

Freeways and Residential Neighborhoods

ROY B. SAWHILL, and JOSEPH W. EBNER, University of Washington, Seattle

ABRIDGMENT

•THE study which was conducted in 1964 and 1965 was requested and sponsored by the Automotive Safety Foundation. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the influence freeways have when they traverse rather than circumscribe a neighborhood area. The North Broadway area of Seattle, Washington, was chosen for the study since it was subdivided into three parts by the construction of the Seattle Freeway and the Roanoke Expressway.

The method of making the evaluation was by the collection of data relative to land use, household characteristics, traffic volumes, and accident hazard.

The zoning and land-use portion of the study revealed a strong indication that each of the three areas are being subjected to pressures tending to make them individual sections of the total area.

Household characteristics were collected by means of a questionnaire representing an 11 percent sample. The majority of the residents felt that the neighborhood is now a better place to live, however, access to schools is more difficult. Only the western section, which is mainly commercial and apartments, thought that the property values had increased. Shopping characteristics were also changed for two of the three sections.

Significant relief in traffic volumes was found on the arterials serving and passing through the neighborhood. The number of accidents was also found to have declined significantly. The decrease in traffic has made the northeast and western sections of North Broadway more attractive as "bedroom" communities for the University of Washington. This has encouraged changes such as the construction of new apartment buildings.

The freeway, although not fully completed, already has opened new areas to the North Broadway residents. This is particularly true of the northeast section whose residents find it convenient for short trips such as shopping as well as for the longer work or pleasure trip.

It is difficult to determine whether or not the new areas opened to the North Broadway residents will be better or worse for North Broadway than the present trend now dividing the area. However, the decrease in volumes and accidents was a definite boon to the area.