of building a cost-effective link between the urban core and the "fast growing outlying suburban areas."[44]

Another BPR report of 1944, *Interregional Highways,* retained the urban focus of *Toll Roads and Free Roads* but drafted more specific details about routing procedure. This report, issued by a presidential committee chaired by Thomas MacDonald, advocated a muscular federal role in routing freeways through cities. It outlined a master plan for 39,000 miles of interregional highways, some 5,000 miles built in cities of 5,000 or more. It also prescribed another 5,000 miles for the construction of undetermined circumferential and distributing routes, so that urban miles now made up one-quarter of the total.[45] In a section titled "The Principles of Route Selection in Cities," the report recommended that new urban freeways "should penetrate within close proximity to the central business area," but it did not specify whether these new routes should pass through or by the central business district, leaving this decision to state and municipal authorities. Though it elided the exact details of routing procedure, *Interregional Highways* nonetheless identified a few ideal locations for new expressways, such as parks and other tracts of public land, as well as the banks of rivers and streams that led to the urban core, which exhibited a "very low order of development—neighborhoods of cheap, run-down houses and shacks, abject poverty, squalor, and filth."[46]

As the doctrines of the highway planning profession at midcentury, neither *Toll Roads and Free Roads* nor *Interregional Highways* explicitly noted the racial character of certain urban neighborhoods, but there was no need. These reports inherited the racialized discourse of mid-twentieth-century planning, which recognized the city's mix of race, ethnicity, and poverty as "blight." By the late 1930s, federal agencies like the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration had codified the racial composition of an urban neighborhood as the primary criterion for identifying blight in the city. The HOLC considered many aspects of a neighborhood in addition to its racial profile, including the condition of its housing stock

and its proximity to industry. Yet of the nine evaluative categories listed on the HOLC appraisal form, or the "city survey file," the social composition of the neighborhood, or its "inhabitants," ranked first. Within that category, the first subcategory, before "ethnic and nationality groups," "laborers," or even "foreign born," was the percentage of "Negros." Blacks, in other words, were singled out as the most conspicuous symptom of urban blight.[47]

The last entry on the city survey file was simply a blank space, room for the appraiser to write his impression of a particular neighborhood. In redlined areas—that is, areas accorded a D grade and assigned the color red on HOLC maps—the term "blight" was ubiquitous, as in "This area is thoroughly blighted and is thereby accorded a low D grade." This specific quotation is taken from the HOLC file on Boyle Heights in Los Angeles. The HOLC savaged East Los Angeles. Not only was it declared "hopelessly heterogenous," but it was said to be "literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive elements." In other redlined areas of Los Angeles, HOLC appraisers made explicit connections between blight and highway construction. For the community of Lincoln Heights, for example, with a Negro population estimated at 5 percent and a mix of "Armenian, Japanese, and Mexican workers," the HOLC appraiser noted that the area "seems ideal for the placement of a new highway project."[48]

There is no smoking gun that directly links the work of the HOLC and FHA with that of the BPR, but race shaped the federal response toward the American city in a variety of ways.[49] Thomas MacDonald recognized the potential to coordinate urban highway construction with urban renewal and slum-clearance programs, planning urban expressways not only to facilitate traffic flow between city and suburb but also to eliminate the "blighted areas contiguous to the very heart of the city." This two-birds-with-one-stone strategy had powerful support from private agencies like the Urban Land Institute, a national association of downtown developers and real estate agents, and the Automotive Safety Foundation, a key player in the automobile lobby. Public entities like the Highway Research Board also endorsed this view, promoting highway construction as the salvation of the inner city, a tool for eradicating blight and arresting the development of slums.[50]

Such talk of expressways, slums, and blight among the city's most powerful

public and private interests did not bode well for urban communities of color, which slipped further into decline during the age of the interstate. The blighted areas targeted for demolition by expressway plans and urban renewal programs were often the outcome of discriminatory housing policy and practice. World War II sparked demands for new housing among white and nonwhite newcomers to the city, but African Americans faced a dearth of options. Although the exigencies of wartime production engendered severe housing shortages for everyone, most new housing built after the war was made off-limits to African Americans through both formal and informal measures. The HOLC and FHA discouraged investment within the boundaries of redlined areas and colluded with the discriminatory practices of mortgage lenders, real estate agents, business owners, and white home owners to arrest black mobility and to fortify a new set of racial, spatial, and economic barriers.

This backdrop is crucial to understanding the role of highway construction in the racial crisis of the American city. Across the nation, state highway departments, with the blessing of federal authorities, gutted cohesive black neighborhoods. In Detroit, where highway planners were careful to minimize disruption of middle-class neighborhoods, highway projects like the Oakland–Hastings (later Chrysler) Freeway, the John C. Lodge Freeway, and the Edsel Ford Freeway tore into middle-class and working-class black neighborhoods, destroying the most prominent churches and businesses anchoring black Detroit. As in Baltimore, these highway projects created a no-man's-land *before* their construction by inducing abandonment and decline. Displaced residents, deprived of housing assistance, faced higher rents charged by predatory landlords who had little incentive to maintain their properties. A staunch advocate of inner-city highway construction, Detroit's mayor Albert Cobo, reckoned such hardship as "the price of progress."[51]

Interstate highway construction enforced a similarly bleak transformation of West Oakland's black community. Even before passage of the Interstate Highway Act, West Oakland had fallen into a pattern of decline as redlining and suburbanization depleted the resources that sustained an African American neighborhood of port and rail-yard workers through the 1930s and 1940s. The community's bay-front location and its proximity to the port of Oakland made the area an ideal site for the convergence of three massive highway projects during the mid-1950s, destroying the cultural and commercial heart of black Oakland. This work left West Oakland in tatters: what had been a centrally located, stable working-class community had become by the late 1950s a disaggregate collection of vacant lots and dilapidated housing. Both East Bay suburban communities and downtown Oakland benefited from this new highway scheme, but the residents of West Oakland found themselves trapped in what had become a ghetto. Later, the addition of a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) line further severed West Oakland's connection to the rest of the city, destroying the last remnants of what had been a cohesive community of middle- and working-class families (Figure 1.5).[52]

Interstate highway construction had especially vicious consequences for black neighborhoods in the urban South, largely because local highway officials, like other public servants, also served as agents of white supremacy. In his dual capacities as Alabama's state highway director and leader of the White Citizen's Council, for example, Samuel Engelhardt led the local fight against school desegregation while he planned the routing of Interstate 85 through Montgomery's black neighborhood. After vocal community protest, Engelhardt took advice from federal highway officials and did nothing, so as to "let the dust settle" before he sicced federal bulldozers on a defenseless black neighborhood.[53] In Nashville, Tennessee, blacks fought unsuccessfully against the routing of Interstate 40, which veered from its straight-line path across the city to bisect their neighborhood. In many of these cities, blacks had limited means of voicing their opposition. Cities like Birmingham, for example, excluded African Americans from public hearings before highway officials, maintaining a strict policy of Jim Crow. In these cities, as in Columbia and Kansas City, Missouri; Charlotte, North Carolina; Atlanta; and New Orleans, federally funded highways were instruments of white supremacy, wiping out black neighborhoods with clear but tacit intent.[54]

Despite the claims of some big-city mayors, such destruction was not an unfortunate consequence of progress. Rather, it was the product of individual decisions made within institutional frameworks, pushed by powerful private interests tied to downtown redevelopment. Highway builders and

FIGURE 1.5. The I-580/I-980 interchange under construction in West Oakland, California. From Department of Public Works, *Annual Report, 1968–1969* (State of California, 1969), 73.

FIGURE 1.6. The construction of I-94 in the Rondo neighborhood, St. Paul, Minnesota, circa 1962. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

the city officials who approved their work had options. In the late 1940s, for example, St. Paul's planning department considered two proposals for routing an east–west highway to link the central districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The central route ran directly along an east–west line between the two cities, which would wipe out the Rondo neighborhood, one of the few urban black neighborhoods of the upper Midwest. The northern route, however, ran northwest from St. Paul to Minneapolis, following a rail line that skirted industrial areas. Although some highway officials pressed for the northern route to preserve both white *and* black neighborhoods, Minnesota's State Highway Department adopted the central route, against both internal dissent and the vociferous protest of Rondo's community leaders (Figure 1.6).[55]

A similar debate occurred in Miami. Since the late nineteenth century, the neighborhood of Overtown sheltered its black population, a diverse mix of African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans, who created a thriving neighborhood that by midcentury had developed a bustling interracial nightlife. By 1950, on the eve of the interstate era, some 45,000 African Americans had settled in Overtown, forging a cohesive community of working-class and middle-class African Americans, anchored by schools, homes, churches, businesses, and community-service organizations. The coming of Interstate 95 in the early 1960s, however, destroyed this community, displacing some 30,000 residents, most of whom relocated to Miami's "second ghetto," in such outlying areas as Brownsville, Opa-Locka, and Liberty City. By 1975, Overtown's population had dwindled to fewer than 10,000 and had become a deracinated landscape of vacant lots and abandoned buildings in the shadow of a massive freeway interchange.[56]

Yet Overtown could have been spared. In 1955, the Miami Planning and Zoning Board, emphasizing neighborhood preservation, presented a plan that would have left this legendary neighborhood intact. The economic logic of preserving a neighborhood that supported a thriving nightlife scene around big-name acts seems obvious today, but the Miami First Committee, a coalition of downtown businessmen, realtors, and politicians, threw its weight behind an alternative expressway plan that slashed directly through the commercial heart of Overtown. Ultimately, the Florida State Road Department adopted this plan, eviscerating what was once a hot spot on the map of African American culture.[57]

Through both malicious intent and benign neglect, interstate highways tore into the heart of African American neighborhoods in cities across the nation, reflecting a broadly shared recognition that black bodies and black spaces had no place in a racialized civic realm. For urban communities of color, the coming of the freeway posed a dilemma in political strategy. Local residents could organize in opposition, as they did in cities from Nashville to Los Angeles.[58] In many black communities, African Americans relied on local institutions to organize neighborhood councils and steering committees. Churches usually played a central role in such efforts, as both meeting places for the community and as cherished landmarks in danger of destruction. Business leaders often took leading roles in voicing opposition to highway construction, and civil rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) also played supporting roles, especially as the civil rights movement gathered steam. Yet these efforts remain outside the narrative scope of the freeway revolt largely because they won few victories, leaving black neighborhoods vulnerable to the worst consequences of the interstate highway program.

African Americans, like other Americans, were not unified in their opposition to highway construction. Black community leaders in Miami, for example, were divided over proposals for highway construction. The editors of Miami's black newspaper, the *Miami Times,* editorialized in support of the city's expressway plan in 1957 and again three years later, voicing its approval for a local expressway bond issue, emphasizing the theme of progress: "We cannot afford to take a backwards step." Similarly, the Greater Miami Urban League issued its approval of the expressway plan that would ravage Overtown, though it qualified such support by noting pressing concerns about housing and relocation issues.[59]

Lacking the community resources that enabled some black communities to protest highway construction (even if unsuccessfully), Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants had even less means by which to defend their neighborhoods. The experience of Graciela Valenzuela and her family underscores this predicament. Initially settling in Boyle Heights after immigrating from Mexico in the early 1960s, Graciela and her husband Abel received a letter from the California Division of Highways, stating that work was beginning in the area and that their home, where they were raising three children, lay in the proposed path of a planned freeway. The letter specified procedures for relocation, outlined state assistance, and served three month's notice. Moving farther east, to Whittier, another community of East Los Angeles, the family found a larger home, removed from the chaos unleashed on Boyle Heights. Years later, however, they discovered that their first home, where their first child had been born, remained intact; the freeway that was to come crashing through had been rerouted. They had moved for nothing.

Graciela and her husband Abel were immigrants from Mexico who were

working long hours, earning two incomes, and raising three children who spoke Spanish at home and learned English in school. They did not protest their official instructions. They did not organize petition drives or disrupt public hearings or write letters to the editor or chain themselves to bulldozers. They played by the rules as specified by the Division of Highways (and as translated by their children), accepting modest compensation and moving when told to move. They remained in East Los Angeles, unfamiliar and unwelcome in other parts of the city.[60] Their story helps explain the absence of visible freeway revolt among city people of color. For many Mexican Americans in particular, language was an obvious barrier, as were the daily demands of work and settlement. For their part, the Valenzuelas, newcomers to the United States, were eager to play by the rules: to speak English, encourage their children to succeed in school, obey the law, and avoid its discipline; if that meant having to relocate for the work of highway construction, such was the price of success in the United States.[61]

Defiant or compliant, urban communities of color stood on the losing end of the fight against the freeway. Just as interstate highways hit their communities, urban Americans of color faced bigger fights: for jobs, housing, health care, education, and protection from the law, especially law enforcement. The interstate era only added insult to injury. Deindustrialization, disinvestment, white flight—all consequences of urban restructuring after World War II—gutted urban communities of color and racialized a new geography of wealth and poverty in postwar America. This is not to wax nostalgic for black urban life before the interstate era, but under stricter regimes of segregation, paradoxically, American cities nurtured bustling minority communities, anchors of communal support and economic opportunity. In the absence of other options, these communities provided gateways to the middle class—the very model of social cohesion and economic vitality that Jacobs extolled in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. The destruction of these communities during the 1950s and 1960s, through urban renewal and highway construction, halted this development, precipitating the long hot summers of racial violence.

Of course, black and brown communities were not the only neighborhoods eviscerated by highway construction. In the gut-wrenching "One Mile"

chapter of *The Power Broker*, Robert Caro recounts the story of Robert Moses hacking his way through stable neighborhoods of the South Bronx, displacing tens of thousands of working-class and middle-class Jewish, Italian, German, Polish, and Irish Americans. East Los Angeles had its version of this story, as did many other urban enclaves of Old World ethnicity. Across the nation, highway construction leveled Jewish neighborhoods, Little Italys, Germantowns, Poletowns, and Irish neighborhoods, some of which were later repackaged as touristic touchstones for younger generations of white ethnic Americans seeking fleeting connections to their urban immigrant past.[62]

White ethnic Americans felt the brutal push of urban renewal and highway construction, but unlike people of color, they could join the exodus to the suburbs. Indeed, the construction of interstate highways facilitated that dispersal. Italian Americans who lived in the Temescal neighborhood of West Oakland, for example, tell heartbreaking stories of the freeway's destruction of an Italian American community. Yet few remained within the precincts of the old neighborhood; many relocated east of the Oakland Hills, to the newer suburban communities of Orinda, Moraga, Walnut Creek, and Lafayette.[63] Postwar housing developers, such as William Levitt on the East Coast or Joseph Eichler and Fritz Burns on the West Coast, welcomed the descendants of Italians, Jews, and Irish immigrants into their new suburban melting pots. In some instances, as in Lakewood, California, Jewish developers built communities open to new patterns of religious diversity, mixing Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. Undergirded by the policies of the HOLC and the FHA, these private developments expanded the boundaries of white racial identity during the postwar era, but their success depended on their proximity to the streams of commerce and consumption that flowed along a new interstate highway system.[64]

The interstate era encompassed a remarkable revision of white identity, or what historian Nell Irvin Painter describes as the "third enlargement" of American whiteness. White Americans of the 1960s could embrace either their whiteness or their ethnic roots, depending on where they lived. Whereas the suburbs nurtured the melting-pot ideology of whiteness, by the early 1970s the cities harbored a new public language of ethnicity and

heritage. Black nationalism and multiculturalism inspired this language, as the American descendants of European immigrants quit the melting pot and embraced their ethnic heritage as a badge of pride, not shame. As Matthew Frye Jacobson argues, this new articulation of white ethnicity did not disrupt but, rather, bolstered white privilege, giving short shrift to the history of slavery and conquest and instead celebrating a myth of "Ellis Island whiteness." As the chapters of this book illustrate, highway construction played a paradoxical role in the postwar revision of white identity. On the one hand, it sponsored the creation of new suburban melting pots, which consigned ethnic expression to the private sphere. But on the other hand, the urban politics of fighting freeways sparked impassioned exhortations of white ethnic identity and heritage, particularly in older neighborhoods built by earlier generations of European immigrants. White flight had already sapped the vitality of these neighborhoods, but their casings could accommodate a repackaged nostalgia for a distant immigrant past, suited for tourists and preservationists in the new service-oriented economy of American cities during the 1970s and 1980s.[65]

The Snake in the City

The highways that stand in today's cities are not innocent spaces. Despite the objective posturing of highway planners and engineers, despite the reams of published data that justified their conclusions, and despite the heft of a profession replete with its own schools, trade journals, and associations, the freeway in the city ultimately followed the spatial coordinates of power, money, and ideology. More than a dedicated channel for efficient traffic flow, the urban freeway boosted the stakes of downtown redevelopment, serving as powerful agents of slum clearance and in many instances, of "Negro removal." It dealt its destruction unevenly, dictated by the prejudice, expediency, and resources of the time.

The freeway revolt halted the momentum of the highway juggernaut, reducing the ambition and scope of this monumental endeavor. Like the Summer of Love or the Age of Aquarius, this grassroots movement has earned its place in the folklore of the 1960s. A scrappy phalanx of neighbors, shopkeepers, community activists, parishioners, and parents, bound by the ties of shared history and neighborhood proximity, huddled behind homemade signs and banners to stop the onslaught of highway-building bulldozers, unraveling the master plans of technocrats and bureaucrats. Their victories, won through sheer determination and shrewd political tactics, have entered the canon of postwar urban history. From a broader perspective, the freeway revolt dealt a lasting blow to the modernist city project, with its ambition to rationalize urban space around the automobile and to sort out the complex functions and processes of urban life. Freeways, like the stark housing and office towers that sprouted on the urban scene during the 1960s, were the concrete expression of modernist ideals, but their imposition from the top down sparked a backlash from the bottom up—a grassroots defense of tradition and community and their localized context of streets and neighborhoods. This was the postmodern moment, the death knell of master plans and its metanarrative of progress.

But the freeway revolt, as we know it, does not fit easily into stereotypes of the 1960s as an epoch of progressive social change. How to reconcile this white neighborhood uprising with the simultaneous crisis of race and poverty in the inner city remains a historiographic riddle, for fighting freeways did not entail a concomitant struggle against the entrenchment of urban racial poverty, it did not challenge the new patterns of racial segregation enacted by highway construction, and it did nothing to secure a more equal footing for African Americans and other peoples of color in the political geography of the city. In some cities, whites were willing to forge alliances with blacks in their fight against the freeway, but only when it served the interests of their particular communities, which took shape within historic frameworks of racial segregation. If anything, the freeway revolt, as it played out in Baltimore, San Francisco, New York, New Orleans, and elsewhere, enforced the aggressive push of gentrification, further whitening the precincts of the urban core for tourist consumption and luxury lifestyles. In this context, the freeway revolt rallied its participants, wittingly or unwittingly, in defense of the spaces wrought by racial and class privilege. The paths that urban freeways took in the course of their construction followed not the dictates of empirical science but, rather, the subjective axes of racial and class power; but the path that

freeways *did not* take followed those coordinates as well. That is why there is no Beverly Hills Freeway.

Noting the disparate outcomes of black versus white resistance to highway construction in Baltimore, one black activist aptly described the politics of fighting freeways: "The snake, if not racist, certainly seems to know that white is more threatening to it than black."[66] This insight provides a starting point for my investigation of alternative histories of urban highway construction. In contrast to the dominant narrative of the freeway revolt, city people of color have a different story to tell and a different way of telling it. By and large, that story is not one of triumph; rather, it is one of reckoning—of coming to terms with the freeway and its monolithic presence in the landscape of daily life. It is a story of remembrance, and of some nostalgia for the "good old days," before the onslaught of bulldozers and the rush of commuting traffic. It is an ironic story, rendered through wit, sarcasm, satire, and other imaginative forms of cultural appropriation. And though it is usually a story of utter destruction, it is not one of defeat, for the very act of telling this story through traditional and inventive cultural forms signals the continuing struggle against the freeway and its towering presence in the racialized quarters of American cities.

Like a prism refracting a beam of light, the city dispersed the freeway into various strands of meaning and significance. Chapter 2 takes up the interpretive strand of gender, which emerged through feminism's "second wave" of the 1960s and 1970s. Although women took separate roads to feminism, urban women of diverse classes, races, and ethnicities earned a prominent, though largely unrecognized, place in the history of the freeway revolt, through polemics, politics, and poetry. Some changed the course of freeways, thus changing the course of urban history; others changed public consciousness, leveling a gendered critique of the freeway and its benefit to what we used to call "mankind."

2 "Nobody but a Bunch of Mothers"

Fighting the Highwaymen during Feminism's Second Wave

She towers over the city below, clutching a car in her hand. Her miniskirt and bikini top reveal long sturdy legs and heaving breasts. Traffic has come to a halt as people flee their cars in terror. The police cannot stop the destructive march of this buxom giant, who visits her feminine wrath on the city. It's the Fifty-Foot Woman, and the freeway between her legs is about to topple (Figure 2.1).

A 1958 B movie, *The Attack of the 50-Foot Woman* tells the story of an abused woman who grows to giant size through an alien encounter and gets even with her philandering husband. The movie belongs to a category of 1950s science fiction films that made the city its mise-en-scène. The urban science fiction film rendered a spectacular portrait of urban destruction, deploying innovative visual effects to dramatize the fall of civilization. And by 1958, at the very moment of their debut on the urban scene, freeways fit squarely within the iconography of the urban science fiction film, a concrete symbol of progress in its latest incarnation. And though it was built to last, this freeway met a quick demise at the hands of an angry woman.[1]

The image suggests an undercurrent of anxiety about women and their threat to the man-made icons of progress, at least in the galaxy of 1950s American popular culture. Yet, as with the many social fantasies and anxieties encoded within movies, TV programs, and radio hits, this image struck a chord of authenticity in the political culture of the 1960s. With the onset of the freeway revolt, diverse women in cities throughout the nation expressed their ambition to pulverize freeways and the plans for their construction.

Angeles," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 1 (February 2006): 119–40. See also Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002); and Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

7. This point draws on Edward Soja's notions of spatial justice; see Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

8. James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960); Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History,* 3rd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992). For a more general cultural history of modernity and postmodernity, see Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*; and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

9. Holston, *The Modernist City,* 13.

10. Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

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12. On the urban history of Mexican Americans in twentieth-century America, see Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Rudolfo Acuña, *Anything but Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles* (London: Verso Press, 1995).

13. David H. Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958); Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*; David Harvey, *Paris: Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); see also David P. Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Michael Carmona, *Haussmann: His Life and Times and the Making of Modern Paris* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002).

14. Valette quoted in Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 3.

15. T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

16. Robert Moses, "What Happened to Haussmann," *Architectural Forum* 77 (July 1942): 57–66.

17. See *L'Assomoir,* for example, or other novels from Zola's Rougon-Marquart series.

18. Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air,* 142–71.

19. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*; Herbert, *Impressionism.*

20. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life,* 55.

21. The term "second ghetto" comes from Arnold Hirsch, who describes modernist public housing towers as a new form of containment for black racial poverty. See Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

22. *St. Paul Dispatch,* September 28, 1956.

23. To be fair, the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (CAT Project, known as the Big Dig) was also about expanding and retooling Boston's highway system to meet current traffic needs, though many constituencies at both local and national levels wanted to see the tearing down of Interstate 93, the "Green Monster" that cut the city in half, separating it from Boston Harbor. See Dan McNichol, *The Big Dig: The Largest Urban Construction Project in the History of the Modern World* (New York: Silver Lining Books, 2000).

1. THE MASTER'S PLAN

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2. Dan McNichol, *The Roads That Built America: The Incredible Story of the U.S. Interstate System* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2006); William Kaszynski, *The American Highway: The History and Culture of Roads in the United States* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000); Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997); John Murphy, *The Eisenhower Interstate System: Building America Then and Now* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009); Felix Rohatyn, *Bold Endeavors: How Our Government Built America and Why It Must Rebuild Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009); Earl Swift, *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011); Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity.*

3. Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy since 1939,* 3rd ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012); Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff, *Mega Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

4. Kenneth R. Geiser Jr., *Urban Transportation Decision Making: Political Processes of Urban Freeway Controversies* (Cambridge: Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Urban Systems Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1970), 464–72. See also Lewis, *Divided Highways,* 131–36.

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6. MacDonald quoted in Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 106; Lewis, *Divided Highways,* 15.

7. Lewis, *Divided Highways.*

8. Bruce E. Seely, "The Scientific Mystique in Engineering: Highway Research at the Bureau of Public Roads, 1918–1940," *Technology and Culture* 25, no. 4 (October 1984): 798–832; Seely, "How the Interstate System Came to Be: Tracing the Historical Process," *TR News* 244 (May–June 2006): 4–9; see also Alan Altshuler, *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964), 24–44.

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10. Kennedy quoted in Rose, *Interstate,* 58.

11. John Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940–1985* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 162.

12. Altshuler and Luberoff, *Mega Projects,* 82.

13. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 203.

14. "'Futurama' in Fair Is Viewed in Test," *New York Times,* April 16, 1939; "Fair Visitors 'Fly' over New York of 1960," *New York Times,* April 16, 1939.

15. It also found poignant expression in the designs of Le Corbusier, the Swiss champion of modernist planning and design, who rendered the city from far above and outside. In "A Contemporary City for Three Million People," for example, Le Corbusier represented vehicles as mere dots moving in an orderly fashion along sweeping thoroughfares. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 437.

16. Sheets, quoted in Seely, *Building the American Highway System,* 175.

17. Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance,* 95–96; Raymond Mohl, "Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 5 (July 2004): 677–78.

18. Raymond Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City: Interstate 95 and the Black Community in Miami," in *Urban Policy in Twentieth Century America,* ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Raymond A. Mohl (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 107–18; Rose, *Interstate,* 42–44; Lewis, *Divided Highways,* 108; Clifton Donald Ellis, "Visions of Urban Freeways, 1930–1970" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990), 64.

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20. Allan K. Sloan, *Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning: The Boston Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing, 1974), 16.

21. Jay M. Gould, *The Technical Elite* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966).

22. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* 7.

23. Geiser, *Urban Transportation Decision Making,* 331–33.

24. Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt, *The Deceived Majority: Politics and Protest in Middle America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1973); Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air.*

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26. William Issel, "'Land Values, Human Values, and the Preservation of the City's Treasured Appearance': Environmentalism, Preservationism, and San Francisco's Freeway Revolt," *Pacific Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (November 1999): 611–46; Altshuler and Luberoff, *Mega Projects,* 86.

27. Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Daniel Bluestone, *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory: Case Studies in Historic Preservation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

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versus the Highwaymen; or, How San Francisco Won the Freeway Revolt," *Journal of Planning History* 8, no. 1 (February 2009): 56–83.

31. Milk quoted in Jason Edward Black and Charles E. Morris III, eds., *Harvey Milk: An Archive of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 30.

32. Jason Schultz, "Freeway 90210: Opposition and Politics of the Pavement in Los Angeles" (paper, Humanities Honor's Program, University of California, Irvine, June 1, 2004).

33. "Completion of I-95 Only a Matter of Time," *Princeton Packet,* November 7, 1995; "The Chickens Come Home to Roost: Opponents of I-95 Brought Traffic Here," *Town Topics,* March 22, 1995.

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35. Lupo, *Rites of Way,* 51–57; Lenny Durant, interview by Holbrook.

36. Quoted in Geiser, *Urban Transportation Decision Making,* 285.

37. Quoted in Gordon Fellman, *Implications for Planning Policy of Neighborhood Resistance to Urban Renewal and Highway Proposals,* national government publication (Waltham, Mass.: Department of Sociology, Brandeis University, 1970), 32.

38. "Inner Belt Mural Goes in C'Port," *Cambridge Chronicle,* September 18, 1980.

39. Robert Nichols, *The Expressway: A Play in Three Scenes,* Judson Archives, box 15, folder 3, New York University Fales Library and Special Collections.

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42. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis.*

43. Lewis, *Divided Highways,* 53–54.

44. U.S. Public Roads Administration, *Toll Roads and Free Roads,* 76th Cong., 1st sess., House Document no. 272 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), 99.

45. Ellis, "Visions of Urban Freeways," 155–57; Mohl, "The Interstate and the Cities: Highways, Housing, and the Freeway Revolt" (research report, Poverty and Race Research Action Council, 2002), 5–6.

46. U.S. National Interregional Highway Committee, *Interregional Highways,* 78th Cong., 2nd sess., House Document no. 379 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 69–70.

47. Kenneth T. Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History* 6, no. 4 (August 1980): 419–53. For a different perspective on the HOLC and its role in redlining, see Amy E. Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 4 (May 2003): 394–420.

48. Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Los Angeles City Survey Files, Lincoln Heights, Record Group 195, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

49. There is now debate about the impact of the city survey files on the racial geography of the American city, as new evidence suggests that the FHA's *Underwriting Manual* actually played a greater role in enforcing racial segregation in the postwar urban regions. My point, however, is simply to underscore the fact that federal agencies like the HOLC and FHA actively and deliberately considered race in their approach to urban policy at midcentury, providing a racial lens through which other policy makers, like BPR officials, "read" the urban landscape. See Hillier, "Redlining and the Homeowners' Loan Corporation."

50. Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City," 109–10.

51. Cobo quoted in Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis,* 47–48.

52. Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Jeff Norman, *Temescal Legacies: Narratives of Changes from a North Oakland Neighborhood* (Oakland, Calif.: Shared Ground Press, 2003); Walter Hood, *Urban Diaries* (Oakland, Calif.: Spacemaker Press, 1997).

53. Ralph Abernathy wrote a letter to JFK protesting the destruction of his home and church. His pleas for assistance were granted though the rest of his community was destroyed. See Rose and Mohl, *Interstate,* 106–7.

54. Mohl, "The Interstate and the Cities," 102–18.

55. Altshuler, *The City Planning Process.*

56. Raymond A. Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City"; Milan Dluhy, Keith Revell, and Sidney Wong, "Creating a Positive Future for a Minority Community: Transportation and Urban Renewal Politics in Miami," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2002): 75–95.

57. Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City," 113–14.

58. As far back as 1954, the California Division of Highways proposed a five-hundred-foot-wide swath of concrete through Sugar Hill, one of the most prosperous black neighborhoods in the nation. Sugar Hill resident Floyd Covington, former Urban League director, organized the Adams Washington Freeway Committee and pleaded before the California State Highway Commission in Sacramento to reroute the freeway, arguing that blacks had limited options for relocation. African Americans in Santa Monica also protested this particular freeway route, as it would bisect that city's small coastal black community. After hearing such protests, the state Highway Commission stalled in its decision for several months but ultimately proceeded with its original plan. Josh Sides,

L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 124; Miguel Marcello Chavez, "Las Cuatro Esquinas: The Chicana and Chicano Movement in the West Side of Los Angeles, 1963–1979" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010).

59. *Miami Times* quoted in Mohl, "Stop the Road," 685.

60. Graciela Valenzuela, interview by author, May 4, 2013.

61. Ibid.

62. Caro, *The Power Broker,* 837–94.

63. Norman, *Temescal Legacies,* 71–93.

64. Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). On Lakewood, see D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

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2. "NOBODY BUT A BUNCH OF MOTHERS"

1. Vivian Sobchack, "Cities on the Edge of Time: The Urban Science Fiction Film," *East West Journal* 3, no. 1 (December 1988): 4–19; see also Sobchack, *The Limits of Infinity: The American Science Fiction Film, 1950–1975* (South Brunswick, N.J., and New York: A. S. Barnes; London: Thomas Yoselloff, 1980); Vivian Sobchack and Kathleen McHugh, eds., "Beyond the Gaze: Recent Approaches to Film Feminisms," special issue, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 2004).

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3. Alison Lurie, *The Nowhere City* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1965).

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