

EFFECTS ON NONRELOCATED HOUSEHOLDS OF BUILDING A HIGHWAY IN A DENSE URBAN RESIDENTIAL AREA

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ABRIDGMENT

•THE EFFECT of constructing a major highway through a densely populated section of a metropolitan area on the nonrelocated residents living near the new facility has not been studied in depth. Although the majority of highway displacements occur in such locations, nearly all research on the social and economic effects of constructing freeways has been conducted on highways cut through rural or suburban areas where there is less vulnerability to deleterious effects and more chance of benefit due to a greater increase in the level of accessibility.

The absence of research suggests that it has been assumed that effects on nondisplaced residents are not significant; yet the overall effects could be severe because they are not ameliorated through compensation and because social costs seem to be concentrated among the poor, Negroes, renters, and people who do not have the availability of an automobile. These are usually not the people who benefit directly from a facility.

Preliminary data on the socioeconomic characteristics of households directly affected by the construction of almost the entire Interstate system built within the Columbus, Ohio, SMSA suggest that Negroes were affected in numbers greatly disproportionate to the black population of the SMSA, that the median income of impacted households was well below that of the SMSA, that only 25 percent were home owners as compared with a metropolitan home ownership figure of 57 percent, and that 43 percent did not have an automobile available.

Of the effects mentioned in this paper, the impact on housing appears the most serious and pervasive. In addition to the obvious impact of the removal of housing on those who are displaced, there is evidence that housing supply reduction affects nonrelocated households as well. The question of housing submarkets, delineated by income and racial characteristics, is the most crucial variable related to the degree of the effect and whether it is harmful. In a "tight" submarket, the result can be an increase in rents, clearly a negative consequence for tenants, while property values for home owners may not rise with rents if there is doubt about the future desirability of the area as a place of residence.

Other consideration for nonrelated residents include the following:

1. Removal of employment, shopping, services, recreational opportunities, and friendships;
2. Change in the accessibility to such opportunities both within and outside the area, and by the modes of transport available to the resident, such as foot, private vehicle, and public transportation;
3. Impacts on environmental quality, such as noise, air pollution, and aesthetics; and
4. Utility of the area as a place of residence.