

THE LEGACY OF INTERSTATE 5:
A REPORT INFORMING THE OFFICE OF HOUSING'S COMMUNITY PREFERENCE
POLICY

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Executive Summary

At a time when Seattle's affordability challenges are reaching crisis levels, elected leaders have sought to stem the flow of displacement through a variety of anti-displacement tools, including the creation of a community preference policy. In 2019, Mayor Jenny Durkan directed the Office of Housing to create a preference policy framework to assist those living in neighborhoods at high risk of displacement to continue living in the city. The policy framework allows developers building in neighborhoods at high risk of displacement to voluntarily reserve a portion of units for specific preference criteria, including prioritizing units for current neighborhood residents, those who use community services in the neighborhood, those who previously lived in the neighborhood, and those who have a relative who previously resided there. The Office of Housing is implementing this framework based on the city's Displacement Risk Index, and is considering ways to expand the policy by adding additional preference.¹

Across the United States, urban renewal and the construction of the interstate freeway system were closely intertwined during the second half of the 20th century. While urban renewal sought to increase investments in the center city by eliminating the "blight" or disinvestment in places where lower income residents and communities of color often resided, the freeway system was engineered to connect cities to suburbs, ultimately building out a nationwide network of roadways in one of the largest federal infrastructure investments in the nation's history. However, the construction of freeways was often used as a tool of urban renewal itself. Forces conspired to route large interchanges through "blighted districts," using the power of eminent domain to clear residents from the freeway's path. Across the country, notably in Portland, Oregon San Francisco and Los Angeles, California, vibrant communities were displaced, bulldozed, and permanently altered.

This report seeks to understand the history of Interstate 5 (originally called the "Seattle Freeway") in order to assess if these same dynamics were at play, specifically if the planning history reflected intent to target areas with a larger proportion African American residents for residential demolitions. Through primary source research at local, regional, and state archives, this report finds that Seattle's historic African American neighborhoods, primarily located in Seattle's Central District, largely avoided the direct impacts of freeway construction. While one proposal under consideration would have cut the CD in two, ultimately the freeway followed a different route, avoiding demolitions in that area. Furthermore, this report documents that a majority of residences impacted were detached Single-Family homes in neighborhoods with a high proportion of white households, though freeway construction also led to the destruction of Japanese businesses and the division of Seattle's Chinatown/International District (C/ID).

I-5 is the largest infrastructure project in Seattle's history, demolishing 4,500 homes and displacing 40,000 residents. While indelibly shaping the city's landscape by carving a path through neighborhoods,

¹ Office of Planning and Community Development, "Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle's Growth Strategy," May 2016, <file:///Users/albertableck/Desktop/Professional%20Report/Sources/Primary%20Sources/FinalGrowthandEquityAnalysis.pdf>.

this project did not disproportionately impact Seattle’s African American population, as other freeway projects across the country did, and is therefore an imperfect proxy for targeted residential displacement. However, a lasting remnant of I-5 is the physical separation and segregation that exist between those of different racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as divisions by economic status.

Nonetheless, addressing the outmigration of African American residents, as well as many other marginalized groups, is an urgent need as the city continues to grow. This report recommends three alternative options to strengthen Seattle’s preference policy, including creating a mandatory 25% set aside for residents living in census tracts at high risk of displacement, creating a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) framework, and expanding access to homeownership through down payment assistant loans and collaboration with community-based organizations.

Introduction

Seattle faces a housing affordability crisis that grows more severe by the day. As many seek to understand and alleviate the fallout, increasing attention has been focused on policy solutions to address these issues at the local level, particularly emphasizing the experiences of historically marginalized groups. As communities of color have been pushed out of the city into the surrounding suburbs, many have called for policy measures to allow people to stay in place. One solution gaining traction is a preference policy framework. High-cost cities across the country have implemented preference policies for housing, though with different structures and to varying degrees of success. Seattle has the opportunity to learn from these programs, creating a preference policy tailored to the unique history of the city’s development.

In February, 2019, Mayor Jenny Durkan signed Executive Order 2019-02 (“EO”) directing City departments “to develop and implement strategies to further affordability...and mitigate residential displacement.” Section 1 of the EO called on the Office of Housing to update funding policies to incorporate a Community Preference Policy in neighborhoods at high risk of displacement in addition to developing policies around homeownership on publicly owned sites, continuation of the city’s preservation program, and home repair opportunities. In June 2019, Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda proposed an amendment to the Administrative & Financial (“A&F”) Plan for the recently renewed Housing Levy to include funding from the City Council’s 2020 Biennial Budget to implement the Community Preference Policy. The amended A&F legislation passed unanimously, and Office of Housing staff began crafting the policy in the summer of 2019.

Under the current iteration of the Community Preference Policy, housing developers can voluntarily set aside up to 50% of building units for residents awarded preference and determine which applicant will receive an offer of housing, either through a lottery or on a first-come first-served basis.² Preference is awarded to those who currently live in the neighborhood, possess community ties or utilize community services in the neighborhood, previously resided in the neighborhood, or have an ancestor or family member who previously resided in the neighborhood. The program is applied on a project-by-project basis, and developers can opt into the program if the development falls within a census tract at high risk of displacement. The Displacement Risk Index indicators in the Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity Analysis

² The Office of Housing recommends no more than 50% of the building units be set aside for Community Preference, but this is not a binding requirement.

form the basis of defining high risk tracts, and include racial demographics, linguistic isolation, educational attainment, housing tenancy (including cost-burden), household income, and eight other indicators.³

The Office of Housing is currently considering ways the program might be expanded to incorporate additional preference criteria, using historic Census data while tracking indicators over time. Staff have conducted a high-level study of the history of eminent domain and resulting displacement to inform the policy. However, a detailed analysis of government action has not yet been undertaken. This study conducts an in-depth examination of government action by the City of Seattle and State of Washington resulting in displacement of residents, with a particular emphasis on the use of eminent domain during the construction of I-5. This report is intended to provide OH with a deeper understanding of this history, as well as to offer policy options for expanding Seattle's Community Preference Policy moving forward.

This report will provide a detailed analysis of the short-, medium-, and long-term impacts of the construction of I-5 on Seattle residents, as well as policy opportunities in light of these historical events.

Key questions the report aims to address include:

1. What is the construction history of I-5?
2. What were the short, medium, and long-term impacts of I-5's construction on residents and neighborhoods directly adjacent to the freeway?
3. How can Seattle's Community Preference Policy address past harms from the construction of I-5?
4. What additional policy frameworks should the city consider to ensure residents at-risk of displacement have the opportunity to remain?

The legacy of I-5 has recently been in the limelight as efforts to build a lid over the highway gain momentum.⁴ This is a critical juncture to acknowledge the impacts of I-5's construction on the residents and neighborhoods in close proximity to the freeway, and beyond this, to initiate a citywide conversation on how to address this legacy. This case study of I-5 is intended to serve as a blueprint for planners, policymakers, and developers on how to assess the impacts of past large infrastructure projects, as well as how to build racial equity frameworks into policies in order to counter displacement pressures.

Background

The justification for a community preference policy is embedded in the structural and institutional legacies of racism perpetuated through land use and infrastructure projects in the 20th century. In *The Color of Law*, Richard Rothstein documents the how government policies and practices created and reinforced racial segregation, arguing that these *de jure* systems were inherently prejudiced, and the inequitable outcomes were not simply the *de facto* result. One key factor in producing segregation was the interstate highway system. "It wasn't only the large-scale federal programs of public housing and

³ The Displacement Risk Index Indicators also include proximity to transit, proximity to current or future Link light rail and streetcar, proximity to core businesses, proximity to civic infrastructure, proximity to high-income neighborhood, proximity to job center, development capacity, and median rent. Office of Planning and Community Development, "Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle's Growth Strategy."

⁴ "How Capping I-5 Could Redeem Seattle's Past | Crosscut," accessed April 10, 2020, <https://crosscut.com/2018/10/how-capping-i-5-could-redeem-seattles-past>.

mortgage finance that created *de jure* segregation. Hundreds, if not thousands of smaller acts of government contributed...They included routing interstate highways to create racial boundaries or to shift the residential placement of African American families.”⁵ In 1938, the Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace proposed to President Roosevelt that highways routed through cities could serve the dual goals of transportation efficiency and “elimination of unsightly and unsanitary districts.”⁶ The author documents how government and industry groups frequently used the arguments of slum clearance and racial separation to advocate for highway construction.

Seattle and Washington State were not immune to the national growth forces and structures around infrastructure and urban renewal. Following World War II, Seattle witnessed a number of large-scale public infrastructure projects ranging from highways, to sports stadiums, to the campus for the 1962 Century 21 World’s Fair. Among these projects, the construction of Interstate 5 (I-5) through Seattle emerges as one of the most impactful in the city’s history, reshaping neighborhoods to make way for the massive thoroughfare carrying hundreds of thousands of cars a day, indelibly shaping the city’s residential growth patterns, economy, and environment.

The federal government played a formative role in the establishment of the national highway system. Planning for a national network of highways began in the 1930s, and designated US Route 99 as a primary corridor along the West Coast. In 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act, authorizing the creation of the Interstate Highway System. With this program came significant funding for states and localities to construct highways, including \$165 million for the buildout of Washington state’s highway system. Washington’s governor, Albert D. Rosellini, advocated for an accelerated timeline for freeway construction, with a priority to complete the section between Seattle and the Canadian border as quickly as possible.

Several routes were proposed, with the ultimate plan incorporating a twelve-lane freeway through Downtown Seattle with a temporal express lane system. Public hearings were held following the announcement of the proposed alignment in 1957, drawing a mixed response from residents. The City of Seattle endorsed the plan, simultaneously proposing to create a rapid transit corridor alongside the freeway to mitigate additional congestion. The State’s Highway Department approved the plan, and in April 1957, the Washington State Highway Department established the office charged with property acquisition for what was then called the Seattle Freeway, notifying property owners of the impending construction and drawing up contracts for the sale of the properties to the state.⁷

Completed in 1967, the construction of I-5 through Seattle resulted in the largest relocation of households through eminent domain in the city’s history. A total of 4,500 homes were either demolished or relocated to surrounding neighborhoods, and approximately 40,000 residents were displaced.⁸ “Right of Way”

⁵ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law : A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, First edition. (Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2017). 122.

⁶ Rothstein.127.

⁷ Paula Becker, “Washington Establishes an Office for Clearing the Route of the Seattle Freeway (Interstate 5) on April 1, 1957.,” accessed November 8, 2019, <https://www.historylink.org/File/4168>.

⁸ “Interstate 90 Public Hearing - CityArchives | Seattle.Gov,” n.d., <https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/seattle-voices/interstate-90>.

Agents from the Department of Highways visited households throughout the planned construction zone, advising residents their home was in the path of demolition, and offering the fair market value of the home as compensation. Residents could appeal the valuation of the State, in which case a third-party appraisal was conducted and a final offer made. If the homeowner still didn't agree, the State would initiate condemnation proceedings, which occurred in about ten percent of cases citywide. Contracts were drawn documenting the agreement, after which residents had 90 days to vacate the home.

The Route Description promulgated by the Washington State Department of Highways stated,

“with few exceptions, this area contains older and less desirable buildings and is the beginning of the separation of the apartment house, clinic and residential area from the central business district -- from Marion Street to Denny Way -- this section will traverse an area that needs improvement in appearance.”⁹

The construction of Interstate 5 spurred community mobilization and action. Residents of the First Hill neighborhood, a well-established and generally affluent neighborhood slated to be impacted by the freeway route, attended public hearings to voice their opposition to the plans, supported by famed leaders of architecture and preservation, including Victor Steinbrueck, a University of Washington Architecture Professor and driving force behind efforts to preserve Seattle's Pike Place Market, and Paul Thiry, the architect of Seattle's Century 21 World's Fair campus at Seattle Center.

First Hill residents held protests and voiced their discontent with elected leaders, authoring letters to the City Council, Mayor, and State Highway Department. Community leaders met with high level officials to articulate their concerns, and conducted an economic analysis of First Hill through a “walking poll” to understand the impacts the freeway would have on the neighborhood. While there is evidence that residents across the city opposed the project, it is the names and perspectives of prominent residents in First Hill that are the most memorialized.

Nevertheless, the freeway's impacts were felt by a broad cross-section of the city. While the concerns of First Hill residents led to material changes to the freeway's design, the voices from other corners of the city whose objections were overruled throw into relief the processes and priorities of state and local officials in building out the city's largest infrastructure project.

Preference Policies: Policy Review

New York City, San Francisco, Portland, and other cities have adopted preference policy frameworks centered around the concept of the “right to return.” These policies differ in a variety of ways including the preferred population, administration, and housing type, demonstrating the range and ability of these policies to adapt to the local context.

Municipal efforts to implement what are known as “community preferences” or “preference policies” have faced a variety of obstacles, perhaps most significantly the risk of being found in violation of the

⁹ Paula Becker, “First Part of Seattle Freeway (Interstate 5) Route Receives Federal Funding on October 1, 1957.,” accessed November 8, 2019, <https://www.historylink.org/File/4166..>

Fair Housing Act (FHA) of 1968. The FHA prohibits discrimination on the basis of a protected class and requires state and local governments as well as public housing authorities (PHAs) to proactively take steps to end segregated housing patterns by “affirmatively furthering fair housing.” The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) placed a low priority on enforcement of this provision of FHA until the Obama Administration’s creation of the “2015 Rule,” requiring state and local governments and PHA to complete an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH).

The experiences of a number of cities have revealed that if a preference policy includes more than one qualifying criteria, it is less likely a legal appeal on Fair Housing grounds will be successful.¹⁰ New York City was the first city to adopt a community resident preference policy in 1988, in which 50% of affordable housing units were set aside in the housing lottery for residents of local districts. The program was put on hold in 2015, when it was challenged. In *Winfield v. City of New York* (2015) three African American plaintiffs claimed the policy excluded them from areas with higher quality housing, employment, and educational opportunities and perpetuated racial segregation in the city.¹¹ The *Winfield* case is still under appeal in the the Southern District of New York. Nonetheless, the Court’s decision in this case will form important precedent for future iterations of community preference policy frameworks.

In a recent comprehensive survey of preference policies nationwide, Kaplan presents case studies for Santa Monica, Cambridge, San Francisco, Portland, and Oakland, in each case evaluating the ability of the policy to strengthen anti-displacement efforts. Though the policies differ to a large degree, they all share certain features of the preference framework. For example, both Cambridge and Portland established a point system to establish preference.¹² Oakland gives preference to households displaced due to a development project the City sponsored or supported, though displacement must have occurred within one year of the application for affordable housing.¹³

San Francisco’s preference policy framework includes four separate programs. The Certificate of Preference, adopted in 2008, prioritizes affordable housing for households displaced by federally funded urban renewal projects. The name of the program references the documents the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency issued to those whose property was taken through eminent domain, beginning in the 1960s. This document was intended to facilitate these residents receiving access to housing funded by the Redevelopment Agency. However, since 2008, those with a Certificate of Preference are granted preference for any housing program run by the City.

Second, San Francisco created the Neighborhood Resident Housing Preference (NRHP), granting priority to those who live within a half mile of the Supervisorial district in which a City-owned housing

¹⁰ Keaton Norquist, “Local Preferences in Affordable Housing: Special Treatment for Those Who Live in a Municipality,” *Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review* 36, no. 1 (January 2009): 207–38.

¹¹ “Winfield et al v. City Of New York, No. 1:2015cv05236 - Document 217 (S.D.N.Y. 2017),” Justia Law, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/new-york/nysdce/1:2015cv05236/444418/217/>.

¹² The categories qualifying for preference include if one is a current Cambridge resident, households with at least one child under eighteen, households with at least one child under six, households with emergency housing needs, and applicants who are employed in Cambridge.

¹³ Eli Kaplan, “Implementing a Community Preference Policy for Affordable Housing in Berkeley,” Client Report (Berkeley, California: University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2019), June 2019.

development is sited. The genesis of the NRHP program was the stark out-migration of African American residents from the City and County boundaries of San Francisco.¹⁴ Meetings were held between City staff and African American community leaders who were concerned about the poor take-up rate in affordable housing lotteries for African American residents. City staff looked to New York City's Community Preference Policy, which had set-aside 50% of affordable housing built in a neighborhood for existing residents. Given the legal challenge filed against New York City's program, San Francisco leaders sought to ensure neighborhoods were racially diverse enough that, in a lottery system, this type of preference would not be discriminatory against a certain racial group.

By analyzing neighborhood demographics, analysts found that if the Neighborhood Preference was set at 25%, the area's population would be sufficiently diverse to avoid discriminating on the basis of race. If preference were set any higher, however, the policy was likely to favor the majority racial group in that neighborhood. Despite this, in 2015 San Francisco's Board of Supervisors adopted a policy setting preference at 40% of new affordable units for preexisting, income-qualifying residents in the neighborhood (defined as within half a mile of the supervisorial district).

One of the first tests of this policy was the Willie B. Kennedy, a 98-unit senior housing project in the Western Addition. The development received funding from a HUD 202 grant, in addition to other funding sources. Fair Housing guidelines required the developer, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), to submit a marketing plan to HUD. The plan, including units set-aside for seniors in the Western Addition, was ultimately rejected, kicking off a series of negotiations between HUD staff and San Francisco officials, ultimately involving California's federal delegation, including Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi.

HUD ultimately allowed the Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development (MOHCD) to use mapping provided by University of California Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project (UDP) to identify neighborhoods at greatest risk for displacement, creating a preference policy where 25% of the units were set aside for those residing in high-risk of displacement census tracts at the Willie B. Kennedy. Leaders report that a number of seniors from the Western Addition were placed in the Willie B. Kennedy. MOHCD continued to utilize the preference policy in affordable developments not funded by HUD. An assessment of the policy over the course of a year found the policy was meeting the goal to house a higher rate of African American residents than before the policy's implementation.

San Francisco's experience illuminates both the opportunities of the preference policy to connect those at high risk of displacement with housing, as well as the constraints of operating under the current Fair Housing framework. Neighborhood preference worked in San Francisco because the city is both racially diverse and displays high levels of residential segregation by race. It is key to demonstrate the policy is not discriminatory by calibrating the preference such that it isn't high enough to accept a greater number of one racial group over another.

¹⁴ This analysis is drawn from an interview with Kate Hartley, former Director of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), March 9, 2020.

Another lesson from Neighborhood Preference is the role of community-based organizations. MOHCD leadership noted San Francisco’s Asian/Pacific Islander (API) community had employed community organizing to secure the greatest likelihood of success in the lottery by pooling resources with extended families. Latinx and African American communities did not utilize these strategies to the same degree, and therefore were not as successful in the lottery system. While implementing Neighborhood Preference, MOHCD started providing grants to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to assist city residents in application readiness.

A distinctive aspect of San Francisco’s system is the centralized online housing portal, DAHLIA (Database of Affordable Housing Listings, Information, and Applications). Anyone seeking affordable housing can apply through this system, which automatically applies preference based on the applicant’s supplied information. This system has enabled San Francisco to collect robust data for all inclusionary and nonprofit projects, allowing staff to evaluate the impact of the preference policies and efficacy for addressing displacement and improving access for groups prioritized for preference.¹⁵

Portland’s North/Northeast Strategy similarly is aimed at addressing the harm from previous government action, including both urban renewal, freeway construction, and the expansions of Legacy Emanuel Hospital and the Memorial Coliseum in the heart of Portland’s historically African American neighborhoods. The N/NE Strategy grants preference to those who were displaced from North and Northeast Portland during the urban renewal era, as well as their descendants. Applicants are awarded points based on where they or their relatives lived, with maximum points allocated to those whose property was taken through eminent domain. Those who qualify are able to receive resources for home repair, rental housing, and down payment assistance loans.¹⁶

An understanding of the impacts of major infrastructure projects on residential outcomes, as well the nature of current day displacement pressures is foundational to establishing a preference policy calibrated to Seattle’s history and context. Next, this report describes the history of Seattle’s largest infrastructure investments to investigate whether these projects might give rise to opportunities for additional preference criteria.

A Historical Review of Seattle’s Mega-Infrastructure Investments

Following World War II, Seattle witnessed a number of large-scale public infrastructure projects ranging from highways, to sports stadiums, to the campus for the 1962 World’s Fair. Among these projects, the construction of Interstate 5 (I-5) emerges as one of the most impactful in the city’s history. As previously stated, construction of the freeway resulted in the single-largest displacement event in the city’s history, with the demolition of 4,500 homes and displacement of approximately 40,000 residents. Beyond this, I-5 reshaped neighborhoods to make way for the massive thoroughfare carrying hundreds of thousands of

¹⁵ Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development, “MOHCD Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Annual Progress Report,” Annual Progress Report (San Francisco, California: Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development, 2018), <https://sfmohcd.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Reports/2017-18%20Annual%20Progress%20Report%20rev.pdf>.

¹⁶ “Preference Policy | The City of Portland, Oregon,” accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/74540>.

vehicles daily, indelibly shaping the city's future growth patterns, economy, urban form, and built environment.

The federal government played a formative role in the creation of the national highway system. Planning for a national network of highways began in the 1930s, designating US Route 99 as a primary corridor along the West Coast. In 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, authorizing the creation of the Interstate Highway System. With the passage of the Highway Act came significant funding for states and localities to construct highways, including \$165 million for the buildout of Washington State's interstate system. Washington's governor, Albert D. Rosellini, advocated for an accelerated timeline for freeway construction, with a priority to complete the section between Seattle and the Canadian border as quickly as possible.

Other mega-projects occurring in Seattle over the course of the 20th century include:

Project Name	Construction Duration	Use of Condemnation & Number of Units Displaced
Alaskan Way Viaduct	1950 - 1966	Yes, small number of brick and wood-frame buildings (exact number unknown) ¹⁷
State Route 520	1959-1963	Unknown ¹⁸
Interstate 90	1980-1992	Unknown ¹⁹
World's Fair Campus	1955-1962	Yes, 200 single family homes and the Warren Avenue School ²⁰
Kingdome	1972-1976	Unknown ²¹
Washington State Convention Center	1985-1988	Yes, one affordable housing building demolished (exact number of units unknown) ²²

The Alaskan Way Viaduct, S.R. 520, and I-90 all received Federal Highway funds, while the World's Fair Campus, Kingdome, and Washington State Convention Center were largely funded by state and local bonds. As in the rest of the country, the projects proposed in the latter half of the 1960s began to experience intensified opposition from residents, who used tools such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), signed in to law by President Richard Nixon 1970, to delay projects by requiring

¹⁷ "Alaskan Way Viaduct, Part 3: Building the Viaduct," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.historylink.org/File/9978>.

¹⁸ "Evergreen Point Floating Bridge Opens on August 28, 1963.," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://historylink.org/File/690>.

¹⁹ "Residents File Suit to Stop Interstate 90 Project on May 28, 1970.," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.historylink.org/File/2448>.

²⁰ "Seattle Center: How the City Bulldozed History to Create Change | Crosscut," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://crosscut.com/2011/05/seattle-center-how-city-bulldozed-history-create-c>.

²¹ "Kingdome: The Controversial Birth of a Seattle Icon (1959-1976)," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.historylink.org/File/2164>.

²² "Washington State Convention & Trade Center Officially Opens in Seattle on June 23, 1988.," accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.historylink.org/File/2646>.

further review of their impacts. Following completion of I-5, two subsequent freeway proposals in the late 1960s, the R.H. Thompson Expressway and Bay Freeway, were defeated by widespread opposition to these projects.

Origins of Freeway Construction in Washington State

In 1951, the Washington State Highway Commission was empaneled, meeting for the first time on July 9th, 1951.²³ The Board consisted of five members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The Commission was, in part, an effort to depoliticize transportation infrastructure decisions, moving away from a Governor-appointed Highway Director to a group of five members from across the state. Members were required to be from different legislative districts, and no greater than three could belong to the same political party. The composition of the Highway Commission resulted in ostensible statewide representation while simultaneously minimizing the influence of urban areas, where highways would lead to sweeping impacts. Appointed to six-year terms (longer than any state office), Commissioners were largely insulated from political forces, and almost immediately set to the task of implementing a vision of highways connecting cities and towns across the state, and in-turn, connecting Washington to the growing national interstate system.

The Resolution establishing the Highway Commission emphasizes the importance of freeways for the public welfare,

“The administration of highway affairs has become a matter of major public importance involving vast sums of money, the development of commerce and resources, the employment of great numbers of persons, the promotion of recreation and the welfare of every citizen of the state. It demands the highest order of business and technical administration, accompanied by continuity of sound long-range highway policies, freedom from political interference and changes of personnel, and an organization attracting the services of qualified talented administrators and meriting the confidence of the people.”²⁴

In this description of the Commission, the concept of technical expertise is elevated as the primary qualifying characteristic of Commissioners. The idea that these appointees were free from “political interference” is accurate in the sense that they were not at peril of losing their seat if they disagreed with a legislator, the Governor, or other influential individuals. However, it belies the fact that the Commissioners were given a platform to spearhead one of the United States’ most influential legacies—the proliferation of an interconnected highway network that would change the economic, social, and environmental face of cities in the 20th century.

²³ “An Act Relating to State Government; Creating a State Highway Commission to Administer the State Highway System and Defining Its Powers and Duties; Establishing the Washington State Safety Council as a Division of the Executive Department, and Providing for Its Organizational Structure, and for the Study of Accident Prevention Thereby.” (Olympia, Washington, n.d.), Box #2, 83-4-31703, Volumes 6-9, Washington State Archives, accessed January 8, 2020.

²⁴ “An Act Relating to State Government; Creating a State Highway Commission to Administer the State Highway System and Defining Its Powers and Duties; Establishing the Washington State Safety Council as a Division of the Executive Department, and Providing for Its Organizational Structure, and for the Study of Accident Prevention Thereby.”

During the Highway Commission's meeting in August 1951, Commissioners adopted a Resolution outlining the processes for allocating federal highway funds available through the Federal Aid Highway Act and subsequent measures. The Resolution detailed the policy framework for fund allocation, describing how the budget would be divided between counties using the same formula the state used for dispersing gas tax revenue, as well as the cost-split for Federal funding in urban and rural areas.

"Federal Aid Urban funds beginning with the 1952 allotment to the State of Washington shall, after a deduction of 1.5% for economic investigation, be divided as follows: 75% for projects on the routes of state highways in urban areas and 25% for projects on the urban system but not on the routes of state highways."²⁵

The Resolution then sketches the criteria for Federal Aid Urban projects:

"A 'highway efficiency study' will be made by the Department of Highways of all routes on the system. Based on a priority rating developed by the 'sufficiency study', the highway department will allocate available Urban Federal Aid funds to projects on the urban system...All matching funds, right of way and engineering costs, including design cost, must be provided by the city involved as a non-Federal Aid participating item."²⁶

While significant funds were coming from the Federal government, under this framework the State's Highway Department (and therefore the Highway Commissioners) held considerable sway in determining not only which projects received funding through the requirement of a "highway efficiency study," but also the physical form the roadway took, ensuring the plans conformed to Federal standards. At the same time, cities were required to bear a significant amount of cost, including engineering and design.

The first appearance of Seattle appears in 1953, when the Commission gave an overview of a meeting with a delegation of Seattle leaders to discuss projects in Seattle, including the Alaskan Way Viaduct Extension, Seattle's major north-south expressway that ran along the waterfront of the Central Business District. The meeting minutes stated:

"...An agreement will be prepared covering an expenditure of \$100,000.00 for advance designing of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Extension by the State of Washington and advance designing of the Mercer and Broad Street Underpasses of Aurora and Dexter Avenue by the City of Seattle, the cost of said work to be shared equally by the State and the City, said agreement to be subject to approval by the State Highway Commission and the City of Seattle."²⁷

In these early projects, the State of Washington and City of Seattle negotiated a mutually agreed upon process whereby both entities shared approval authority, but costs and design work were split between the State and City, with the City taking on the majority of the design work. These forerunners were prototypes for policy decisions made during the construction of Interstate 5 and illuminate the power-sharing agreements that ultimately came to shape freeway construction in Washington State.

²⁵ "Resolution No. 2" (Resolution, Olympia, Washington, August 15, 1951), Box #2, 83-4-31703, Volumes 6-9, Washington State Archives.

²⁶ "Resolution No. 2."

²⁷ "Meeting Minutes of the Washington State Highway Commission, December 15, 1953" (Meeting Minutes, Olympia, Washington, December 15, 1953), Box #2, 83-4-31703, Volumes 6-9, Washington State Archives.

The appearance of what was then known as Primary State Highway 1 doesn't appear in the Commission's discussions until June, 1956, when the Commission notes receipt of a letter from the City of Seattle "enclosing Resolution No. 17215 adopted by the City Council on June 18, 1956, concerning the proposed Tacoma-Seattle-Everett Toll Road." The City Council's Resolution recognized Congress' recent allocation of \$500,000,000 in highway funds to Washington State, advocating that the proposed toll road instead be built as a freeway utilizing State Motor Vehicle Funds and federal aid. The Resolution called for consideration of the proposed "Tacoma-Seattle-Everett Toll Road" and requested financial assistance from motor vehicle taxes collected by the state.²⁸

This Resolution marks a critical turning point in the plans for the second major north-south thoroughfare through Seattle. As in many US cities following World War II, Seattle's political and engineering leaders began conceptualizing ways to link states and regions through a comprehensive highway network.

From 1956 through completion in 1967, the State and City collaborated closely on what came to be called the Seattle Freeway.

*Seattle Freeway Development Timeline*²⁹

²⁸ "Resolution No. 17215" (Resolution, Seattle, Washington, June 18, 1956), Seattle Municipal Archives.

²⁹ Paraphrased from Bill Finkbeiner, "Background Paper on the Seattle Freeway" (Seattle, Washington, January 21, 1969), Seattle Municipal Archives.



Seattle Freeway Development Timeline

1948: City Engineer Charles Wartelle proposes a straight, 15-mile, low-level highway skirting Lake Washington, spanning the City from north to south

1949: In an annual report filed with Mayor William F. Devin and the City Council, City Engineer J.W.A. Bollong stresses the need for an elaborate Seattle Expressway System

1950: City Engineer R. W. Finke states that Seattle's north-south Freeway could soon begin the planning stages

1951: City Engineer Finke asserts the Seattle Freeway, "will provide very high vehicular capacity with a free flow of traffic by providing two separate roadways, each of at least three lanes"

- The "immediate-possession statute" is enacted in 1951 to expedite highway projects
- The law gave the State the right to take possession of property after a reasonably short period of negotiation with the owner and in the case of litigation, before the jury determines the price to be paid.

1952: Freeway route approved by the Washington State Highway Commission

- Test borings are conducted
- Seattle City Council adopts a resolution to seek \$1,000,000 from the State to fund plans, additional test borings for bridge foundations and a financial study
- City of Seattle plans to finance the freeway by building it as a toll facility

1953: Bill introduced in State Legislature to provide \$1,000,000.00 for preliminary study for toll road

1954: Tacoma to Everett Tollway considered top priority project for area by Highway Commission

1955: Consulting Engineers Greiner-Tudor Associates prepare a design report for the Washington Toll Bridge Authority. The report contains recommendations on design criteria, a project cost estimated at \$194 million, progress schedule, estimate of maintenance and operating expenses, and other relevant data

- The State Supreme Court declares unconstitutional in a trial case the "immediate-possession rule" the State planned to use to acquire properties in the freeway's route
- The 1955 Act authorizing construction of the proposed Tacoma-Seattle- Everett toll road is declared constitutional by Superior Court Judge Raymond W. Clifford

1956: state Highway Director William A. Bugge announces \$168 million earmarked for the Tacoma- Everett superhighway from the newly authorized Federal Interstate Highway Program

1957: Proposals are made to shift Freeway route to Empire Way but receive little backing due to the necessity for E-W access streets

- Property acquisition commences, and a housing aid fund for displaced residents is established

1958: Director Bugge states the Freeway will have eight regular lanes and four reversible lanes through Seattle

- General Contracting Firm Sheumann and Johnson begin excavating at Eastlake Avenue and Martin Street for the first of seven piers that would carry the freeway across Lake Union, ultimately becoming Seattle's largest bridge

1959: The State Highway Commission borrows an additional \$18,000,000 from Federal Highway funds to keep construction on schedule

1961: The First Hill Improvement Club proposes covering the Freeway between Marion and Pine Streets

- Paul Thiry, architect of Seattle's World Fair campus, puts forth "First Hill Mall Plan," proposing a depressed freeway with a lid on top, featuring additional housing and public space
- Engineering Department produces a study leading to a revised Mall Plan
- Negotiations between the Engineering Department, Thiry, and the First Hill Improvement Club lead to a new iteration of the plan, submitted to the Federal Government and the State Highway Department
- In August, the Federal and State Government reject modifications to their original plan
- First Hill Improvement Club requests additional access to First Hill, leading Mayor Clinton to engage consulting firm Tammen & Bergendoff to conduct additional studies, review plans
- Tammen & Bergendoff recommend a bridge across 8th Avenue to provide access between First Hill and Downtown
- State Highway Commission approves the 8th Ave overpass proposal December, 1961
- Seattle City Council authorizes City Engineer Roy W. Morse to conduct a feasibility study to understand the possibility of building a parking garage over the freeway, most likely between University and Seneca Streets. \$40,000 is allocated to the feasibility study

1962: Seattle City Council endorses the Seattle Freeway route, including an overpass across Eighth Avenue, providing access to First Hill

- The US Bureau of Public Roads formally approves a recommendation of the Washington State Highway commission for the Eighth Avenue overpass
- Crews begin construction of the Mercer Street Interchange on Eastlake Avenue East between Roy Street and Aloha Street
- \$14 million Lake Washington Ship Canal Bridge opens to local Seattle traffic in late December.
- Landslides occur in October near Lakeview Boulevard East and Bellevue Avenue East, damaging two homes and threatening a small apartment building. Other slides occurred near Olive Way costing more than \$250,000. Total slide damage since the beginning of construction exceeds \$750,000
- The Freeway section between Northwest Ravenna Boulevard and East Roanoke Street is formally opened by City and State officials



1963: Mayor Clinton announced the Olive Way Freeway overpass would be opened to traffic

- The fourth and final overpass structure of the Roanoke Expressway is completed
- Landslides continue to be an issue, and George Andrews, Freeway District Engineer, tells Seattle officials that slide problems may delay the completion of this section from late 1964 to sometime in 1965
- North end Freeway construction costs: Seattle's Water Department an estimated \$131,000 for replacement of large supply lines
- Morrison-Knudsen Co., Inc. Boise, and Ramsey & Co., contractors who built the section of the Seattle Freeway from East Galer Street to Lakeview Boulevard, sue the State for \$1.1 million, charging that Highway Department officials changed the specifications after work had begun.
- State Department of Highways Director Charles G. Pahl tells the Associated Press it would cost an additional \$27 million to correct unusual slide conditions along ten miles of Freeway at Beacon, Capitol and First Hills and at Yesler Terrace.

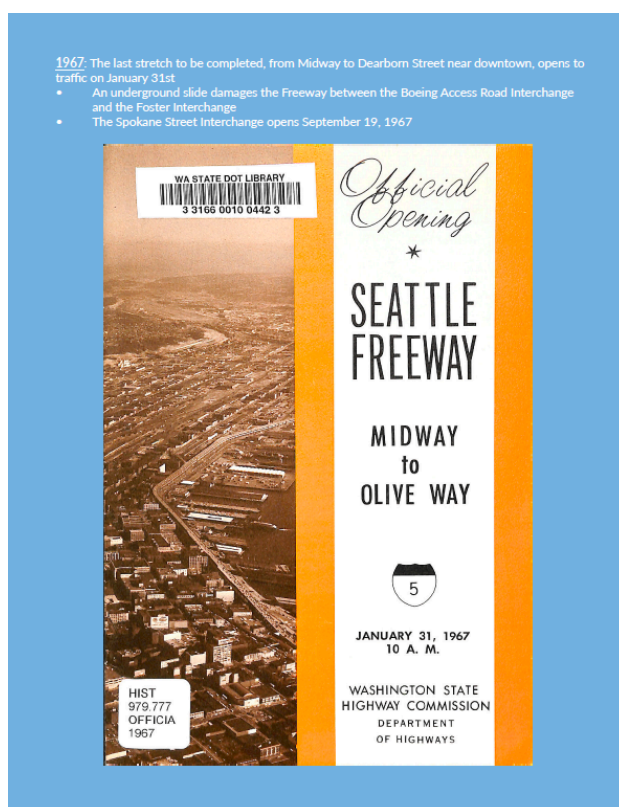
1964: The Washington State Highway Commission approves \$28.7 million for supplemental expenses for the Seattle Freeway

- Rains lead to further construction delays
- Morrison-Knudsen Co., Inc., and Ramsay & Co., Seattle joint-venture contractors' suit opens in Superior Court

1965: Reversible lanes opened in June

- Guy F. Atkinson Construction Co. files a claim for \$1,124,511 damages against the State. The firm alleges the Highway Department failed to inform bidders accurately of the conditions
- In response to increasing congestion in the Seattle Freeway's northern section, additional funds are secured for freeway widening
- Additional earth slippage occurs around the 10th Avenue East Bridge in the Freeway's East Roanoke Street interchange

1966: Freeway accidents have doubled in number over 1965



In their meeting minutes, the State Highway Commission also listed all property that fell within planned freeway routes and would ultimately be sold at public auctions. Properties condemned as part of the Seattle Freeway construction start appearing in December 1956, when fifteen properties were listed. These properties were primarily one and two-story wood frame houses, some with attached garages, valued between \$1 and \$125 (\$9.49 to \$1,186.20 in inflation-adjusted 2020 dollars).³⁰

A key insight that emerges from the construction timeline is the fact that the Seattle Freeway was built and funded separately from Urban Renewal projects taking place in the city. However, while the construction of I-5 was not funded as an urban renewal project, State planners justified the route through similar language. The Route Description promulgated by the Washington State Department of Highways stated, “with few exceptions, this area contains older and less desirable buildings and is the beginning of the separation of the apartment house, clinic and residential area from the central business district -- from Marion Street to Denny Way -- this section will traverse an area that needs improvement in appearance.”³¹ The ideology implicit in this property valuation methodology, including the devaluation of multifamily developments and community services, is emblematic of the values and paradigms of planning and development in the mid-20th century. Uncovering and interrogating these values is key to understanding the root causes of this type of displacement that did take place as a result of the construction of the Seattle Freeway.

³⁰ “Meeting Minutes of the Washington State Highway Commission December 17, 1956” (Meeting Minutes, Olympia, Washington, December 17, 1956), Washington State Archives.

³¹ Paula Becker, “First Part of Seattle Freeway (Interstate 5) Route Receives Federal Funding on October 1, 1957.”

A Delicate Balance of State Power and City Influence

The plan that was ultimately adopted for the Seattle Freeway incorporated a twelve-lane freeway through Downtown Seattle with a temporal express lane system. Public hearings were held following the announcement of the proposed alignment in 1957, drawing a mixed response from residents. The City of Seattle endorsed the plan for the freeway to run along Sixth and Seventh Avenues, simultaneously proposing to create a rapid transit corridor alongside the freeway to mitigate congestion.

The City Planning Commission formed a critical block of support for the development of the freeway. In a report entitled, “Planning for Thoroughfares: Central Freeway,” the Planning Commission stated, “The Central Freeway...is the backbone of Seattle’s future arterial thoroughfare system.”³² In this same report, the Planning Commission weighed alternative routes, including alignments along 12th Avenue and Empire Way (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way). The report argued that a route on the east side of First Hill would not adequately connect people to the Central Business district. Overall, the Planning Commission stressed the importance of the freeway rested on its ability to move people, and therefore transit must serve a critical role. “If the freeway is going to an all-around job of moving people efficiently, provision must be made specifically for transit routes.”³³

Building on these recommendations, in January 1960, Lloyd Graber, the General Manager of Seattle’s Transit System, sent a Memo to John Spaeth, Seattle’s Director of Planning, outlining the rationale for incorporating a public transit facility on the freeway, accompanied by a folder of materials from the 1957 Seattle Metropolitan Area Rapid Transit Study and other relevant documents.

The folder included a letter Graber had received from City Engineering staff regarding the opportunities to establish a Rapid Transit corridor in conjunction with the freeway. The letter stated, “the topography and growth potentials of the Puget Sound area prescribe positively that the foreseeable ultimate rail rapid transit facility should be designated into the Tacoma-Seattle-Everett Freeway at this time.”³⁴ The State Highway Commission ultimately rejected this proposal and the freeway was built without a dedicated transit facility. This disagreement demonstrates the State’s veto power over City interests, including business interests, such as the influential Central Seattle Association, that had shaped the Central Seattle Plans created in the 1950s. As the clearinghouse and granting agency of Federal funds, the State overrode Seattle’s plans for transit infrastructure as part of the freeway.

This analysis of the legislative and budgetary actions taken in these years demonstrates that intergovernmental coordination was a necessary precondition for the development of the freeway system in Seattle and across Washington State. Though the freeway changed the face of the city more than any single project in Seattle’s history, the development of the freeway was controlled to a significant extent by the Washington State Highway Commission and the Department of Highways, creating a complex

³² City of Seattle Planning Commission, “Planning for Thoroughfares: Central Freeway” (Report, Seattle, Washington, January 3, 1957), Seattle Municipal Archives.

³³ City of Seattle Planning Commission.

³⁴ Lloyd P. Graber, “Seattle Central Business District Comprehensive Plan - Land Use Study: Public Transportation Concepts” (Study, Seattle, Washington, January 1960), D-102, Seattle Municipal Archives.

web of power-relationships and compromises. Community opposition and requests for modification strained these relationships, interposing demands into an already monumental and complex process. The community demands perhaps shed most light on the power relationships at play, throwing into relief which communities could sway the civic processes, and which were overridden.

One Freeway, Two Cities: Impacts of Seattle's Largest Infrastructure Megaproject

Short-term Impacts: Residential

County Assessor data in conjunction with City and State records show the majority of structures demolished were residential, and that a large portion of the detached homes were owner-occupied or in a mortgage contract with a bank.³⁵

The immediate impacts of interstate construction were visible to residents in the earliest days of the freeway development process. Following authorization by the Washington State Highway Commission in 1956, Highway Officers visited the buildings that sat in and were immediately adjacent to the planned freeway route. These inspectors took detailed records of each building, including the date of construction, owner, use, condition, physical characteristics such as the number of stories and the type of construction, and the combined assessed value of the structure and the land. State law entitled property owners to fair market value for their land, which was determined by two independent appraisals. Appraisal documents took careful note of the conditions, including extensive documentation of age and damage to incorporate into the calculated fair market value.

Though the inspection documents do not record the race nor ethnicity of the building owner, comparing the freeway route to historic census maps illuminates who was displaced through the use of eminent domain. This analysis will divide the freeway into three primary sections in order to approach the residential impacts: North, Central, and South.³⁶

Impacts – Northern Section

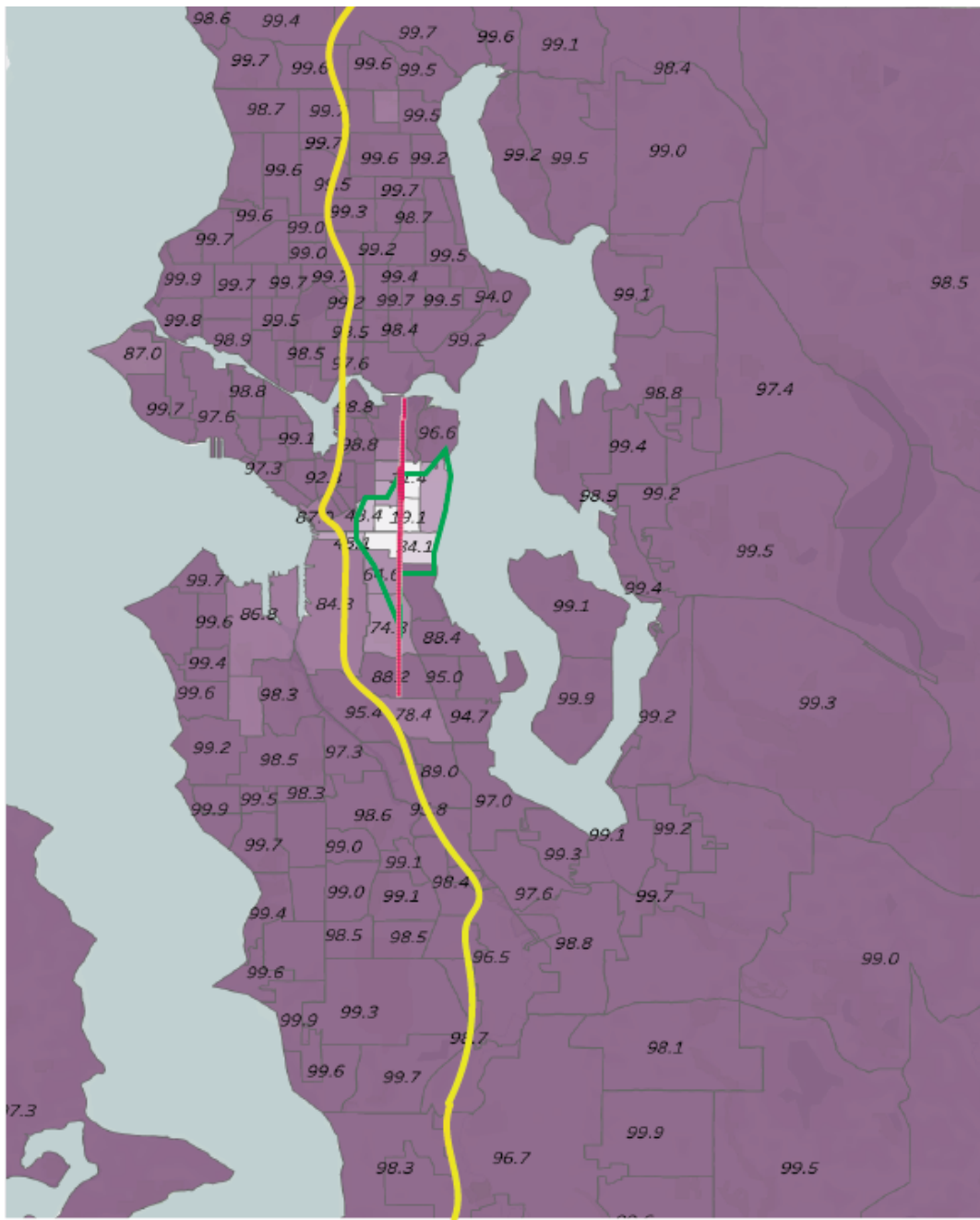
The Northern section of Interstate 5 incorporates all properties located north of Mercer Street. A census map of 1960 demonstrates a significant majority of white households living in this section of the city (see map below). While the northernmost parts of the city were still sparsely populated in the 1950s, the development of Northgate shopping mall in 1950, one of the country's first post-war suburban-style malls, saw increased commercial and residential development in neighborhoods north of the ship canal.

Ten percent of property owners citywide refused to accept the state's fair market valuation. These properties were taken through condemnation proceedings, and it is unclear what payment these property owners received. Homeowners had 90 days from the signing of the contract to move, though some had additional time due to construction delays. Demolition of properties in the freeway's path began at the ends of the Ship Canal Bridge in the Eastlake and University District neighborhoods. State agents hosted auctions for people to bid on houses in the freeway's path. Some of these structures were placed on

³⁵ "N-S FREEWAY - County Assessor Data" (Microfiche, 1951), Seattle Municipal Archives.

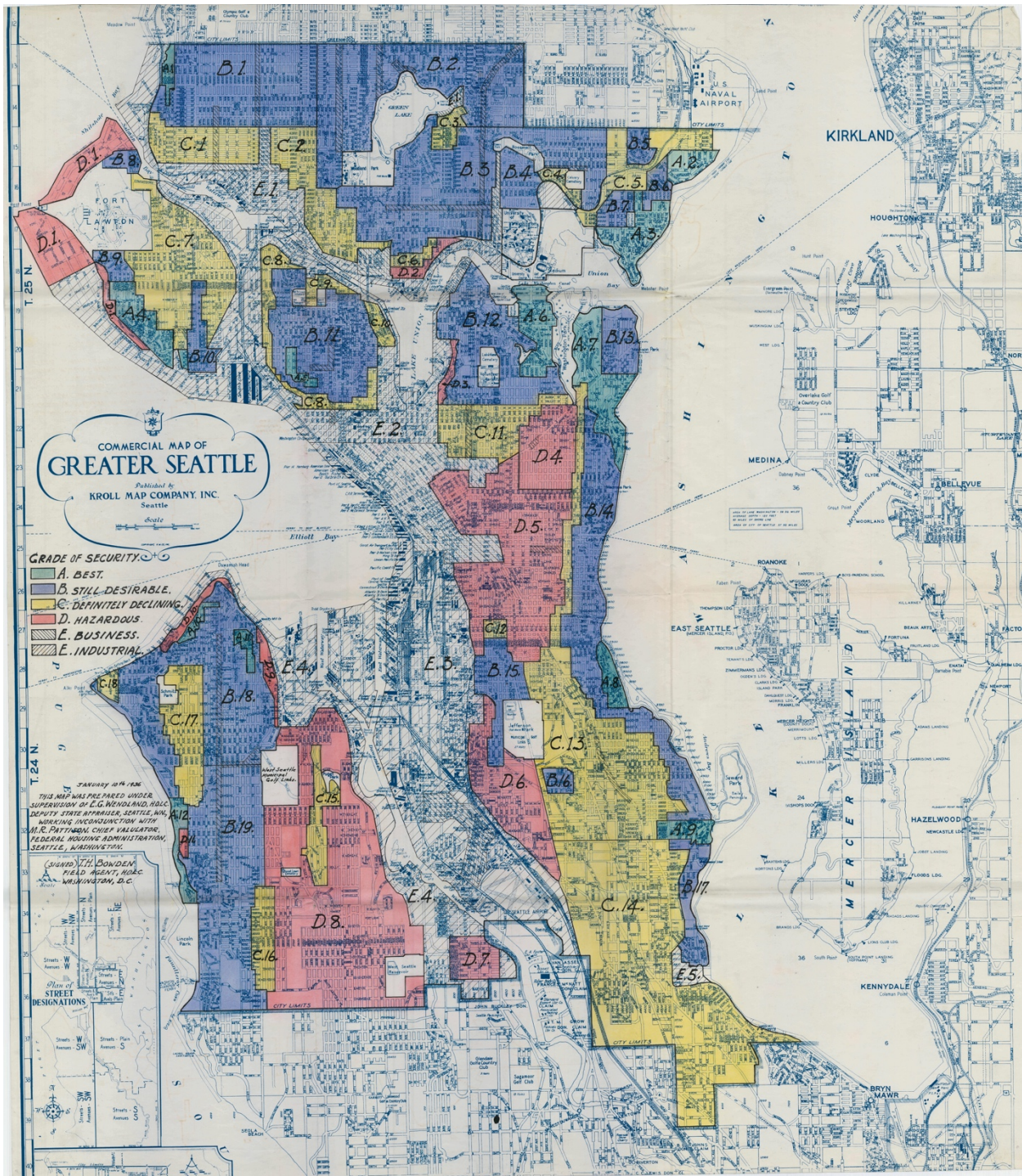
³⁶ Divisions made by author and do not reflect categories created during freeway planning.

flatbed trucks and relocated to other neighborhoods, while others were stripped of valuable materials and left in the path for demolition.



A map of Seattle showing the proportion of white households in 1960. Overlaid is the route of the Seattle Freeway (yellow), the proposed alternative route on Empire Way (red), and the boundaries the Central District, the historic heart of Seattle's African American community (green). Base map courtesy of the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium.³⁷

³⁷ Anna Yoon, Brian Lam, Gihoon Du, Jiang Wu, et al., "Interactive Map of Race Seattle/King County 1940-2010," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium, accessed January 12, 2020, <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/maps-race-seattle.shtml>.



Home Owners Loan Corporation Map of Seattle, 1936, courtesy of Mapping Inequality.³⁸

³⁸ Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America," American Panorama, ed., accessed January 25, 2020, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=downloads>.

The majority of the northern section of I-5 falls in areas that were categorized as “still desirable” (blue), though there is one district east of Greenlake labelled “definitely declining” (yellow). This section of I-5 was built in neighborhoods featuring largely residential uses, primarily composed of detached Single-Family dwelling units. Some of the first mentions of homes sold for demolition in the Washington State Highway Commission’s notes document homes in these areas. Entries included the address, number of stories, and minimum sale price. One entry reads, “1 ½ -story frame house & attached garage, 2337 N. 95th St. Minimum Price: \$200 [\$1,837.12 in 2020 inflation-adjusted dollars].”³⁹ Records in the archives document the acquisition of 1-story frame homes as well as a handful of duplexes, with minimum prices ranging from \$10 to \$1,000 (\$91.86 to \$918.56 in 2020 inflation-adjusted dollars). Based on a broad survey of the archives, the greatest number of freestanding housing structures were demolished in the northern section.

The impact of the construction of the freeway through the northern portion of the city is not limited to homes. The freeway is twelve lanes wide through this area, creating a division between east and west. There are several underpasses built at the intersections of larger arterials, but the ability to travel along the city’s latitude was significantly altered by the construction of the freeway.

Impacts: Central Section

The Central section is bounded by Mercer Street to the north, and South Dearborn Street to the south, and includes the Central Business District of Seattle. This area featured the greatest density of buildings in the city, and some of the strongest opposition originated in the First Hill neighborhood, one of the City’s oldest and wealthiest areas.

An analysis of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps reveals the presence of a variety of immigrant-owned businesses that existed in the freeway’s route previous to construction, dating from 1905 to 1951. Though these maps do not document the specific business that were directly displaced during the course of freeway clearance, they provide an indication of the types of land uses the freeway came to replace.

The freeway was sited to run directly through Seattle’s historic Chinatown and International District, and businesses connected with Japanese proprietors, including “Japanese hotel” “Japanese laundry” and “Japanese Baptist Mission” are all in evidence in the freeway’s route. This is notable given the internment of those of Japanese heritage during World War II, which had resulted in abandoned properties and financial distress in Japantown fifteen years earlier. Understanding the local ramifications for small businesses in addition to residential displacement lends additional depth to an analysis of the intersecting and overlapping impacts of I-5 construction.

Political debates within city government at the time demonstrate which community stakeholders held the most sway in City Hall. In 1961, the *Seattle Daily Times* published a story under the headline “Council Backs Mall Over Two Downtown Freeway Sections.” The City Council voted to support the recommendations of City Engineer Roy Morse, who had originally been pitched the proposal by the First

³⁹ “Meeting Minutes of the Washington State Highway Commission December 17, 1956.”

Hill Improvement Club (FHIC). FHIC had commissioned architects and engineers, including Century 21 World's Fair campus architect Paul Thiry, to put together a proposal and cost estimate for a lid between Marion and Pine streets in downtown Seattle. There was a significant discrepancy between the estimated cost of the lid from the FHIC and the City Engineering Department: FHIC estimated the lid would cost approximately \$12 million while the Engineering staff estimated \$20 million. Nonetheless, the Council followed Morse's recommendation to request the State dedicate \$6,000,000 additional funds for freeway costs in proposed covered areas.⁴⁰ The Council framed their primary concern as creating sufficient connections to First Hill.

While the full lid proposal was ultimately rejected by the State Highway Department, the creation of the 8th Avenue overpass from the Central Business District to First Hill also sheds light on formal and informal political processes at play in the central section of the freeway. In a letter to Mr. T.V. Dean of FHIC, Mayor Braman stated,

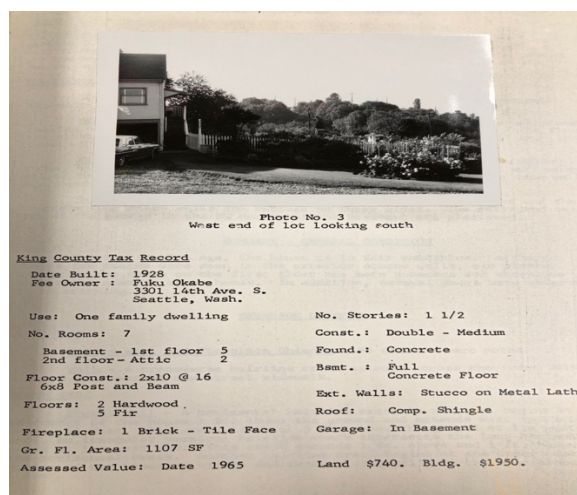
“I think the First Hill Improvement Club is certainly to be congratulated on their part in calling the need for this overpass to the attention of the authorities at the right time so that this great facility got into the plans and was constructed. It surely will be a valuable adjunct to the use of the entire Freeway and to the service of the First Hill area.”⁴¹

In a letter dated October 15, 1965, Mayor J.D. Braman informed a constituent that use of the air-space over the freeway for a park was impossible due to the “lateness of [the effort to build a lid’s] inception and the reluctance of the State Highway Department to change design at that late date.” However, the Mayor went on to assert his support the idea, stating, “I do believe that the concept, undertaken early enough and under the proper topographical conditions, would be well worthwhile; and only regret that the combination of these circumstances did not permit a favorable verdict in our own case.”⁴² The Mayor’s stated support of the lid concept at this moment, while ineffectual at spurring the creation of the lid, may have nonetheless been an important foundation which future lid advocates could deploy. While First Hill advocates were unable to secure the full mitigation efforts they desired to see in a lid, they were effectively able to negotiate the creation of multiple overpasses to enhance the neighborhood’s connection with downtown Seattle, summoning the political capital to modify the freeway’s plans at significant cost to the city and state.

⁴⁰ “Council Backs Mall Over Two Downtown Freeway Sections,” *Seattle Daily Times*, June 6, 1961, Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴¹ James d’Orma “Dorm” Braman, “Letter to Mr. T.V. Dean from Mayor J.D. Braman,” May 17, 1965, Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴² James d’Orma “Dorm” Braman, “Letter to Mrs. Rodney G. Loper from Mayor J.D. Braman,” October 15, 1965, Seattle Municipal Archives.



The State Highway Department's records of a home on Beacon Hill condemned by eminent domain for freeway construction.⁴⁴

The buildout of the southern section is also unique in that it was the only portion requiring the taking of Seattle Parks & Department's property. In March of 1965, Superintendent of Parks approved the transfer of portions of the Georgetown Play and Cleveland High School track for the freeway, accepting a payment of \$4,935 from the State for the land.⁴⁵

In March of 1965, members of the Georgetown community met with State Highway Engineer George Andrews to discuss opportunities to change the proposed freeway route in order to prevent the taking of a portion of Georgetown Playfield. The plans for the freeway called for requisitioning 45 feet on the east end of the playfield to build an exit ramp on Corson Avenue. The community members informed the engineer that if only 28 feet were taken the football field within the park could be kept intact.⁴⁶

While the Highway Department ultimately accepted this compromise, the Georgetown Community Club continued to advocate on behalf of preserving the entirety of the park. President of the Club, Herbert G. Keppler, authored a letter to the Mayor outlining the case for preserving the park untouched. "There is no other place in the area for children to play...South Seattle Park has been phased out by Urban Renewal and South Park already has been cut down; Georgetown is the only other park left in this area with a full-size field...Cleveland High School uses the football and baseball fields." Keppler's argument highlighted the lack of adequate park space in South Seattle, particularly due to recent Urban Renewal activity. In the

⁴⁴ Washington State Highway Department, "Inspection of the Home of Fuku Okabe" (Inspection, Olympia, Washington, n.d.), Department of Highways, Seattle Freeway Building Condition Survey, 68-A-415, Box No. AB-3, Washington State Archives, accessed January 9, 2020.

⁴⁵ Edward J. Johnson, Superintendent of Parks, "Letter to Mr. A.L. Newbould from Edward J. Johnson," March 17, 1965.

⁴⁶ "Georgetown Groups Meet in Attempt to Save Park," *Beacon Hill News*, March 18, 1965, Vol. 41 No. 11 edition, Seattle Municipal Archives. CITE "Georgetown Groups Meet in Attempt to Save Park"

context of Seattle's park development, this assertion is backed by historical data around the city's investments in green space in the southern half of the city.

Seattle's most significant investment in open space took place in the early 1900s, when the City Council hired the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm to put together a master plan of green spaces linked by bicycle boulevards. Over the next 34 years, the firm designed 37 parks and playgrounds throughout the city, funded by three separate, voter-approved bond measures totaling more than \$3,500,000. While there are more than twelve parks in the areas just north of the center city, Jefferson Park is the only greenspace created by the Olmsteds in the southern half of Seattle.⁴⁷ Keppler's assertion that South Seattle had received fewer parks than other, more affluent areas of the city is certainly accurate when considered in light of the city's early park development.

Keppler's letter then alluded to the challenges that faced South Seattle at this time. "This is an area where children need a lot of help – we are working at a disadvantage – while it appears this is taking just a little bit now, it is just the beginning; a lot more could be taken"⁴⁸ The dearth of green spaces in South Seattle was accompanied by heavy industry concentrated in the Duwamish Valley Manufacturing and Industrial Area, including Boeing, the Port of Seattle, and Burlington Northern railroad, along with a significant private industry presence. State engineers noted this area was "in transition" from residential to industrial use, and utilized this claim as justification for the chosen route.⁴⁹ While this research does not document the exact number of homes taken through eminent domain in south Seattle, it is clear I-5 ushered in a shift in land use, pushing the area toward increased industrialization while further marginalizing residential development.

Beyond the lost open space itself, this chapter of I-5's development sheds important light on the political dynamics at play in the city. Residents of First Hill advocated successfully to win a number of concessions from the State Highway Department, including the 8th Avenue overpass, and later the construction of a partial lid as part of Freeway Park, completed in 1976. Despite their efforts to sway local and state officials, the community leaders of Georgetown were only partially successful in preserving the Georgetown Playfield and Cleveland High School track, which to this day lie directly next to the freeway. Mayor Braman claimed that the freeway could not be re-routed because the state controlled the project and that it was simply too late in the process.

"I am sure you all understand that this is a project of the Washington State Highway Department and that we in the City have little to say, other than to hold certain generalized limited access route hearings early in the planning, which was several years ago. We, of course, join with you in concern about losing any of our valuable park and recreation."⁵⁰

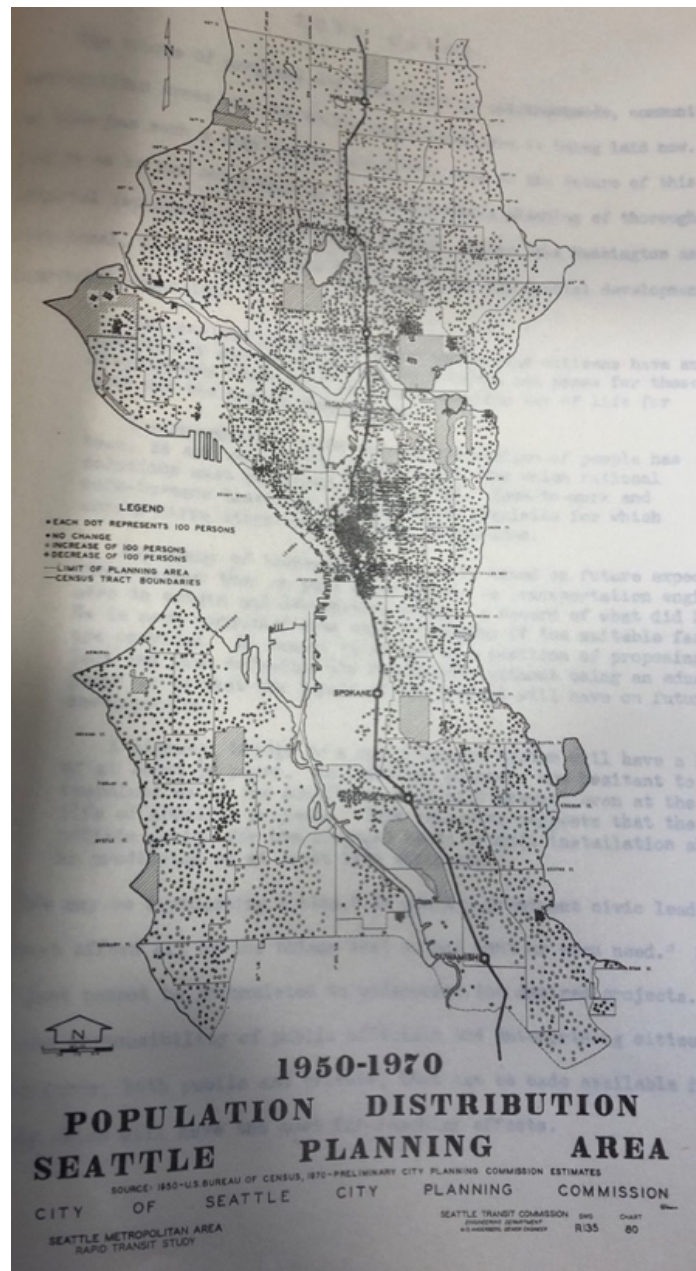
⁴⁷ "A Brief History," Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://seattleolmsted.org/history/>.

⁴⁸ Herbert Keppler, "Letter to Mayor J.D. Braman from Herbert Keppler, Georgetown Community Club," March 22, 1965, Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴⁹ City of Seattle Planning Commission, "Planning for Thoroughfares: Central Freeway."

⁵⁰ James d'Orma "Dorm" Braman, "Letter to Mr. Herbert G. Keppler from Mayor J.D. Braman," February 3, 1965, Seattle Municipal Archives.

Braman pledged to “determine just where we can be helpful in this,” and further stated his confidence that “something can be done to eliminate or at least minimize the impact of the new road on these valuable areas.”⁵¹ Whatever steps the Mayor took, Georgetown playfield was cut through by the freeway. Comparing the mitigation costs of the 8th Avenue Overpass with the payment of \$4,935 to preserve park area provides a stark counter to the justification that the freeway’s course was determined by the most efficient, cost-effective route. Rather it was the complex web of political relationships and power dynamics that shaped the freeway’s footprints in impacted communities.



A map showing the population distribution of Seattle noting population change patterns, 1960. Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives.⁵²

⁵¹ James d’Orma “Dorm” Braman.

⁵² Lloyd P. Graber, “Public Transportation Concepts.”

Historical Implications

Based on this analysis, African Americans were not disproportionately displaced from their homes by the construction of Interstate 5. However, as time went on following freeway construction, Seattle's segregation patterns persisted and deepened, now with I-5's walls and roaring traffic serving as a physical barrier eliminating inter-neighborhood mobility and integration.

Policy Perspective: How to Address A Freeway's Legacy

The first action taken on the path to establishing Community Preference in Seattle was a Resolution unanimously adopted by the City Council in 2017, an action focused on countering displacement in Seattle's Chinatown/International District (C/ID). The impetus of this Resolution was a partially due to voices surfacing in opposition to the recently adopted Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) policy accompanying an upzone in the C/ID. The MHA framework incorporated an inclusionary housing policy that enabled increases in zoning capacity while also requiring developers to provide affordable housing units as part of their developments, either by including affordable units in the development ("on-site performance") or paying into the City's affordable housing fund ("payment in-lieu"). As in many Chinatowns across the country, Seattle's C/ID is centrally located and experienced heavy development pressures in the years following the Great Recession.

The City Council's Resolution called for the Office of Housing to work in collaboration with community partners and City departments to submit recommendations to the Council.

"Council seeks recommendations that would provide neighborhood stability, as evidenced by people returning or being able to stay in the neighborhood, such as options for giving preference to qualified applicants for OH-supported housing who have been long-time residents of the neighborhood in which the housing is located, informed by a review of preference programs implemented in comparable settings, such as San Francisco, California, and Portland, Oregon."⁵³

In 2018, Councilmember Lisa Herbold hosted a discussion about the Community Preference Policy framework in the Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development & Arts Committee. In the presentation, staff from the Office of Housing discussed "how and whether the City can establish preference," also incorporating pathways to achieve community ownership.⁵⁴ OH framed the goal of this policy as "a way to provide housing in communities at high-risk of displacement, [or histories of] racial discrimination addressing past government harms."⁵⁵ OH staff stated that the City could create policies that allow

⁵³ "A Resolution Relating to the Chinatown/International District; Identifying Actions of the City and Its Partners That Hold Promise to Enhance Cultural Identity and Economic Vitality, Recognize History, and Promote Equitable Developments.," Pub. L. No. Res 31754, 11 (2017), <https://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=5366942&GUID=74CD4C81-B762-4BA3-BB7F-73DDA18FDA15>.

⁵⁴ Maureen Kostyak, Emily Alvarado, Erika Pablo, "Community Resident Preference Policy as an Anti-Displacement Strategy" (Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development & Arts Committee, Seattle, Washington, June 12, 2018), <https://www.seattlechannel.org/mayor-and-council/city-council/2018/2019-civil-rights-utilities-economic-development-and-arts-committee?videoid=x92046>. 8

⁵⁵ Maureen Kostyak, Emily Alvarado, Erika Pablo.

providers to tailor policies for affordable rental housing as well as homeownership through setting aside rental or ownership units and using a lottery system to match applicants with housing. However, OH staff emphasized the necessity of compliance with Fair Housing Laws, particularly the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Rule. In this case, the City could not perpetuate exclusion or racial segregation, but rather could adopt policies to “sustain integration and address displacement.”⁵⁶

Councilmember Herbold stressed the priority of implementing Community Preference in parallel to the implementation of MHA. Herbold asserted the priority that “our communities are places where traditional cultural members of this city can live. We must find the resources to do this more quickly and implement in conjunction with citywide MHA.” Councilmember Herbold’s urgency in establishing Community Preference was framed around the need to protect vulnerable community members at risk of displacement in parallel to increases in development capacity granted through MHA. The Councilmember proposed a policy option where developers could build to additional capacity if they incorporated units for Community Preference residents in their buildings.

The Community Preference Policy is still nascent; staff in the Office of Housing began outreach to community partners in November of 2019 to solicit feedback intended to help shape the policy. The policy framework currently allows developers to voluntarily dedicate up to 50% of units of a development built in a neighborhood at high risk of displacement to current residents of that neighborhood, those who use community services in the neighborhood, those who used to live in the neighborhood, or those whose relatives previously lived in the neighborhood.

The first development in Seattle to incorporate community preference was Hirabayashi Place, a 96-unit development in Seattle’s Chinatown/International District, which utilized preference for current residents in the 98104 zip code. Completed in 2016, Hirabayashi Place is named in honor of Gordon Hirabayashi, a Seattle resident of Japanese descent who defied internment during World War II, appealing his case to the Supreme Court. Inter*im CDA, a C/ID based non-profit, was the lead developer, partnering with El Centro de La Raza for childcare services. The development was funded through Seattle’s Office of Housing, the Human Services Department, the Washington State Housing and Community Development Program, Enterprise Community Investment, and other sources.⁵⁷

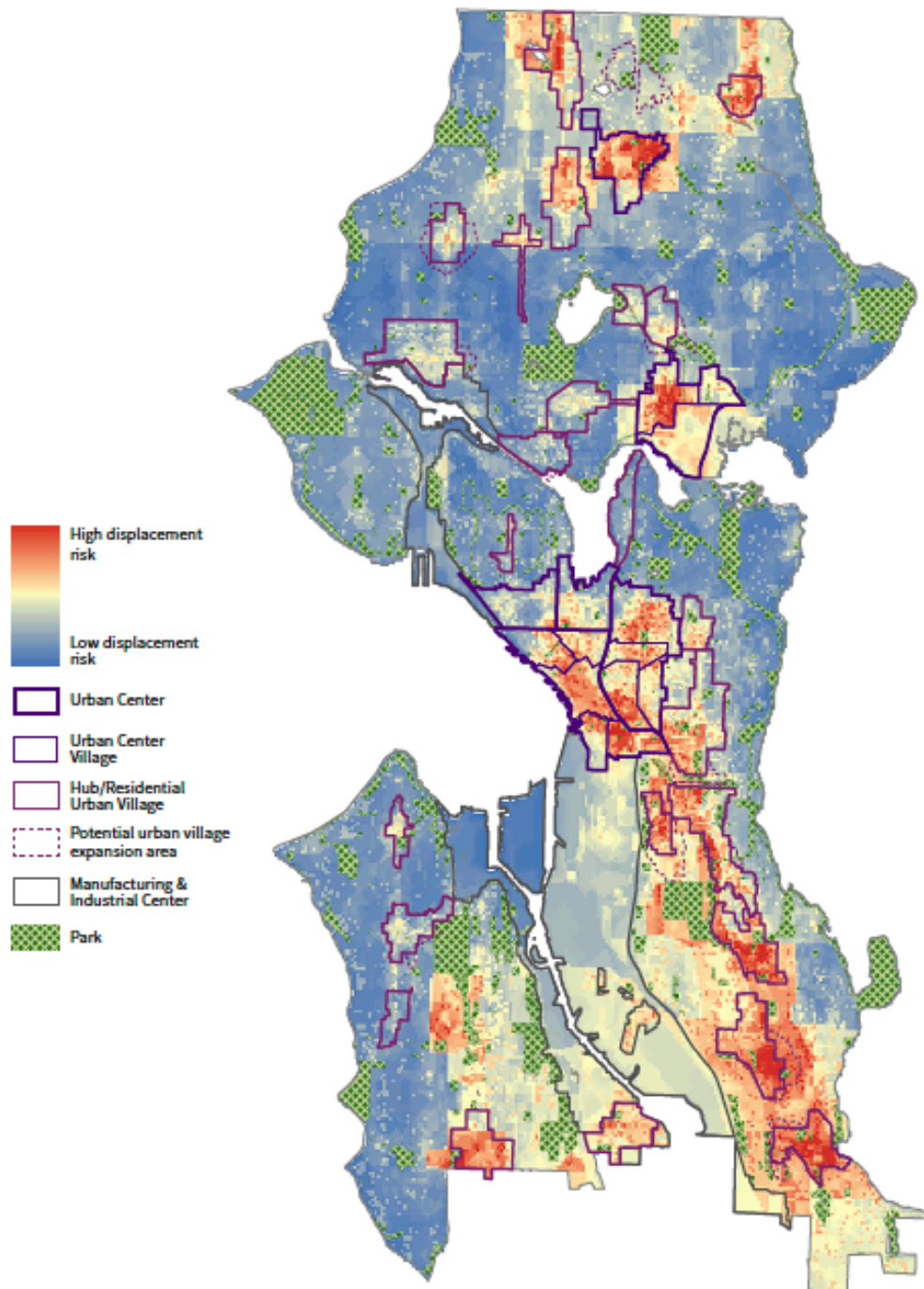
Policy Considerations in Light of I-5’s Legacy

While the route of Interstate 5 (I-5) shares significant overlaps with Seattle’s Displacement Risk Index, there are similarly, large swaths of the route that are at low displacement risk, as defined by the Office of Planning and Community Development (see maps below). In looking at the history of planning and construction of the freeway, it becomes clear that I-5 was not created in concert with Urban Renewal efforts, and therefore avoided to a large degree the targeted harm inflicted on communities of color experienced across the country. This is not to say that communities of color were not harmed during the creation of I-5. Rather, a broad cross section of Seattle’s population was impacted, and the City’s built environment indelibly altered. However, the use of eminent domain is a less targeted proxy for government harm relating to institutionalized racism and institutional disinvestment.

⁵⁶ Maureen Kostyak, Emily Alvarado, Erika Pablo.

⁵⁷ “Hirabayashi Place,” accessed May 6, 2020, <http://interimicda.org/project/hirabayashiplace/>.

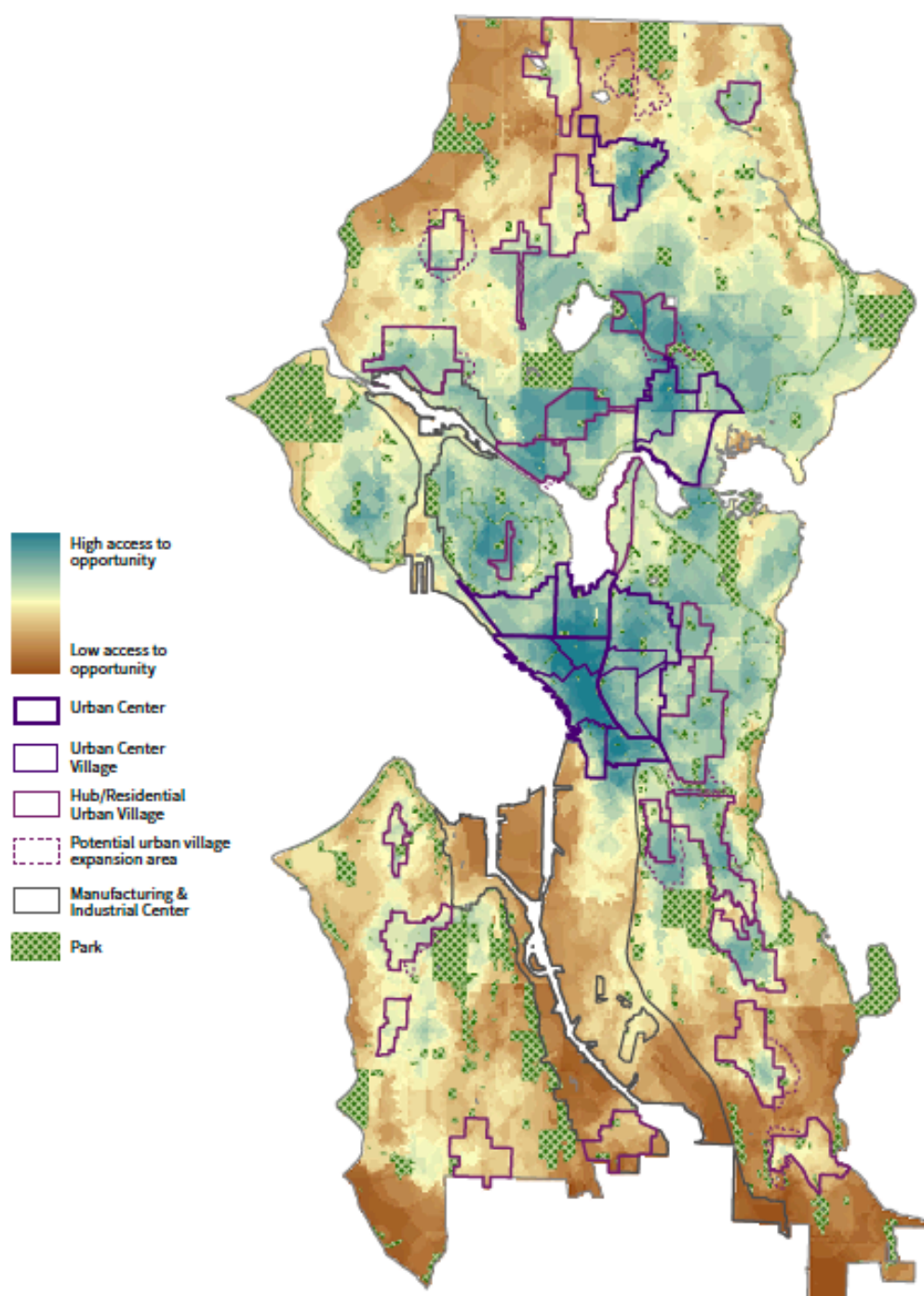
Figure 5 Displacement Risk Index



A map of Seattle overlaid with the Displacement Risk Index. Map courtesy of Seattle's Office of Planning and Community Development.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Office of Planning and Community Development, "Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle's Growth Strategy."

Figure 6 Access to Opportunity Index



A map of Seattle overlaid with the Access to Opportunity Index. Map courtesy of Seattle's Office of Planning and Community Development.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Office of Planning and Community Development.

Additional Anti-Displacement Opportunities

The results of this study in no way negate the need to provide additional anti-displacement strategies to those at most risk of being pushed out of the city, including Seattle's African American residents and other historically marginalized groups. Below are three recommendations that build on the policy precedents in Portland, San Francisco, and others, modified to address Seattle's unique context and best serve the city's communities.

1. Preference Policy for Neighborhoods at High Risk of Displacement

To date, large cities such as New York City and San Francisco have explored implementing preference policies for residents of particular districts or neighborhoods. The key challenge to this type of policy is avoiding disparate racial impact, prohibited by the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Leadership in the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development reflected that preference policies based on neighborhoods at high risk of displacement offer significant opportunity as well as some risk. The preference policy must be applied to developments at levels that do not create a disproportionate advantage for one racial group over another, and is most effective if implemented in partnership with CBOs able to support members of underserved communities through the application process.⁶⁰

Seattle bears significant similarities to San Francisco, particularly in terms of geographic constraints, immigration histories, and development patterns. Understanding San Francisco's experience with the Neighborhood Resident Housing Preference (NRHP) policy sheds light on how Seattle can approach community preference to ensure it is not vulnerable to legal challenge or administrative obstacles. The Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) has developed detailed maps of displacement risk including indicators such as racial demographics, linguistic isolation, educational attainment, housing tenancy (including cost-burden), household income, and eight other indicators (see above). Seattle's community preference should be structured to grant priority in areas with accelerating displacement, as documented by OPCD, and preference should be required for affordable housing funded by the City of Seattle in neighborhoods at high-risk of displacement. Further analysis should be conducted to determine the set-aside proportion to ensure there is no racially disparate impact, but a mandatory 25% set-aside could be a good starting point, as evidenced in San Francisco.

Seattle should also implement a centralized portal parallel to San Francisco's DAHLIA system to allow the city to track the efficacy of these programs, as well as to recalibrate the policy as necessary.

2. Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)

Another anti-displacement policy gaining traction nationwide is the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA). TOPA policies require landlords to provide advance notice of plans to sell the building, as well as to extend an offer to tenants to purchase the property before placing it on the market, in other words, a right of first refusal. TOPA policies have been adopted in Washington DC, and are currently under consideration in Berkeley, Oakland, and at the state level in California. TOPA frameworks can take a

⁶⁰ Interview with Kate Hartley, former Director of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), March 9, 2020.

variety of forms, but generally require landlords to notify tenants of an intent to sell, provide a timeframe for tenants to form a tenant association and express interest in purchase, and to secure financing. A parallel policy framework, the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), gives non-profits a first right of purchase.

The preservation of affordable housing, as well as the pathway to ownership is a powerful anti-displacement tool worthy of consideration. The State of Washington currently does not offer a purchase opportunity, but does require owners to serve a written notice to each household at least twelve months before expiration of rental assistance or prepayment to local government, Public Housing Authority (PHA), and the state.⁶¹ In 2019, the Seattle City Council authorized a Notice of Intent to Sell ordinance, requiring owners of residential property with at least one unit rented at 80% Area Median Income (AMI) or below to inform the City, allowing staff and community partners to evaluate properties for preservation or acquisition, but would not require the seller to accept a below-market offer from the City or non-profit.⁶² By incorporating a TOPA/COPA at the state or local level, tenants would have greater opportunity not only to remain in place, but also to participate in the wealth-building opportunities of homeownership. The City should also consider strengthening preservation mandates to ensure public agencies, in addition to non-profits and tenants, have a better chance to renew and prolong affordability requirements and subsidies.

3. Down Payment Assistance & Homeownership Supports

Homeownership assistance programs have existed at the federal, state, and local levels for many years, providing education and counseling, down payment assistance loans, and home repair support to assist those who wish to become homeowners. However, until 2015 homeownership supports had not been tied to a preference policy. Portland, Oregon's North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy combines these two priorities, creating a unique policy hybrid in the United States.

Portland's N/NE Strategy partners with local community-based organizations (CBOs) whose purpose is to support the city's low-income residents as well as communities of color to pursue homeownership. The Portland Housing Center (PHC) serves as a link between Portland's Housing Bureau and residents seeking down payment assistance. PHC ensures these applicants have access to mortgage-readiness education, realtor services, financial counseling, and the other resources for home purchase. PHB provides the down payment assistance loan once a resident or family find a home on which they'd like to submit an offer.

Creating a similar partnership between the Office of Housing and CBOs throughout Seattle's diverse communities could yield a much higher volume of homeowners in communities that have rental rates much higher than Seattle's white population, leaving them vulnerable to economic evictions and other forms of displacement. As evidenced across the country, homeownership is a powerful neighborhood stabilization tool and provides opportunities for intergenerational wealth building that few other

⁶¹ "A Brief Review of State and Local Preservation Purchase Laws," *Housing Law Bulletin* 36 (December 2006), [http://nhlp.org/files/Pres%20Purchase%20Rts%20\(Nov%20Dec%2006\).pdf](http://nhlp.org/files/Pres%20Purchase%20Rts%20(Nov%20Dec%2006).pdf).

⁶² "Notice of Intent to Sell - Housing | Seattle.Gov," accessed May 5, 2020, <https://www.seattle.gov/housing/intent-to-sell>.

investments do. In 2017, the African American homeownership rate was 28% in King County, compared to 42% nationwide. This falls markedly below the 63% ownership rate among whites in King County.⁶³ Addressing the displacement of African American families must begin with a recognition of this disparity and a commitment to bringing these families to parity with their white counterparts. Increasing homeownership supports for income-qualifying individuals is a necessary first step in remedying this inequity.

Conclusion

In planning, as with almost any aspect of urban life, in order to accurately gauge the present it is critical to understand the past, and the multi-layered dynamics, personalities, and forces that conspired to create the reality we perceive today. The Seattle section of Interstate 5, originally developed as a solution to the automobile traffic threatening to choke the city, has fundamentally altered Seattle's history of development.

The lens through which one views I-5 reflects the viewer just as much as it demonstrates an approach to city planning. I-5 is, at turns, a continuous traffic jam, a means to distributing the products of Seattle to the Puget Sound Region and West Coast, a barrier between neighborhoods, and a place where people have taken shelter from the elements since the days of the Vietnam War. The history of I-5's development is as complex as the freeway's footprint in present-day Seattle. Originally conceptualized as a toll road through Seattle, the freeway proposal was swept into the national movement to build an interconnected highway system throughout the United States under the Federal Highway Aid Act of 1956, one of the largest infrastructure development undertakings this country has witnessed.

In recent years, attention has turned back to I-5, with community members advocating to build a lid atop the freeway's downtown section, reconnecting the street grid and "knitting" neighborhoods back together.⁶⁴ These efforts mirror the calls of one of Seattle's most storied architects, Paul Thiry, the visionary behind Seattle's World Fair campus, to create a lid atop the freeway in order to create an urban "mall," with low buildings, parking, and open space, providing a connection between Downtown and First Hill. As recent efforts to build a lid gain momentum, now in the stages of completing a feasibility and engineering study, it is critical to unearth the history of I-5 to understand who was most impacted by this mega-project. Only through an analysis of past harm can a discussion of mitigation begin to address these issues and plan for a more equitable and just future.

Unlike in many U.S. cities, the impacts of the development of the Seattle Freeway did not fall heaviest on Seattle's communities of color. I-5 is unique in that its impacts were so momentous that it left practically no community untouched. The relatively sparsely populated neighborhoods of north Seattle were bisected by the freeway, creating a much faster route south to Seattle's Central Business District and north to Everett, but creating barriers to east-west travel that remain challenging for pedestrians, drivers, and transit users alike. Seattle's Greenlake neighborhood, an area considered desirable dating back to the

⁶³ Gene Balk, "The Rise and Dramatic Fall of King County's Black Homeowners," *The Seattle Times*, June 12, 2017, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/the-rise-and-dramatic-fall-of-king-countys-black-homeowners/>.

⁶⁴ "Lid I-5," Lid I-5, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://lidi5.org/>.

HOLC, was split in two, with thousands of detached homes demolished to make way for the freeway's passage. Many of those whose homes were taken through eminent domain were homeowners, while a considerable number were still in contract with a bank and in the process of paying off their mortgage.

While demographic information about those displaced by eminent domain was not recorded by the State, census maps allow this study to infer that the vast majority (approximately 99%) of homeowners in the northern section of the freeway's path were white. The construction of the Seattle Freeway disrupted once of the most sacrosanct institutions in the U.S.—homeownership. It is difficult to know where the displaced homeowners went after their home was acquired by the state. Were they able to purchase another home? Did they stay in Seattle, or leave altogether? Further research may reveal a more detailed picture about where these homeowners went, and how this event impacted their lives.

As the Freeway came to traverse Seattle's Central Business District, the transformation of the city's streets into a smooth, concrete thoroughfare surrounded by hulking retaining walls ushered in further transformation. Community members in First Hill, one of the neighborhoods on the front lines of freeway construction, were galvanized to speak up against the plans adopted by the State Highway Commission. Residents protested the "ditch" that would divide their neighborhood from the rest of the city. In 1960, the First Hill neighborhood was between 87% and 93% white. It was these residents whose protests are the most well-documented in archival sources, and whose voices are most extensively memorialized. Less visible is the number of Japanese-owned businesses in Japantown that were demolished with freeway construction, which ultimately split Seattle's Chinatown/International District in two, or the voices of residents living in South Seattle who saw their neighborhoods transform from tree-lined streets of homes to a booming manufacturing and industrial district.

As the Freeway traveled south to Beacon Hill and Georgetown, the effects were felt just as strongly, though in a different context. These are the areas the HOLC labelled as either yellow ("Definitely Declining") or red ("hazardous"). While the freeway largely avoided the heart of Seattle's African American community in the Central District, residents of these South Seattle neighborhoods witnessed the evolution of their neighborhoods from detached one-story homes to increasingly industrial in character. The freeway ushered this transition, and at present, the areas surrounding I-5 south of Dearborn are zoned industrial. Georgetown was also one of the only neighborhoods where a park was sacrificed for the Freeway. As residents protested in a letter to the Mayor, this was one of the few green spaces in Georgetown.⁶⁵ A portion of Georgetown Playfield as well as the Cleveland High School track were taken, and these areas are now permeated by the sounds of cars traversing the span.

The immediate impacts of I-5 include not only large-scale residential displacement, but also loss of commercial spaces, small businesses, and neighborhood assets such as open space. It is not only the immediate impacts, but the effects that unfolded over time, that are critical to this analysis. While I-5 did not specifically target Seattle's historically African American communities for removal, as happened in places like Portland, Oregon, it deepened the gulf of segregation between Seattle's white community and communities of color. As is visible in the population maps from 1970, people of color were further concentrated into the Central District, and also moved south. It is the freeway route, as well as the Mercer

⁶⁵ James d'Orma "Dorm" Braman, "Letter to Mr. Herbert G. Keppler from Mayor J.D. Braman," February 3, 1965.

street East-West corridor that divides some of Seattle's most diverse neighborhoods from those with white-majorities.

This analysis would be incomplete without a mention of the economic implications of I-5. The freeway connected Seattle with growing cities to the north and south, creating a thoroughfare for trucking and shipping goods arriving at the Port of Seattle. The growth of the aerospace industry in the 1960s points to many factors, but this spine of transportation no doubt aided Boeing as it came to be a dominant player in airplane production and government contracts.

Given these facts, how should policymakers today approach remedying the history of I-5's past? No Preference Policy nationally presents a perfect framework, but some of them have valuable insights to consider. Preference opens the door to establishing institutional priority for those who have been most impacted by the consequences of government actions, intended and unintended.

While calls are growing louder for a lid through the downtown section of I-5, it is up to policymakers to ensure those voices are balanced with a historical perspective of how I-5 impacted different communities in the city. Decisionmakers must look more deeply into this history to find the narratives that have not yet been told, and to uplift those voices. It is up to our leaders to determine what steps will best help communities who are struggling in Seattle today. National precedents, including preference policies based on displacement risk, TOPA policies, and additional homeownership supports are three options for consideration in the effort to stem the tide of displacement. This report is an early attempt at framing those choices and rehabilitating voices left unheard. It is now in the hands of leaders, both within government and outside it, to shape how this history unfolds.

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