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**April 3, 2019**  
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**CAN 10 AMERICAN CITIES REMOVE HIGHWAYS? NATIONAL REPORT SAYS YES**  
*Cities could see less traffic and greater economic development*

Washington, D.C. ... A new national report by the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) urges the removal of ten of America's worst highways, to unlock valuable land and reknit communities disrupted by highway construction decades ago. The list of ten represents major highways that have devastated city neighborhoods and local businesses, particularly minority-owned businesses. Removing them offers a chance to correct decades of community division and restore vibrant public life to waterfronts, local streets, and downtowns.

The 2019 edition of the biennial *Freeways Without Futures* report, issued this week, highlights local highway removal campaigns from Texas to Oregon, from Kentucky to Florida, from New York to California, where cities and state departments of transportation are being called upon to replace these aging, car-centric facilities with pedestrian-centered boulevards, locally connected street systems, green space, and commercial and residential redevelopment that benefits both current and future neighborhood residents.

The report—the sixth in a series since 2008—comes at a time when more American communities are considering or undertaking highway removal. Across the US, 17 cities have committed to replace or mitigate major freeways since the late 1980s, including cities like San Francisco, Milwaukee, and New York, which fully removed highways successfully, with no adverse impact on traffic.

One reason highway removal is gaining traction is practical: Replacing these facilities, many at the end of their useful lives, is often neither feasible nor an efficient use of public funds.

"Local, state, and federal resources are declining," says Lynn Richards, President and CEO of CNU. "We need to use investments that meet multiple community goals: enhancing all kinds of mobility, promoting economic development, creating jobs, and reimagining the possibilities for waterfronts, parks, and neighborhoods."

The 10 highways recommended for teardown include:

- I-10 (Claiborne Expressway), New Orleans, Louisiana
- I-275, Tampa, Florida
- I-35, Austin, Texas
- I-345, Dallas, Texas
- I-5, Portland, Oregon
- I-64, Louisville, Kentucky
- I-70, Denver, Colorado
- I-81, Syracuse, New York
- I-980, Oakland, California
- Kensington and Scajaguada Expressways, Buffalo, New York

**-more-**

A jury of nationally recognized transportation experts chose this year's list from 29 nominated in-city freeways. The panel reviewed each submission based on a number of criteria: the age and state of the highway, the quality of alternative boulevard or street design, the feasibility of removal, community support for removal, existing political momentum, redevelopment opportunities, potential cost savings, and potential to improve access to opportunity for underserved communities.

The report also monitors the progress and challenges for three completed or underway highway removals or mitigations:

- Rochester's Inner Loop in New York, where a range of new development is underway, including supportive and affordable housing;
- the Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle, whose closure to traffic in January 2019 did not result in the "carmageddon" of nightmarish traffic predicted, and whose replacement with a tunnel is likely to have been (as local groups predicted) unnecessary; and
- I-375 through downtown Detroit, a removal scheduled to begin by 2022. The two current design alternatives for its replacement, however, still cater excessively to automobiles and very much resemble the freeway they will replace.

*Freeways Without Futures* portrays the subtle but growing transformation of attitudes away from car-centric thinking and urban highways: Now, in more places from coast to coast, the question is no longer whether to replace, but when and how to remove and transform.

Copies of *Freeways Without Futures* can be downloaded from <https://www.cnu.org/highways-boulevards/freeways-without-futures/2019>

*Members of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) help create vibrant and walkable cities, towns, and neighborhoods where people have diverse choices for how they live, work, shop, and get around. People want to live in well-designed places that are unique and authentic. CNU's mission is to help people build those places. Visit [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org) for more.*

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