

the section lines rather consistently. There is a great deal of concern as to what effect this may have. In one community, for example, there is quite a struggle as to whether the highway should go east or west of town because of its potential impact on agricultural values.

People who feel themselves more or less displaced, because their places are cut into segments by highways, are tending to take their indemnities and try to acquire property elsewhere. Since they have been doing that on a narrow market—and we probably have never seen such small offerings as there are at the present time—we have seen an increase of something like \$75 and acre in the price of land.

In Champaign County, Illinois, during 1956 we didn't see the shrinkage in the net returns from farming that we have seen in previous years, partly because of almost perfect weather and partly as a result of the use of present and prospective funds to buy land at some distance on the part of the persons practically displaced from certain tracts of land by highway development. I do not think that it is going to modify the land-use pattern greatly, but it is going to have an upward influence in the price of land, largely because of the scarcity of land offered for sale. Farms are being enlarged, and it is only as people are willing to bid up a segment of a farm, to add to what they have, that they can get some relief from the high cost per unit of product experienced in small acreages. Because of this trend toward larger farms, land values have become very sensitive.

With respect to measuring the impact of highway improvements on land use in agricultural areas, there are two major approaches, both quite standard. One would be to make a study in terms of the characteristics of the farms that are sold, reducing them by indexes so as to apply correlation analysis. Another method is to work with comparable areas. The comparable-area approach has been found to be as fruitful as the correlation analysis approach.

### **Alternatives Confronting the Highway Planner** **Louis B. Wetmore, Department of City Planning and** **Landscape Architecture** **University of Illinois**

There are some significant alternatives in the kinds of road systems which might be built. As we look at the rate at which this nation has been growing for the last 10 or 15 years and which gives promise of continuing, consideration of what might be called minor adjustments in this total system is not realistic. If we are talking about doubling the total economic activities of the many sizable metropolitan areas (introducing new units into the metropolitan constellations as smaller areas grow to this size) we get into real questions of choice among the alternatives to be faced as to the kind of highway or street systems that would give the best service.

In many areas land is a key resource and there is a serious question as to its capacity to meet out total needs. We already know that land for industrial purposes is very scarce in a great many areas. In many cases, use of land for highways or for urban uses is in competition with agricultural use. Increments of 10 percent can be handled but increments of 100 percent cause serious problems and pressures.

Many metropolitan areas are tending toward very low densities in new residential development. There is a question as to how long this trend toward lower density patterns in housing may continue despite what people may want. Other limitations may produce a different density or distribution pattern 20 years from now and give us quite different considerations as to the kinds and spacing of street systems that would be required. Even as we look at present trends in distribution, we have significant alternatives in the way in which we might direct the rapid development in our metropolitan areas. Yet only cursory attention is being given to these alternatives and to the ways in which the highway systems might be shaped to support a selected pattern of metropolitan area growth.

**The New York Thruway Beckons Researchers**  
**F. William Davidson**  
**New York Thruway Authority**

Basically, I am here as an observer. My field is public relations and public information. I do know, however, of something like \$400 million in capital investment along the New York Thruway route. Granted that this may not be a net gain for our state-wide economy and that much of it might have come to New York if the Thruway never had been built; but tremendous projects and developments have been created only because the Thruway was built. For example there is a \$30 million county-wide shopping center in Yonkers. The promoter of this development told me that if it had not been for the Thruway they never would have gone ahead with this project.

It is not claimed that all of the industrial developments along the Thruway have been created solely because of the Thruway. In fact, I should like to discuss the difficulty that people in my field have in claiming such things. We greatly desire to claim that because of the Thruway there have been new jobs and new money, and the higher we can go into the millions of dollars the better we like it. We use that approach, of course, but I must admit that there are times when I have my doubts as to the firmness of the ground that I am treading upon. Perhaps a brief review of the research done on the Thruway will explain.

I am the acting director of a department in the Thruway Authority—the Department of Public Information and Business Promotion. It is strictly a public relations outfit. That is our whole effort—news releases, promotion, speeches. The business promotion comes in chiefly through out activities in persuading more commercial accounts, more trucking companies, and more bus companies to use the Thruway, which is one of the longest toll highways in the county.

The sources of information are basically these: Every two weeks we get literally hundreds of news clippings about the Thruway from papers all over New York, and that material is catalogued. By analyzing these newspaper clippings over a long period and watching the developments, we see the story unfolding. These news clippings also have valuable information as to capital investment and the reasons people locate where they do.

Some people are reluctant to admit that the Thruway influenced their move. In any case where there is some question as to the role the Thruway played in any substantial industrial or residential development, we usually try to contact the promoter or some local Chamber of Commerce official personally, to clear the matter up.