"...and never the twain shall meet": Baltimore's east-west expressway and the construction of the "Highway to Nowhere."

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This thesis titled
"…and never the twain shall meet": Baltimore's east-west expressway and
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Baltimore, Maryland is home to a six-lane super-highway in miniature colloquially known as the “Highway to Nowhere.” Part of a controversial plan to erect an east-west highway through the heart of the city, the “Highway to Nowhere” is a remnant of expressway construction projects halted by a city-wide “freeway revolt” during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Using archival research and resident interviews, this thesis explores the planning and development of the “Highway to Nowhere” and the roles played by anti-highway community organizations such as the Relocation Action Movement (RAM), the Movement Against Destruction (MAD), the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point and the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR). Examining the tactics and strategies utilized by these organizations, this thesis highlights the importance of “politics of scale” in achieving political objectives. This study answers calls within the environmental justice literature for case studies examining process equity.

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“OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet”
Rudyard Kipling, *Ballad of East and West*

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1992, the *Baltimore Sun* published a suite of articles marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of a widely known local community organization. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, this group, the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point, was instrumental in opposing the construction of an elaborate network of urban highways. These highways, according to the *Sun*, would have “plowed through… some of Baltimore’s oldest and most colorful neighborhoods.” In an article entitled “the highways that never happened,” the *Sun* lauded the efforts of The Society stating “who wouldn’t agree that the city is not better off now for having confronted those [highway] questions? For this, we can thank the society and groups like it that brought people together to preserve not just neighborhoods, but also to craft a vision of a livable city” (“The highways that never…” 1992, 6A).

Seventeen years later, the neighborhoods preserved during Baltimore’s so called “road fight” or “freeway revolt” are the centerpieces of the city’s Inner Harbor redevelopment scheme. Fells Point and Federal Hill are cherished historic districts which highlight the city’s nautical past while also providing elaborate night-life, famous cuisine and high-end shopping. Yet, less than three miles to the west of these neighborhoods is a disturbing reminder of Baltimore’s era of highway planning. In the neighborhood of Harlem Park, a 1.39 mile long superhighway in miniature, colloquially known as the “Highway to Nowhere,” forms a thirty-foot deep trench that splits the neighborhood in two. The construction of this road, which was to form an integral part of a proposed east-west
expressway, destroyed 900 homes and displaced 1,500 working class African-Americans between 1966 and 1968 (Dilts 1971). Today, rusting road placards and unfinished off-ramps still dominate this 18-block long right of way which is surrounded by boarded up and vacant rowhouses. The area of Harlem Park, frequently depicted in recent television shows such as *Homicide: Life on the Street*, *The Wire* and *The Corner*, is beset by gangs and drug violence. While the full east-west expressway may have, echoing the *Sun*, “never happened,” residents of Harlem Park live with the consequences of this abandoned project everyday. Air pollution, noise, toxic run-off, highway detritus and the unsightly “scar” of the road are impossible not to see, hear or breathe.

Despite the vast differences that distinguish Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point (Fig. 1) from one another at the present, these neighborhoods share a similar past. In 1937, all were listed by the Homeowners Loan Corporation as “obsolescent,” all had declining populations and all contained high percentages of African-Americans or other “lower class” people. In the 1960s, Fells Point was labeled a “decaying and expendable inner city area” (Fees et al. 1991, 139), and “a skid row, ripe for the steamroller of ‘urban renewal’ and obliteration” (Grauer 1991, 38). Planners, who viewed the areas as “slums,” were eager to demonstrate that highways could serve as forces for urban renewal. Meanwhile, a series of Baltimore mayors hoped to revitalize a declining urban core and defeat the “hardening of [the city’s] traffic arteries.” These dreams, however, engendered a popular resistance pitting city officials against neighborhood activists. The result, best embodied in the differing characters of the three neighborhoods discussed above, was a widely uneven pattern of highway development.
Figure 1: Locations of Harlem Park (red), Federal Hill (blue) and Fells Point (yellow).
From *Impacts of the East-West and Southwest Expressways on the city of Baltimore*, 1962.
The purpose of this thesis is to explore this unevenness, provide a history of the “Highway to Nowhere,” and also to answer calls within the environmental justice literature for detailed examinations of disamenities and the processes by which these negative landscape features are constructed and contested. In particular, this thesis pays special attention to the community organizations and actors that led Baltimore’s “freeway revolt” during the late 1960s and 1970s. Specifically, this thesis addresses three primary questions.

1. **How and why were the neighborhoods of Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point targeted as routes for the east-west expressway?**

   In answering this question, this thesis explores the decision-making processes of city planners, consulting agencies and city officials that led to the selection of these three neighborhoods as routes for highways. By exploring the history of highway planning in Baltimore this thesis shows how the neighborhood of Harlem Park, or the “Franklin-Mulberry corridor” as planners referred to it, became an institutionalized component of road building in Baltimore.

2. **What influence did anti-highway community organizations have on creating the current highway geography of Baltimore and how did these organizations exert that influence?**

   In answering this second question, this thesis explores how the four primary anti-highway organizations in the city, the Relocation Action Movement (RAM), the Movement Against Destruction (MAD), the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR) and the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point (The Society), contested the highway. In particular, this thesis explores
the widely varying tactics used by these organizations and evaluates how these tactics shaped the current distribution of Baltimore’s highways. By focusing on these community organizations, this thesis contributes to the broader literature on environmental justice by offering a case study of how individual community organizations can shape landscapes of disamenities. In particular, this thesis shows how the ability to utilize politics of scale was (and is) a requisite for group success. For a generalized description of these groups, their founding dates, areas of interest, constituencies and goals see the table in Appendix A at the end of this thesis.

3. What was the impact of the failed construction of the “Highway to Nowhere” on residents who were displaced from the Harlem Park neighborhood?

In addressing this last question, this thesis explores terrain that has largely been ignored by previous researchers. Utilizing interviews with residents who were displaced from Harlem Park in the late 1960s, this thesis provides a glimpse into the immediate and long-term impacts that urban highway construction had in Harlem Park.

Divided into nine chapters, this thesis begins with a brief introduction to urban highway building in the United States. This first chapter details the evolution of the interstate highway system, the social ramifications and environmental externalities created by such a system and the nationwide “freeway revolt” that erupted during the 1960s and 1970s as a result. In examining the environmental costs of the interstate system, this thesis draws from the literature.
of environmental justice and suggests several ways in which this research contributes to broader debates within that subdiscipline’s discourse. Chapter two examines the data and methodology used to conduct this thesis and provides an introduction to some of the most important primary documents regarding the “road fight.” Chapter three explores the two-decade highway planning odyssey of Baltimore planners between 1942 and 1961 and explains how the neighborhoods of Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point were selected as routes for urban expressways. Chapters four through seven explore the various community organizations that opposed highway development. In each chapter the tactics and methods of resistance used by these organizations are elaborated and the efficacy of these tactics is explored. Chapter eight explores the history of Harlem Park and contrasts its history from the 1940s to the late 1960s with its history in the aftermath of highway construction. This chapter also examines the impact of the road on those who were displaced. Finally, chapter nine delves into the various schemes and dreams that a variety of actors have put forth for the “Highway to Nowhere” in the last twenty years.

In 1992, the Baltimore Sun labeled the expressways proposed during the 1960s as “highways that never happened.” While the highways that would have demolished Federal Hill and Fells Point were never constructed, these “ghosts” still played an important, if not widely known, part in the transformation of these neighborhoods from declining working-class communities to celebrated attractions. Despite the Sun’s claims, a highway was built in Harlem Park. That
road, the “Highway to Nowhere,” is the most visible legacy of Baltimore’s “freeway revolt.” While the fight against the urban highways of the 1960s is lauded as a part of Baltimore’s “long history of civic activism,” the existence of the “Highway to Nowhere” remains a source of bitterness and frustration despite the much celebrated victory of the “freeway fighters.” For the residents of Harlem Park, especially those who were displaced, there was no victory.
“It was here in Washington that I first saw it. I remembered Seattle as a town sitting on hills beside a matchless harbor – a little city of space and trees and gardens, its houses matched to such a background. It is no longer so. The tops of hills are shaved off to make level warrens for the rabbits of the present. The highways eight lanes wide cut like glaciers through the uneasy land.”


CHAPTER ONE: THE ROAD, THE RHETORIC AND THE REVOLT: URBAN HIGHWAYS IN THE UNITED STATES

Its grey surface, stretching for a total of 46,837 miles, can be seen from space. It spans rivers and wetlands and whirls through inner cities on 55,512 bridges. Using 82 tunnels it dives beneath harbors and bores through solid rock. It climbs 11,000 foot peaks and runs for miles below sea level (ASCE 2006). Its surface, typically more than 32 inches thick, is composed of over 300 million cubic yards of concrete (USGS 2006). Its total estimated cost is $329 billion or almost two thirds more than the cost of the Apollo project which landed a man on the moon (Cox and Love 1996). It has been called the “greatest public works program in history” (Weingroff 2006). This engineering and architectural marvel, often taken for granted by the millions who traverse it, is the Federal Interstate Highway System. This chapter examines the history of the Interstate System, the philosophy behind urban expressways, the environmental costs and consequences of building such roads, and the nationwide freeway revolt that confronted road builders during the 1960s and 1970s. In examining the negative externalities of urban expressways, this thesis explores recent research on environmental justice and positions itself in relation to calls for local histories and studies that examine how environmental disamenities, like the “Highway to Nowhere,” come to be.
Once called the “best investment a nation ever made” (Cox and Love 1996, 1), America’s system of highways is certainly a marvel, but for the hundreds of thousands of urban residents living in their shadows, urban expressways represent a threat to space, health, and an ever-present environmental injustice.

A Brief History of the Interstate Highway System

In the spring of 1956, the 84th Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act. With the swipe of a pen, President Eisenhower authorized the Act and set in motion the appropriation of $25 billion dollars for the construction of a 41,000 mile system of national defense highways. The goal of the act was to modernize the roadways of the United States. For Eisenhower, a modern road system – one like the famous German autobahn he observed firsthand during the Second World War – was a necessity for national security. Yet, Eisenhower’s dream of a national roadway had even deeper roots, ones which extended to his time as a young lieutenant colonel in the post-World War I Army (ASCE 2006).

In 1919, the First Transcontinental Motor Company began its journey from Washington D.C. to San Francisco. It took 62 days for this company of trucks, jeeps, touring cars and motorcycles to complete the 3,251 mile journey. Horrendous roads, sucking mud and mechanical breakdowns slowed the convoy to an average speed of 6.07 miles per hour (ASCE 2006). It also planted the seed in Eisenhower’s mind that the country needed good, solidly constructed roads. The Federal-Aid Highway Act was Eisenhower’s long-held dream made real.
Eisenhower, however, was not the first to understand the need for an interstate highway system. Just prior to entering World War I, Woodrow Wilson authorized the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1916. This legislation established a system of cooperative funding for roads between the states and the Federal government. More than just providing aid, however, the Highway Act sought to coordinate the hodgepodge of road construction taking place in all 48 states. According to Dan McNichol, “chaos reigned on the open road. There were [more than] 50 interstate trails and about 400 named highways spreading across the country with . . . no uniformity in the construction or the maintenance of the trails; they wandered hither and thither all over the countryside” (2005, 66). Seppo Sillan, a former head of the Federal Highway Administration recalled that “each state had its own route networks, and in some places the roads changed dramatically at the state line. You could be driving along a beautiful four-lane divided highway and then right at the state line it would change to a two-lane country road in the neighboring state” (quoted in ASCE 2006, 38). During the 1920s, the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) sought to bring order to the unruly road system of the United States. Under its domineering leader, Thomas H. MacDonald, who was universally known over his thirty-year career as “The Chief,” the Bureau set about modernizing, building, and weaving together the disparate threads of the nation’s roads. The assigning of U.S. route numbers and the expansion of state road networks, however, remained the primary goal of the BPR and the hope of a transcontinental road network remained a dream. During
the 1930s, however, Franklin Delano Roosevelt urged MacDonald to design such a system. In 1939, MacDonald’s report, entitled *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, was presented to the President. The Nazi assault on Europe and the shattering of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor launched the United States into the Second World War and stalled plans for a nationwide road network. Finally, a decade after Eisenhower’s allied armies rolled to the edge of the Elbe River on Germany’s renowned autobahn, a true transcontinental highway plan emerged in the form of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.

Although MacDonald left public service in 1953, his approach to road building lived on. Over his lengthy career, MacDonald had advocated the usage of highways as tools for urban reconstruction. MacDonald’s philosophy was clearly evident in his *Free Roads and Toll Roads* which laid the groundwork for a national “interregional” highway system and also acknowledged the link between highway building and the reordering of city space (U.S. BPR 1939). Writing to FDR about MacDonald’s study, Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, summed up the highway-reconstruction link when he stated that construction was to be used to “eliminate unsightly and unsanitary districts where land values are constantly depreciating” (quoted in Mohl 2000, 230). From the start, planners and engineers were saddled with the dual task of building roads and reorganizing the city.

As the Federal government geared up to begin financing state and local highway proposals through the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, urban planning
departments and special interests weighed in in favor of MacDonald’s vision of central city highways. Provided with almost limitless Federal aid, planning departments realized that a significant number of their more distressing urban problems could be solved. Highways could be used to reclaim downtown real estate, relocate poor African Americans, redevelop CBDs, and solve transportation problems (Mohl 2000, 234).

Yet, these planning departments also recognized that constructing highways through dense urban cores could be politically controversial and socially destructive. Robert Moses, the preeminent highway advocate and slum clearer, echoed these thoughts when he stated that central city highways would be “the hardest to locate, the most difficult to clear, the most expensive to acquire and build, and the most controversial from the point of view of selfish and shortsighted opposition” (quoted in Mohl 2000, 234). These fears were much quieted by the “Road Gang,” the “numerous powerful components of the highway lobby” that included “the Teamsters union, construction companies and unions, various automobile-related trade associations, urban politicians and state highway officials, and the like” (Mohl 1993, 107). This group of “highway men” took up MacDonald’s vision and added components of their own design. Three of the most powerful and influential members of the “Road Gang” were the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the American Road Builders’ Association (ARBA), and the American Concrete Institute (ACI).
Adopting MacDonald’s call for slum clearance as a way to reclaim city space, the ULI, a group representing downtown real estate owners, stressed that central city highways would be the “salvation of the central district, the core of every city” (Burton 1954, 78). This group continually pressed planning departments across the nation to take advantage of the “wide open opportunity” to cut out “great areas of our nation’s worst slums” (Urban Land Institute 1957). The ARBA defended the use of highways as tools for slum clearance as early as 1949. Highways, the ARBA wrote to President Truman, could “contribute in a substantial manner to the elimination of slum and deteriorated areas,” and stimulate downtown businesses and raise property values (quoted in Mohl 2000, 233). The ACI echoed this by ardently advocating the use of highways in the “elimination of slums and blighted areas” (U.S. BPR 1943). These groups published pamphlets, technical bulletins and newsletters (Mohl 2000, 232). They also lobbied mayors and other politicians both locally as well as in Washington, D.C.

Local groups also contributed to momentum, urging highway planners to develop inner city highway plans. Local developers in Miami declared that highway building would “stimulate building in this downtown area, which is vital at this time” (quoted in Mohl 1993, 117). A local realtor argued that there was nothing “more important to the prosperity and well-being of the citizens of Florida than the interstate highway program” (quoted in Mohl 1993, 117-118). Even the Miami Urban League, traditionally an advocate for the improvement of
housing for African Americans, argued that the highway was “necessary for the continued progress of our city” (quoted in Mohl 1993, 118).

Clearly, the interstate highway system was conceived of as more than merely routes for traffic. Early highway planners such as Harold MacDonald promoted city highways as a means to reclaim city land that had been “lost” to tenements and other undesirable types of housing. When highway construction became a reality in the late 1950s, significant pressure was placed upon state and local planning departments to develop plans for central city highways that would use the roads as tools for urban renewal as well as instruments of CBD revitalization. To a large extent, special interests such as ULI, ARBA, ACI and smaller, local interests pressed planning departments to integrate their particular agendas into highway planning. The construction of this new urban highway infrastructure devastated neighborhoods, pushed African Americans into “second ghettos,” and exacerbated “white flight” and CBD decline. Special interests, in particular, pressured and encouraged planning agencies to adopt clearly racist development schemes. While special interests targeted planning departments, other groups presented the average American citizen with a detailed, positive vision of what new highways would bring.

The Vision of Highways

According to a 1969 report published by the National Commission on Urban Problems, between 1957 and 1968 at least 330,000 housing units were destroyed to make way for urban highways. Along with the loss of housing stock
came the removal and relocation of 32,400 families each year [author’s emphasis] (1969, 81). In 1965, still the early stage of highway construction, the U.S. House Committee on Public Works stated that the disruption caused to urban places by road building was “astonishingly large” (1965, 105). One urban policy scholar has stated that it was believed that construction of the interstate highway system “would displace a million people from their homes before it was completed” (Hartman 1972, 55). Clearly, highway construction was altering both the physical and human landscapes of cities. Yet urban highway construction continued almost unopposed across two and a half decades. The reason for this lack of opposition and even the easy acceptance and popular approval of such plans was that a well defined vision was sold to the American public by planning departments, local politicians, and the “Road Gang.” These groups actively sought to obfuscate the injustices of highway building and substitute a vision of modernity and national progress.

Decades before highway construction began across the United States, the “Road Gang” was active in influencing public perceptions about highways. Presented at the 1939 World’s Fair, GM’s Futurama exhibit painted a picture of advanced super-highways soaring through sky-scraper filled central cities. These elegant ribbons, upon which traffic would rip along at one hundred miles an hour, were part of GM’s vision for the “motorways of the world of tomorrow.” Over the course of a year, five million Americans encountered GM’s portrayal of a
“National Motorway System” that linked the automobile with progress and modernity (Mohl 1993, 105).

    Less than five years later, the American Road Builders’ Association (ARBA) was connecting highway building to the maintenance of public order. Highway building, ARBA advised, would eliminate slums which were a menace “to the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the nation” (U.S. BPR 1949, 1912). Similarly, the Automotive Safety Foundation placated readers with the argument that highways were “desirable, beneficial, and beautiful” (1956, 32). New York City Mayor Cobo argued that highways were “a picture of beauty” (quoted in Mohl 2000, 234). Highways were also connected, much as the Futurama exhibit had done, with the nation’s advancement. Without highways “no large city can hope for a real future,” stated the city manager of Kansas City (Cookingham 1954, 141). Likewise, the Miami Times cried “we are living in a progressive state. We cannot afford to take a backward step” (quoted in Mohl 2004, 685).

    In addition, proponents of central city highways also wielded urban-nature imaginaries to cast inner cities into an appropriately wretched light. Interstate highways were portrayed as “eating out slums” and repossessing “blighted areas” (Theil 1962, 6-7). The public was urged to support central city highways not only to combat “decay” and “blight,” but also to take back inner city land for “productive civic uses” (Mohl 2000, 233).
Pamphlets like “A Preview of Baltimore’s Central Expressway” distributed by the Better Baltimore Committee featured pictures of beautifully landscaped, depressed highways speeding traffic from one place to another (Fig. 2). Caricatures of gridlock depicting “Baltimore’s headache” promised that “there is a cure! (Better Baltimore Committee, 8) (Fig. 3). The Baltimore pamphlet, much like others printed in cities across the United States, highlighted the need to reduce traffic, increase public safety, and drive up real estate values. The Better Baltimore Committee concluded their pamphlet with a statement encouraging highway construction because “the movement of people is the lifeblood of our local, as well as our national, existence” (Better Baltimore Committee, 6).

Figure 2: “A preview of Baltimore’s Central Expressway” pamphlet, Greater Baltimore Committee, undated.
Figure 3: Front page, “A preview of Baltimore’s Central Expressway” pamphlet, Greater Baltimore Committee, undated.
In the end, the American public was sold a vision of an interstate highway system that featured speed, cleanliness and freedom from “decay,” as well as architectural beauty. Progress was the leitmotif of urban planning divisions and the “Road Gang” as they connected highway building with civic responsibility and national morality. This promised vision, however, never approximated the harsh realities of highway construction that emerged as cities began to raze whole neighborhoods. In the next section, we will discuss the reality of highway construction as it impacted central cities and the communities that found themselves paved over.

Neighborhood Destruction

One of the major consequences of central city highway construction was the bifurcation, disruption, or total elimination of low-income and/or African American neighborhoods. These neighborhoods, often described as “obsolescent” or “blighted” not only provided highway planners with the cheapest properties to condemn, but also with a source of what many planners regarded as their biggest urban problems. While African American neighborhoods were often the target of planners, low income white areas were also selected for demolition. In any case, the destructive impacts of highway construction on urban neighborhoods, both White and African American, were largely the same.

Housing destruction was an inseparable component of urban highway construction. African American neighborhoods almost always absorbed the brunt of the impact of highway construction in terms of home demolition and condemnation. So prevalent was this in New Orleans that African American residents of that city took up the slogan “if you want to know where the black community is, just follow your ears to
the noise of the expressway” (Wright 1997, 144). Unfortunately, this was not an isolated case.

In Columbus, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Cleveland interstate highways plowed through African American inner city neighborhoods destroying thousands of housing units and displacing tens of thousands of residents (Mohl 1993, 135). In Nashville, the Tennessee State Highway Planning Department carefully shifted three miles of elevated highway through the northern section of the city through what was largely an African American business district. Transportation author Ben Kelley writes:

Had its primary purpose been to isolate the black community in North Nashville, on one side of the elevated expressway, from the rest of the city – an intent that proponents of the route since have vigorously denied were at work – the construction line could not have been drawn with greater precision (1971, 98).

While planners did host public hearings, one author has noted that these meetings were “held with no meaningful advance announcement, no transcript was kept, and the handful of carefully selected participants were drawn not from the community but from Nashville’s white business and government leadership and the state highway department, whose officials ran the session” (Kelley 1971, 98). Similar situations occurred in Richmond, Virginia and St. Paul, Minnesota (Mohl 1993, 134). One observer, recalling the destruction of St. Paul’s African American community, stated “very few blacks live in Minnesota, but the road builders found them” (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989, 28-29).

Miles Lord, Minnesota’s attorney general at the time, remembered:

We went through the black section between Minneapolis and St. Paul about four blocks wide and we took out the home of every black man in that city. And woman and child. In both those cities practically. It ain’t there no more, is it? Nice little neat black neighborhood, you know, with
their churches and all and we gave them about $6,000 a house and turned them loose onto society (1979)

In Florida, seemingly every major city suffered from the construction of their urban highways. The stories of Tampa, Jacksonville, Miami, St. Petersburg, and Orlando all recount home destruction, population removal, and community decline in the aftermath of highway construction (Mohl 1993). In Miami’s Overtown neighborhood, once called the “Harlem of the South,” the social impacts of highway construction have become more than simply a legacy of displacement. The destruction of Overtown, once the home of over forty-thousand African Americans, has colored Miami politics since highway construction began in the 1950s. Miami’s first African American city commissioner, speaking in 1971, stated “the greater Miami area is a classic example of the transportation planners’ disregard of the inner-city populace” (Range 1971, 39). In 1981, an African American planning department employee echoed this sentiment saying “Overtown still bears the scars of the highways” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 37). In addition, the director of the Catholic Services Bureau of Miami stated presciently in 1981:

I believe that I-95 represents a sociological disaster for Miami. Many of the problems faced by the city today are traceable to I-95… what is clear is that planners had little understanding or concern for the human problems involved (quoted in Mohl 1993, 140).

The “sociological disaster” of Miami’s highway construction was manifested in the furious riots that occurred in 1980, 1982 and 1989 as African American anger boiled over due to the city’s lack of adequate housing (Mohl 1993, 140-141). While these consequences of highway construction were exacerbated by long-term institutional racism, lack of housing, police corruption and extremely limited political representation,
highway construction has often spurred immediate and violent unrest. In 1968, during a public hearing over highway construction in Washington, D.C., an African American protester took the podium and declared, while lighting a packet of matches, “this will stop the highway” (quoted in Mowbray 1969, 177). Two weeks later, in the aftermath of the Martin Luther King assassination, Washington was burning and the National Guard was standing on street corners.

African American communities were not alone in suffering the social and human consequences of road building. For example, the Fells Point neighborhood of Baltimore was regarded as a “decaying and expendable inner city area” (Fees et al. 1991, 139), and “a skid row, ripe for the steamroller of ‘urban renewal’ and obliteration” (Grauer 1991, 38). As such, this primarily working class White neighborhood was selected as a route for Baltimore’s East-West Expressway. While this neighborhood successfully blocked highway construction, residents whose homes had been condemned, but not yet destroyed, faced a lengthy process of haggling with city government over when they could return to their residences. In New York, the Cross-Bronx Expressway tore through a one-mile section of the city known as East Tremont which was home to 1,530 families of primarily Jewish ancestry (Freilla 2004, 79). Similar stories reflect the shared experiences of thousands of White and African American families who faced the annihilation of their communities, expulsion from their homes, and the struggle to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of road building.
The Rise of “Second Ghettos.”

For African Americans, the period of highway construction was a unique time of spatial change. For decades, African Americans had been forced to reside in so-called African American “ghettos” in central cities (Drake and Cayton 1945; Katzman 1973; Kusmer 1976; Trotter 1985).

Restrictive covenants, White hostility to integration and the racist practices of realtors had resulted in soaring population densities within these areas. Highway construction with its goal of slum clearance pushed African Americans to look for housing elsewhere.

In many cities across the country, this expansion of the African American population into “transitional” areas sparked racial tensions and led to violence as some Whites attempted to protect their neighborhoods from integration or oust recently resettled African Americans. In Miami, a series of apartment bombings occurred during the 1950s as the Ku Klux Klan attempted to frighten African Americans out of transitional “frontier” areas (Mohl 1993, 128). One neighborhood association, the Seaboard White Citizens Council, planted burning crosses in the lawns of those African Americans who dared to relocate (Mohl 1993, 129).

In the long run, these transitional areas quickly emptied of Whites as African American in-migration exacerbated already occurring “White flight.” The result was the creation of “second ghettos,” highly segregated neighborhoods that recreated the slum-like conditions of the areas that highway construction had destroyed (Trotter 1985; Mohl 1993, 132-133). Today, “second ghetto” areas are prevalent features of the urban
landscapes of cities like Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Miami. The period of highway construction, neighborhood destruction, relocation, and transition coincided with increased racial tension, the rise of the Civil Rights movement, and devastating nationwide riots, especially in the late 1960s. While highway construction was certainly not the direct cause of these conflagrations, the immense social changes brought about by highway construction were certainly a component. The racist policies of planners, supported by white special interest groups, which pushed African Americans from their homes and into hostile transitional neighborhoods or into even higher density housing than before road building, reaped a whirlwind which is still visible today.

Environmental Consequences of Highway Construction

Ironically, the construction of city highways, which were supposed to increase urban resident safety and relieve traffic congestion, ultimately had the opposite effect, as highways have generated more traffic (Mowbray 1969, 62). The act of simply connecting one place to another with the goal of relieving surface traffic congestion has had the predictable effect of increasing the total amount of traffic on the highway (Mowbray 1969, 62). Subsequently, mile-long traffic jams and endless gridlock have become expected components of automobile transit in major cities. In turn, this had a devastating effect on the local environment in which many of those displaced by highway construction are still living.

Everyone deserves to breathe clean air. Unfortunately, in many cities across the United States highway construction and the attendant urban sprawl that often accompanies it has dramatically increased airborne pollution (Bullard et al. 2000, 25). A
study conducted by the Argonne National Laboratory found that 437 out of 3,109 counties and individual cities failed to meet EPA air quality standards. An examination of these 437 “nonattainment” areas shows that the places with the highest concentrations of air pollution were those areas with large African American and Hispanic populations (Wernette and Nieves 1992, 16-17.) “Nonattainment” of air quality standards can result from the presence of heavy industry, but it can also be traced to the thousands of automobiles that clog the highways of inner city areas.

Automobiles are the primary emitters of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), vaporized chemicals that come from the burning of fossil fuels. Automobiles also contribute heavily to the presence of nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, both of which can have serious health consequences from long term exposure (Bullard et al. 2000, 25). These consequences include asthma, respiratory tract infections, lung scarring, and reduced resistance to infection (Bullard et al. 2000, 26). In the Atlanta Metropolitan Region, an area criss-crossed by seven major highways, hospital admissions for asthma among children increased 70% during the 1980s (Centers for Disease Control 1995, 609). According to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control (CDC) African Americans in the Atlanta region are two to six times more likely to die from asthma than Whites (Centers for Disease Control 1995, 610). While this may reflect uneven access to hospitals and treatment facilities, it also reflects the heavy burden of pollution exposure that African American neighborhoods, often situated close to urban highways, suffer. The CDC also found that hospital visits for children, the segment of the population most susceptible to airborne pollutants, increased by a third immediately
following peak ozone periods in which roadways were clogged by thousands of vehicles (Centers for Disease Control 1995, 612).

It is clear that automobiles cause pollution that can be damaging not only to the environment, but also to humans. It is also clear that highways allow thousands of automobiles to concentrate into areas primarily populated by minorities. The result is that minority neighborhoods, which have often been bifurcated by urban highways, continue to be impacted by those roads.

In addition to air pollution, highways also produce noise pollution. While the long-term effects of noise pollution are still debated, it is known to inhibit concentration and can cause increases in heart rate, levels of anxiety, and stress (Corbisier 2003, 23). One study found that large volumes of traffic noise caused increases in fatigue, headache and blood pressure. Interestingly, this study also found that the annoyance level produced by continual traffic noise interfered with marriages (Pathak 2008). Highway noise can also interrupt conversations, prevent sleep, and generally interfere with everyday activities (Corbisier 2003, 23). It is evident then that highways, which typically traverse low-income and/or African American communities, represent an environmental injustice in terms of this inequitable distribution of urban noise.

Additionally, highways expose nearby environments and peoples to polluted runoff and highway detritus. All Americans have experienced cars with leaky oil pans and roadways littered with garbage. As a result of the sheer number of vehicles that traverse them, highways have become a source of trash, oil, herbicides, hydraulic fluid, road deicers, industrial chemicals, and other point (and non-point) source pollutants that
can flow into urban neighborhoods during periods of wet weather. The result of this is not only a visibly dirtier neighborhood in terms of decaying McDonald’s wrappers and 7-11 cups, but literally a toxic neighborhood underlain with high concentrations of dangerous fluids.

A variety of studies support the conclusion that highway runoff is toxic. One study of the San Francisco Bay area found that 90% of the sampled highway runoff was filled with chemical compounds or metallic toxics (BASMAA 1996). Another study discovered that highway runoff was toxic enough to damage a variety of freshwater and marine ecosystems (Kayhanian et al. 2008). In addition, it was shown that toxic chemicals on roadways do not disburse gradually from highway to the surrounding land, but accumulate on highways in vast concentrations until heavy rains flush them off. The result is that nearby drainage systems and storm sewers are overwhelmed by runoff which then flows into adjacent yards, fields, and even into basements. The settling of this toxic material carried in runoff into dirt fields or gravel beds along highways can result in airborne pollution if this material is disturbed (Kayhanian et al. 2008).

Highways are increasingly being built or repaired using a variety of recycled materials. According to a study conducted by Holtz and Eighmy, between 352 and 859 million tons of recycled materials are being used per year in highway (re)building (2000, 34). According to this study, recycled material is often composed of a combination of “blast furnace slag, steel slag, coal combustion by products, and foundry sands” (Holtz and Eighmy 2000, 34). The municipal sector also contributes recycled materials for highways in the form of “waste glass, scrap tires, construction and demolition debris,
petroleum contaminated soils, roofing shingle scrap, plastics and municipal solid waste combustion residues” (Holtz and Eighmy 2000, 34). All of this recycled material is reused as road surface as well as sealer and filler for damaged roads. While the reuse of this material is often touted as an example of sustainability, many of these items are hazardous to people and the environment. Crack sealers can be broken down and distributed into runoff, while road surfaces composed of these materials are under constant wear as a result of traffic movement. The result is that these materials may be redistributed into the air or as runoff into nearby water tables. One study found that recycled materials used for highway construction contained toxic levels of aluminum and mercury (Azizian et al. 2003). Another study found that leachates from these recycled materials could result in the contamination of both surface and ground water (Olajire et al. 2005).

While the exposure of minority neighborhoods to these toxics may have been unintentional, it was the process of highway building with its racist agenda that allowed this pattern to develop. While toxic contamination, air quality degradation, and noise pollution may have been unintended consequences, African American and low income neighborhoods were exposed to these problems because they were viewed as impediments to CBD redevelopment and city revitalization more than half a century ago. While few protested the spread of highways across rural land, opposition to urban highways quickly developed as residents in central cities were exposed to neighborhood destruction and degraded environments.
The Role of Environmental Justice

The exposure of African-American and low-income households to increased levels of pollution in comparison to the white populace is hardly a new phenomena. For the last three decades many social scientists have sought to identify exposed groups and understand patterns of environmental degradation. In recent years, scholars of environmental justice have attempted to understand how both amenities and disamenities\(^1\) develop. This thesis conceptualizes the “Highway to Nowhere” as primarily a social injustice, but also as an environmental injustice and therefore attempts to situate itself within the discourse of environmental justice.

Traditionally a minority-led movement, environmental justice (EJ) is a broad discourse encompassing themes of race, process, sustainability, equity and social and ecological justice. Movement outsiders have occasionally referred to EJ as the “new environmentalism” because of the movement’s efforts to redefine urban - problems typically conceptualized as community health issues, such as the construction of toxic waste dumps - as environmental issues (De Chiro 1996, 299). EJ activists and scholars, however, have largely eschewed this characterization, preferring instead to view the movement as a continuation of the Civil Rights and Social Justice movements (De Chiro 1996, 301). Emerging out of these broader, popular campaigns, environmental justice traces it origins to a variety of protests that took place in African American and low income communities across the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Perhaps the two most highly publicized cases of communities responding to the

\(^1\) The term “disamenity” has typically referred to any undesired, unpleasant, dangerous or unhealthy features of a given landscape. For example, toxic waste dumps, trash burners, coal-fire power plants, etc.
degradation of their environments were in Niagara Falls, the site of the infamous Love Canal, and in Warren County, North Carolina, where an African American community protested the siting of a PCB-landfill (McGurty 1997). While certainly not the first time that organizations have protested against unhealthy environmental conditions - community reactions to “noisome” and extremely unhealthy environments prompted the creation of anti-smoke societies and “clean city crusades” in the 19th century - these incidents were among the first to achieve national recognition (Rosen 1989, 1998, 2003; Stradling 1999).

Out of these crises came not only the first legislation dealing with environmental justice, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) otherwise known as “superfund,” but also the first comprehensive studies to focus on the distribution of disamenities. Studies conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO 1983), Robert Bullard (1983), and also the United Church of Christ’s Commission on Racial Justice (UCC/CRJ 1987), found that Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facilities (TSDFs) were disproportionately sited within minority and low-income communities. A variety of studies quickly followed as social scientists and others began to systematically map disamenities in urban places across the United States. These Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) studies focused on locating and understanding the distribution of polluting industries (Burke 1993; Szasz et al.1993; Bowen et al. 1995; Pollock and Vittas 1995). Along with these investigations came the first longitudinal studies which sought to understand whether low-income communities had situated near the polluting industry, perhaps forced to settle there due to low property values, or if the
polluting industry deliberately targeted low-income communities (Been 1994; Oakes et al. 1996; Yandle and Burton 1996; Been and Gupta 1997; Stretesky and Hogan 1998; Mitchell et al. 1999; Shaikh and Loomis 1999; Pastor et al. 2001).

These studies sought to determine “which came first,” low-income communities or polluters, in the hopes of confirming or refuting “environmental racism.” Although the idea can be traced to the UCC/CRJ study, Benjamin Chavis is often credited with coining the term. According to Chavis, environmental racism can be defined as:

- racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulations and laws,
- the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities,
- the official sanctioning of the presence of life threatening poisons and pollutants for communities of color,
- and the history of excluding people of color from leadership in the environmental movement (Chavis 1994, 4).

The debate over the existence of environmental racism continued throughout the 1990s, but both Bullard and Pulido made perhaps the most important contributions. Bullard in 1994 and Pulido in 1996 both argued that intentionality need not be a necessity for environmental racism to exist (Bullard 1994a; Pulido 1996, 2000). For example, structural processes such as institutional racism, zoning, employment discrimination, lack of public services and poverty contribute to minority and low-income communities occupying the same space as environmental hazards (Bullard 1994b; Pulido 1996a, 2000).

Importantly, these studies have sought to conceptualize racism as not merely conscious, overt, malicious acts, but as constituting both a conscious and unconscious part of the arrangement of a world largely controlled by whites (Pulido 1996a, 1996b, 2000). According to Pulido, underlying overt, intentional and institutional racism is a
structure of “white privilege” which bestows upon certain members of society benefits while excluding others (2000). Following from this, “white privilege” and the racial hierarchy that it constructs allow whites to prevent the inflow of environmental hazards into their neighborhoods and communities. The pushing away of disamenities from white communities led these same hazards to settle disproportionately in minority neighborhoods that had fewer means to resist their incursion (Pulido 2000). In addition, the dislocation of disamenities, or their inability to find “homes” within urban places, can often have consequences for rural residents living far outside city boundaries (Buckley et al. 2006).

The arguments of Bullard, and especially Pulido, were invigorating for the environmental justice community and led to a shift in research. Rather than focusing specifically on Toxics Release Inventory sites (TRIs), Toxics Storage and Disposal Facilities (TSDFs), or brownfields, scholars began to focus on understanding the processes that have led to both historical and present-day distributions of environmental hazards (Szasz and Meuser 2000; Cutter et al. 2001; Boone 2002, 2005; Colten 2002; Mennis and Jordan 2005; Grineski, Bolin and Boone 2007). These studies offered a broad variety of potential explanations for environment disparity, from unregulated development and lack of zoning controls to transportation and past industrial land uses.

In recent years, calls for longitudinal and process equity studies, which seek to understand the historical events, practices, decisions, and policies that led to the creation of current arrangements of amenities and disamenities, have only increased. In their excellent review of the literature, Szasz and Meuser (1997, 109) point out that is it
necessary to move beyond descriptive studies which generate lists, but instead to “do case studies, especially local histories, that can provide detailed descriptions of the subtle and complex ways that these processes actually work.” Echoing this, Marwah et al. write “current research on this issue has not adequately addressed questions of causality and temporal dynamics” (1997, 1). Saha and Mohai argue that historical studies “should examine other states and regions and the nation as a whole, as well as other types of locally unwanted land uses. If possible [historical studies] should extend their temporal scope to before 1970…” (2005, 639). Baltimore’s “Highway to Nowhere” is easily conceptualized as another type of locally unwanted land use along the same lines as waste disposal facilities and other disamenities typically investigated by EJ scholars. Weinberg adds that “there appears to be a fairly consistent sense that environmental justice research needs to focus on the processes by which marginalized groups come to be exposed. The consensus seems to be that we need strong case study research that traces the history of production and residential movements” (1998, 612). Similarly, Pellow has argued that researchers need to focus on environmental inequality formation. This means understanding environmental inequalities not merely as objects existing in space, but as processes that occur over time (Pellow 2000). Today’s environmental inequalities are, as Wolch et al. point out, “rooted in past histories of racial oppression and discriminatory service delivery patterns” (2005, 4).

Responding to these calls for process equity is one driver of this thesis which focuses specifically on the history, development, and implementation of the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere.” This 1.3 mile-long disamenity was not created in a vacuum.
Rather, it was created through a combination of policy, decision making, local transportation history, and community action on a variety of levels from public hearings to court rooms and street corners. This thesis attempts to understand why the “Highway to Nowhere” was built in its current location and what the consequences of its construction were.

Most recently, environmental justice research has turned away from what was an almost exclusive focus on disamenities to highlight the distribution and development of amenities, such as parks, waterfront, community gardens and street trees (Schmelzkopf 1996; Gobster 2001; Smith and Kurtz 2003; Jensen et al. 2004; Perkins et al. 2004; Smoyer-Tomic et al. 2004; Baker 2005; Wolch et al. 2005; Brownlow 2006; Heynen et al. 2007; Wells et al. 2008). In particular, Smith and Kurtz’s 2003 article on community gardens in New York highlights an important “trend within a trend” in EJ research. Not only do the authors address the development of community gardens in New York and the battle to preserve these gardens from the revanchist neoliberal city government headed by Rudolf Guiliani, but they also focus on the role played by community organizations.

Smith and Kurtz highlight the importance that “politics of scale” play in the success or failure of community organizations. The authors show that the ability to “draw on relationships at different geographical scales to press for advantage in a given political situation” can cause “changes in the geometry of social power by strengthening power and control of some while disempowering others” (Smith and Kurtz 2003, 4). Similar studies about community gardens in Toronto (Baker 2005) and golf courses in Baltimore (Wells et al. 2008) address the actions of community organizations as they seek to shape
their own landscapes of amenities. In addition, within the broader field of environmental justice politics of scale has been employed to examine a variety of subject matter (Cutter, Holm and Clark 1996; Williams 1999; Smith and Kurtz. 2003 2002; Smith and Kurtz 2003; Harrison 2008). According to Swyngedouw, “scale becomes the arena and the moment, both discursively and materially, where sociospatial power relations are contested and compromises are negotiated and regulated. Scale, therefore, is both the result and the outcome of social struggle for power and control” (1997, 140). That said, it seems natural that environmental justice scholars would now employ politics of scale to offer deeper insights into how community organizations contest disamenities or struggle to attract amenities. In the case of Baltimore’s “road fight,” the ability to utilize politics of scale and, in fact, to “jump scales” was a requisite for group success. This thesis utilizes the conceptualization of politics of scale to gauge how community organizations framed their arguments and struggled for power against highway planners and local politicians. Analyzing the politics of scale utilized by each anti-highway actor is critical to fully understanding the development of the city’s widely uneven distribution of urban highways.

While EJ scholars have long asserted the need to better understand factors that shape present-day distributions of amenities and disamenities, such as institutional racism, transportation inequity, discriminatory hiring practices, and land zoning issues, few studies have attempted to understand how community organizations, through protest, lawsuits, public hearings, and other actions, shape their own landscapes. Fewer still have sought to understand the dynamics of power in attracting amenities and/or repelling
disamenities. For example, politically adept and financially secure community organizations may pull amenities away from more needy communities while simultaneously repelling disamenities which settle in low-income areas with fewer means to resist their incursions. In the case of Baltimore’s “freeway revolt” a variety of different community organizations, each representing different constituencies and levels of affluence, used a wide assortment of tactics in order to protest, forestall or negotiate with highway planners. The results were widely uneven and resulted in the paving of one area while the two non-paved areas developed into attractive tourist destinations.

Several studies unrelated to environmental justice have also focused on the role of community organizations in disputes specifically over highways (Dyble 2007; Thompson 2007). Dyble and Thompson both chronicle important social, and political changes that were ushered in by the defeat of highway initiatives in the face of staunch community organization resistance. In Marin County, California this defeat led to the preservation of open land and the establishment of a growth-control regime (Dyble 2007). In Portland, Oregon, the defeat of the Mount Hood Freeway sparked a renewed interest in alternative transportation methods and eventually led to the establishment of Portland’s Metropolitan Area Express (MAX), which today has the highest ridership of any light rail system in the country (Thompson 2007). Likewise, Baltimore’s own “freeway revolt” ushered in a time of urban redevelopment with the establishment of Harborplace and the restoration of the Fells Point and Federal Hill neighborhoods.

Given the origins of the environmental justice movement, it is perhaps not surprising that EJ has incorporated many of the most prominent Civil Rights issues into
its discourse. For example, by supporting the struggles of Rosa Parks and the Freedom Riders, as well as advocating bus boycotts and freeway revolts, the Civil Rights movement consistently challenged transportation inequities. As a result, a focus on transportation equity has become a theme of mobilization for EJ activists and scholars. Consequently, these scholars have produced a variety of important literature dealing with roads and highways and their associated hazards such as run-off, air pollution, noise and sprawl (Bullard and Johnson 1997; Bullard et al. 2000; Bullard et al. 2004). Bullard has argued that policies regarding transportation do not materialize out of race or class-neutral bureaucracies. “Transportation policies,” Bullard argues, “often reflect the biases of their originators with the losers comprised of the poor, powerless and people of color” (Bullard et al. 2004, 19).

This thesis endeavors to add to the discourse on environmental justice in two important ways. First, this thesis answers calls for a longitudinal, process equity-based study that explores the development of a particularly visible and egregious disamenity, the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere.” Second, this thesis explores the impact that community organizations had on the development of this disamenity and tries to understand why some areas of Baltimore were successful in warding off the “concrete monster” while others failed. In this respect, this thesis utilizes conceptualizations of politics of scale to understand why some organizations were successful while others were less so. It is important to note, however, that Baltimore’s “road fight” did not take place in isolation. During the 1960s and 1970s, Baltimore was one of many cities that experienced what has been called the nationwide “freeway revolt” in response to the plans of politicians and
consultants to construct urban highways that would destroy neighborhoods and displace residents.

The National Freeway Revolt

In 1969, a report by Federal Highway Administrator Francis Turner listed a total of 133.8 disputed miles of road out of a total of 42,500. These challenged miles were in sixteen separate cities, most in the south, north, and east of the United States. The report lists the reasons for local opposition which included “neighborhood impact,” “displacements,” “cost,” “historic sites,” “community impact,” “tax loss,” “park land,” “esthetics,” “route justification,” and, curiously, “religious interests” (Kelley 1971, 94). It is interesting to note that aside from the loss of park land no health or environmental challenges were raised. During the early 1970s, however, especially after passage of the Clean Air Act, this would change dramatically. This opposition, at least in the early years of what has been called the national “freeway revolt,” was fragmented. Local organizations sought to defend their own “small piece of urban turf” (Mohl 2004, 694). Some groups developed to oppose housing, parkland and historic site destruction while others fought to stop environmental degradation. In some cities, these groups were able to negotiate with highway planners to mitigate the destructive effects of highways by finding alternate routes. In some cases, most notably in the cities of San Francisco, Boston, New Orleans (the site of a highway that was to plow through the French Quarter), and New York, opposition groups were able to stop road construction permanently.
By 1967 about half of the total 41,000 miles of proposed interstate had been constructed. The majority of these miles, however, were rural. Across the nation, close to a thousand miles of urban highways remained in the planning stages and discontent over these urban routes roiled (Mohl 2002, 65). The New York Times stated that the controversy “raging in Cleveland, in New Orleans, in Nashville, in Cambridge, are only typical of a great many other cities, where highway construction has caused tremendous social and economic dislocations” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 65). The Bureau of Public Roads found itself facing increasingly resilient community resistance. In 1967, the Director of the BPR, Francis Turner stated, "in the past, we expected opposition to disappear when a final [route] location decision was made. This no longer is the case. Opponents to routings press for new decisions even after contracts are let” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 66). The result was increasing frustration with highway opponents and an unwillingness on the part of the BPR to negotiate where routes would be placed. Lowell Bridwell, the Federal Highway Administrator, believed that the BPR was too “inflexible” and fumed that “the main problem is to get the State highway departments to work closely with the cities and communities… unless there is real cooperation on the part of the State highway officials the effort never gets going enough to provide alternatives” (Turner 1967). The man charged with reining in the mired BPR was newly appointed Secretary of Transportation Alan Boyd. Boyd turned to Bridwell to keep him updated on the actions of the BPR and the Federal Highway Administration. Boyd ordered Bridwell to provide him with a “continuing flow of information . . . on the status of controversial projects, whether or not a decision is imminent” (Boyd 1967). According to Mohl, “the
idea was that these files could be updated regularly, thus permitting Boyd and the DOT generally to react in a timely fashion and make effective, informed decisions before local controversies reached ‘crisis stage’” (Mohl 2002, 66-67). By the end of the year, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) officials were submitting dozens of reports from across the country. These reports were duly cached in a file detailing all of the disputed highway mileage across the United States. This file offers an incredible glimpse of the nationwide highway revolt during the late 1960s.

Initial reports chronicled disputes in San Francisco, New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Chicago, New Orleans, Baltimore, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Elizabeth, New Jersey and Cambridge, Massachusetts ("Major Unresolved…” 1967). The opposition in the majority of these cases was centered on displacement. In Washington, D.C., a report noted “strong opposition because of displacement of people,” while a report from New York highlighted that “local opposition [is] caused by displacements and neighborhood disruption” ("Major Unresolved…” 1967).

In the South, opposition appeared in Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Florida and North and South Carolina. Residents of the Maple Ridge neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma were protesting the Riverside urban expressway claiming that “it will split a neighborhood” (Taylor 1967). In San Antonio and Atlanta, local groups filed suit against Interstate 281 and Interstate 485, respectively. Likewise, Tennessee’s Interstate 40 was mired in opposition in Memphis and Nashville (Mohl 2002, 68). A report stated of Nashville, “the Negro community, because of experiences with other public programs
[e.g. urban renewal or “slum clearance”], seem particularly sensitive to being displaced (Stark 1968). A 1968 report added “the racial situation in Nashville is potentially explosive” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 69). In Ft. Lauderdale and St. Petersburg, Florida, African American communities were expressing “considerable opposition to the proposed location” and it was feared that “there will be serious problems involving satisfactory replacement housing” (Stark 1968a). In Columbia, South Carolina the NAACP was organizing to protest Interstate 20 which plowed through the city’s densely populated center. On the Mississippi, I-20 was expected to “displace 75 minority families and a few small commercial establishments” in Vicksburgs (Stark 1968b). In North Carolina, the Charlotte Observer remarked “Oops, there goes another school” in a 1968 piece on the I-77 North-South Expressway. The article continued:

Charlotte needs an expressway network to be sure. But whether it needs it at the price of running over school sites, chopping out garden spots of beauty and tearing down homes occupied largely by Negroes is worth more than casual attention.

Later in the year, Charlotte’s African American residents would discover that four black schools were to be plowed under.

Things were hardly less chaotic in the North. In Philadelphia, a report stated that the Crosstown Expressway was “plagued by many problems which involved many residents, a cemetery, and several school districts” (Schofer 1967). In D.C. residents were fighting the Three Sisters Bridge which would have spanned the Potomac between the Capitol and Arlington County, Virginia. In New York City, the construction of both I-78 and I-478 was expected to be delayed because “it is expected that the displacement of people and businesses will be the major objection voiced against the project” (Hanson
In Baltimore, “the location of I-95 in the western city limits is currently being reviewed” and “minority group activity in the highway location continue[s] overly strong” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 67, 70). A later report stated that “a citizen group in West Baltimore has threatened to block residential acquisition” around the I-70/I-170 Leakin Park, Franklin-Mulberry Corridor (quoted in Mohl 2002, 71). Even the Midwest was not free from controversy. One report stated that “major interstate segments in urban areas” in Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin “continue to present problems” (Farrell 1967). Even in Pittsburgh, the “City of Bridges,” “there is mass resistance by the residents who want replacement housing, bonus payments for forced relocation… Acquisition of right-of-way has reached an impasse” (quoted in Mohl 2002, 71). Out west things were equally stalled. The development of Seattle’s Interstate 90 was delayed, according to a letter from a subordinate to Bridwell, due to “the extensive right-of-way takings from a minority group residential area” (McClarty 1968).

Clearly, the freeway revolt was a nationwide affair that manifested itself in U.S. cities, north, south, east and west. In the vast majority of U.S. cities, where highways were constructed during the late 1950s, there was weak or limited opposition. During the turbulence of the 1960s, however, the Freeway Revolt stemmed from movements for civil rights, environmental protection and ethnic power (Mohl 2002, 51). From these broader campaigns came opposition to roads that tore down neighborhoods, promoted segregation, targeted African Americans, plowed down park land and dirtied the air. At the same time, new legislation reorganized the governance of highway projects by creating the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) with authority over a host of
other federal and state agencies. Furthermore, new environmental legislation such as the Clear Air and Clean Water Acts focused attention on unhealthy environments created by vehicle pollution. At the same time, the National Historic Preservation Act insured that parks and other historic sites threatened by highways could be protected. The end result was that while during the late 1950s highway planners had wielded virtually unlimited power of condemnation and construction by the late 1960s new avenues for community resistance had been opened. The social and political turmoil of the 1960s combined with this new legislation gave birth to the Freeway Revolt and like other 1960s movements it spread rapidly across the country.

Few scholarly works examined Baltimore’s freeway revolt and those that have are often incomplete, fragmented, unpublished, or limited in scope. No single volume tells the whole tale of the road fight. Despite this, a variety of important works exist, each engaging the road fight from a different angle. The most recent scholarship on Baltimore’s revolt places it within a broader, national uprising against urban highways. Baltimore’s role is examined as a case study which highlights the use of highways as tools for urban renewal and “slum clearance” (Mohl 2000). Another study by the same author examines the political and administrative atmosphere in which the national highway revolt took place. This study focuses mostly on the new environmental and highway legislation that developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s that aided road fighters across the United States (Mohl 2004). The importance of these works for this thesis was in their excellent, if brief, coverage of the anti-highway movement in Baltimore.
Several authors have dealt specifically with the planning and development of the east-west expressway. The most controversial piece suggests that the failure to develop the cross-Baltimore expressway was detrimental to the development of West Baltimore (McCarthy 1998). The best work, which remains unpublished, was written by *Baltimore Sun* reporter and author, Mark Reutter. This work is not only significant due to its depth, but also because of Reutter’s personal involvement at highway hearings. For his research Reutter interviewed a variety of individuals who have long since died (Reutter 1973). His account, which concludes in 1973, is fragmentary as only draft chapters are available in the Langsdale Library archives.

The battle over Baltimore’s highway system involved characters and organizations with widely varying goals and powers. Fortunately, one study delved into the use of political and community power to understand how decisions to construct or curtail road building were made. This work, available at Johns Hopkins University Center for Metropolitan Planning and Research, is perhaps the best appraisal of MAD’s tactics and provides an excellent study of MAD’s seeming inefficacy (Haeuber 1973). A much deeper work by Durr (2003) deals specifically with the exercise of power in Southeast Baltimore. While detailing the rise of labor unions and the Democratic machine, this work also provides an excellent discussion of how Baltimore’s old system of City Council patronage was swept away by the arrival of the “ethnic power” movement as championed by road fighter Barbara Mikulski. Perhaps most significant is Durr’s analysis of the road fight as the rallying crisis that pushed Southeast Baltimore to form a new political order (Durr 2003).
The overall success of the nationwide Freeway Revolt is difficult to judge. In many cases, Baltimore being one example, community resistance was uneven and resulted in a widely uneven pattern of urban highways. In few cities were urban highways stopped completely. More typical was the renegotiation of highway routes to limit their intrusiveness. This had the positive result of sparing some homes, some businesses, and some acres of parkland, but at the same time left those who wielded little political power facing neighborhood destruction or decline and a legacy of environmental degradation. While the Freeway Revolt, like many other movements of the 1960s, fizzled with the resignation of Richard Nixon and the withdrawal from Vietnam it does occasionally reemerge (Mohl 2002, 51). In recent years, “freeway fighters” have been active in Maryland, protesting the so called “Intercounty Connector,” and in Victoria, British Columbia, where a group of protesters styling themselves the “Raccoons” are fighting the Bear Mountain Interchange (Blunt 2008). Other groups have been fighting the Cross Base Highway project in Washington State and the Trans-Texas Corridor that is designed to be a system of “supercorridors” carrying roadways, rails, and electric and gas infrastructure (Conservation Northwest 2006; Worldnet Daily 2006). In dozens of other places across the United States small changes to already existing highways and the extension of old alignments consistently brings about protest. Perhaps more worrying (and as yet unresearched) is the construction of first generation highways in newly industrializing countries (NICs). The Asian Highway network, a proposed system of roadways linking 32 nations with 141,204 miles of road, is slowly being constructed despite worries about environmental damage (Asian Times 2006). In any case, while the
Freeway Revolt in the United States reached a crescendo during the late 1960s its legacy and the even wider legacy of the Federal Interstate Highway System remains with us. Few features of American culture are as ubiquitous, universally used, or as architecturally marvelous as American interstates. Even fewer have generated such intense controversy and left so many with memories of neighborhoods lost.

Conclusion

The construction of America’s urban highway systems resulted from extraordinary procedural injustices that have produced a vastly uneven social and environmental landscape. In their drive to connect cities, defeat congestion, and redevelop central business districts, planning departments across the United States were co-opted by or engaged with special interests to push low income and African American communities out of central cities in the name of revitalization. This revitalization was linked with highway building which was pressed on the American people as a necessity for progress. Highways were sold as modern marvels which could save lapsing central cities. The widespread popular acceptance of this resulted in neighborhood destruction, the loss of affordable housing for low-income people, and the forced relocation of thousands. In turn, this sparked widespread civil unrest and a tightening of the patterns of residential segregation as African Americans were crowded into so called “second ghettos.” This unrest culminated in the late 1960s as a nationwide “Freeway Revolt” erupted in cities across the United States. While successful in stopping highway construction in some cases, the Freeway Revolt still left an uneven pattern of highways across many urban places in which “the losers [are] comprised of the poor, powerless and
people of color” (Bullard 2004, 19). In addition, the environmental consequences for those who now live adjacent to highways have been very high. These communities, many of which were split by the very highways that now pollute them, must deal with excess noise, toxic runoff, highway detritus, and dangerously degraded air. As a result of this, the literature of environmental justice provides keen insights. Of particular importance to this study are the calls from EJ researchers for case studies that examine the processes by which disamenities develop. What is clear is that city governments, supported by the “Road Gang” and almost limitless Federal dollars, created one of the most inequitable geographies of 20th century America. A boon for some and a bane for others, the ultimate legacy Interstate Highway System is one we are still confronting today.
CHAPTER TWO: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In order to answer its central research questions this thesis draws on a variety of data sources. Aside from academic sources, which were described in chapter one, this thesis also drew on archival and periodical data. In addition, interviews were conducted with several former Harlem Park residents who were displaced from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. The vast majority of data gathered for this thesis came from the Special Collections Department of the Langsdale Library at the University of Baltimore and the Maryland Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

A variety of periodicals provided data for this thesis including the *Baltimore Herald*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *Evening Sun* and the *Baltimore Afro-American*. The *Herald*, *Sun* and *Evening Sun*, in particular, were useful for constructing a timeline of events during the lead up to the condemnation of homes in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor and other locations in the city. These papers documented highway hearings, city council meetings, protests and myriad other events regarding the development and construction of the east-west expressway. In particular, James Dilts, a young correspondent with the *Baltimore Sun* during the late 1960s, authored dozens of articles on the road controversy. Unfortunately, Alden Library at Ohio University has microfilm for the *Baltimore Afro-American* only for the period 1893-1959. The result of this, of course, is that only the period of highway planning between 1942 and 1959 is covered. The years during which the highway was debated publicly, in which the city council condemned the routes upon which the road would traverse the city and the aftermath of construction are not available from the *Afro*. Despite this, however, the *Afro* provided perhaps the best insight into the
neighborhoods of West Baltimore. In particular, the *Afro* provided details on clean block campaigns and the activities of neighborhood associations such as the Harlem Park Neighborhood Association. In addition to these newspaper periodicals, this thesis also drew from data published in *Time*, *City*, *Maryland Living*, *Business Week*, *Newsweek*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, *Smithsonian*, *Fortune*, *Architectural Forum* and the *Washington Monthly*. These national magazines covered the nation-wide “freeway revolt” that developed across U.S. cities in response to the construction of urban highways.

A significant amount has already been written about the development of the proposed east-west expressway. Authors such as Raymond Mohl, Mark Reutter, Michael McCarthy, Douglas Haeuber and Scott Kozel have dealt ably with the development of Baltimore’s highway network. Unfortunately, due to demands for brevity or, most typically, the period in time when the authors were writing, some portions of the story of “the road” go untold. In order to fully develop this story, this thesis makes use of a variety of important planning documents that were developed and written by city organizations, such as the Baltimore Department of Planning, and planning organizations, such as the Expressway Consultants and the Urban Design Concept Team. Very briefly, these documents include the *Study for the East-West Expressway*, *Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council*, *Impacts of the East-West and Southwest Expressway on the City of Baltimore*, the UDCT’s *Rosement Area Study*, the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency’s (BURHA) *Urban Renewal*
in Harlem Park study and their A Demonstration of Rehabilitation, Harlem Park, Baltimore, Maryland study.

The most important of these documents in terms of understanding the development and history of the east-west expressway are the first two documents listed, the Study for the East-West Expressway and Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council. Produced by the Baltimore Department of Planning’s Planning Commission, the Study for the East-West Expressway lays out the first comprehensive plan for an east-west expressway. It also provides an excellent short history of highway planning up to 1960. The second study, Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore, was written in 1972 and details the progress of Baltimore’s highway development and provides a brief history of the early years of construction. A hard-copy of the Study for the East-West Expressway can be located in the Maryland Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, or in the collection of the Greater Baltimore Committee at the Langsdale Library. Additionally, since there was a great deal of controversy over the planning of the original routes of the east-west expressway, the reports, responses and rebuttals of the Planning Commission to the Expressway Consultants are especially relevant. These too may be found at the Enoch Pratt Free Library. They provide an insider’s glimpse into the infrastructural problems facing road builders as well as the inter-agency back-biting that plagued the entire east-west project from the beginning. Looking back, this author was unable to find any specific reports dealing with the early development of Baltimore’s major boulevards and thoroughfares. These important transit links, especially along Franklin and Mulberry streets, were the
initial routes that would eventually be transformed into the east-west expressway. The city, in attempting to solve traffic congestion problems, improved these roads from mud to cobblestone to brick to asphalt to boulevards and then finally to highway. The earliest steps in this development were chronicled in the *Baltimore Sun* between the late 19th century and the 1930s. While these articles are available on microfiche, the Enoch Pratt Free Library’s special collections has preserved many of these articles as clippings. For example, information on Franklin Street, from the turn of the century to the present, can be found in the Maryland Room under the file heading “Streets – Baltimore – Franklin.”

In writing this thesis I was interested primarily in how neighborhood organizations responded to highway development and how that response shaped their communities. I focus principally on four main actors and two secondary actors. These organizations represented the primary opponents to highway construction in Baltimore. Not only were these organizations the largest anti-highway actors, but they typically formed as coalitions of smaller neighborhood associations that alone would have lacked the staff and funding to protest the road over an extended period. The four primary actors were the Relocation Action Movement (RAM), the Movement Against Destruction (MAD), the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR) and the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point (The Society). The two secondary actors that are dealt with only briefly in this thesis are the Southeast Community Organization (SECO) and the Volunteers Opposing Leakin Park Expressway (VOLPE).
The primary source of information on these organizations is the Special Collections Department at the Langsdale Library. This archive possesses collections on many of the most important players in highway construction including MAD, SCAR, SECO, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC), BURHA and the Baltimore City Department of Planning (BCP). It was from these collections that I drew the majority of my archival data. A brief description of the MAD collection offers a glimpse into the wealth of data available at the Langsdale.

The MAD collection is composed of fifty-four boxes. These boxes contain meeting minutes, membership and recruitment information, press releases, advertisements and promotional information. Additionally, the collection hosts MAD-related newspaper clippings, correspondence between MAD and individuals, organizations and coalition members. There are also several boxes that hold information on highway litigation such as trial documents, attorney correspondences and billing information. Importantly, the collection also includes documents connected to highway hearings such as city announcements for hearings, testimony and statements made by individual organizations. Meeting minutes were especially useful for studying every organization as they provided a timeline to follow and a means to gauge the ever increasing sophistication of the anti-highway groups as the “freeway revolt” stretched into years. These collections also contain unpublished jewels such as Lee Truelove’s *History of SECO*, Carolyn Tyson’s chapters on MAD and Mark Reutter’s chapters regarding highway development and anti-highway opposition. It is important to note that groups like RAM, The Society and VOLPE do not have collections in their own right.
Despite this, information on RAM and the Harlem Park neighborhood can be found in the BURHA, GBC and MAD collections. The SCAR collection, despite its name, has limited information on SCAR, but quite a bit on The Society. Likewise, collections that have information on Leakin Park typically hold information on VOLPE’s anti-highway campaign.

An important advantage that the Langsdale’s Special Collections Department holds over other similar archives is that their website has an extremely well organized and often updated catalogue of holdings for each collection. In addition, heavily used collections such as the one on MAD, are being slowly digitized and uploaded. Presently, it is possible to access information on MAD’s organizational records, litigation, publications and a host of other information from anywhere on the globe. In addition, the staff at the Langsdale is willing to digitize documents on request. While the majority of the research for this thesis was done in person at the Langsdale, a variety of other internet sources were utilized.

Aside from highway construction, the city of Baltimore was engaged in major urban renewal projects in various parts of the city during the 1950s and 1960s. Harlem Park was the city’s first “demonstration area” for urban renewal. Beginning during the mid 1950s the city used Federal funds to renovate homes, establish pocket-parks and plant street trees among other things. Developing an understanding of the Harlem Park community before highway construction was greatly aided by several historical documents. BURHA’s *An Assessment of the Stewardship Program* published in 1957 and their 1958 *Harlem Park Stewardship: An Interpretive Analysis of a Pilot Community*
Relations Program provide interesting details about initial urban renewal in Harlem Park including resident discontent over the destruction of alley-homes. Additionally, both provide brief histories or statistical information about the area and its residents. A 1969 report created for the city by the Commission on Governmental Efficiency and Economy, Inc. entitled City Park Maintenance casts light on into how Harlem Park’s pocket-parks had evolved. Aside from Ryon’s excellent Baltimore City Neighborhoods history, there is a dearth of information on Harlem Park between the turn of the century and the 1970s. These urban renewal documents, while not comprehensive histories, provide a glimpse into the goings-on in the neighborhood and allow the researcher to track the neighborhood’s decline as overcrowding and property decay took their toll.

Three internet resources played an important role in the development of this thesis. The first resource, Scott Kozel’s “Roads to the Future: Highway and Transportation History Website for Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.,” was valuable for its material on highway construction on the east coast. His section on Baltimore details the development of the “Highway to Nowhere” and explores all of the various plans that led to its creation. A thirty-five year veteran of highway planning and development, Kozel catalogs the myriad highway plans set forth by the city of Baltimore. Second, Jacqueline and Kraig Greff’s “Fell’s Point: Out of Time” documentary website provides oral histories of those who worked to preserve the neighborhood during the 1960s and 1970s. Of particular importance for this thesis was their interview with Mrs. Lucretia Fisher, the founding member of The Society. Third, the Maryland Transit
Administration’s “Red Line Corridor Transit Study” provided insights into the city’s future plans for the “Highway to Nowhere.”

In addition, a variety of other, less scholarly, sources provided context for this research. These included two transportation policy focused blogs, “Baltimore City’s past, present and future” and Gerald Neily’s “Baltimore Innerspace.” These works deal with development, urban renewal and transportation issues. They provided excellent photos of West Baltimore, both present and past. Additionally, the “B’more Mobile” website, which represents a coalition of organizations from Baltimore city and the surrounding suburbs seeking “a strong, affordable, interconnected, efficient and environmentally sustainable system of transportation for all the public,” offers a brief analysis of the “Highway to Nowhere.” The “LiveBaltimore” website, designed to provide prospective buyers with information on Baltimore’s neighborhoods, provided an abundance of neighborhood maps. Lastly, the website of the Culture Works Project, a Baltimore-based not-for-profit organization seeks to “develop cultural opportunities for creative young adults, and assists communities in the beginning processes of community organization and development,” hosts a history project on the “Highway to Nowhere” that includes a brief video tour of “the road” itself.

As demonstrated, a wide variety of information is available on the development and construction to the “Highway to Nowhere,” as well as opposition to its placement. Not only are scholarly works available, but numerous archives are overflowing with hundreds of thousands of pages of data on the subject. Curiously, there is an extremely limited amount of information available on those who were displaced from Harlem Park
via the condemnation of homes in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. This author found just two city reports which give details on displacement in the city of Baltimore. The first report, dated March 1965, provides details on displacement due to urban renewal and other activities. It does not, however, deal with displacements from highways. In fact, it specifically states that the figures included in the report “do not include displacements from the East-West and Southwest Expressways” (Hartman et al. 1965). The second, undated report by Rubenstein and Ferguson provides some statistical data on those displaced due to both urban renewal and highways during the middle 1960s and early 1970s. Unfortunately, this second report provides no additional sources of information and does not include any interviews or specifics as to the impact of “the road” on the lives of the people who were displaced by it. Although the Baltimore Sun has published half a dozen articles in the last decade dealing with the consequences of building the “Highway to Nowhere,” relatively little mention is made of displaced residents. It was thus necessary to interview several residents to gauge the impact of “the road.” A packet of information explaining the nature of the research being conducted for this thesis, a series of interview questions and an interviewee consent form were submitted to Ohio University’s Internal Review Board in early February 2009. On 9 February 2009, the IRB determined that this research was “exempt from IRB review because it involves researching involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.” Based on this category two exemption, the IRB approved the request to interview human subjects. The IRB approval number is 09E029. The consent form is attached as appendix B at the end of this thesis.
A significant period of time has elapsed between when condemnation of homes in the Harlem Park neighborhood began in 1966 and the present day. As a result, adults who lived in the area at the time are, most likely, in their seventies and eighties. Locating these individuals, many of whom may already be deceased, proved difficult. Fortunately, in 2003 the Baltimore Sun published an article detailing a reunion of friends who grew up in the Harlem Park neighborhood and who were forced to leave the area due to highway construction. Most were teenagers and twenty-somethings at the time of their displacement. None were homeowners. Cross-referencing these names with names listed in the Baltimore City whitepages, I was able to locate the addresses and phone numbers of four of the five residents interviewed in the newspaper.

In order to introduce myself and my research, I sent letters of introduction to the homes of these four residents. This letter is attached as appendix C. In this letter, I explained my research and my desire to interview each resident. As traveling to Baltimore and setting up individual interviews did not seem feasible given time constraints, I proposed interviewing each resident over the phone. In my letter of introduction I identified a time that I would call each resident to ask if they would like to participate and to set up an interview time. The letter explained that the interview would be recorded. Additionally, this letter included a stamped envelope with my return address on it and two consent forms. One form for the records of the interviewee and one form that was to be returned to me should the interviewee consent to being interviewed. Unfortunately, one of the individuals that I had hoped to interview was deceased. Additionally, one of my letters did not arrive at the proper address. After interviewing the
two individuals that did receive my letter I was able to get an accurate address and phone number for the third remaining person that I wanted to interview. Overall, I interviewed three former Harlem Park residents for this thesis.

In order to be able to record telephone interviews, I opted to utilize the internet-telephone application Skype. This tool allows free internet calling between Skype users. In order to allow incoming calls from non-users and also to call out to non-Skype numbers, I purchased an online number and Skype Credits. Unfortunately, Skype itself does not include a call-recording tool. To solve this problem, I downloaded a free trial of the add-on application CallBurner. This tool allows unlimited call-recordings for a period of thirty days. Combining Skype with CallBurner allowed me to phone interviewees and record our conversations. Interviews were recorded as .MP3 files and then transcribed in Microsoft Word. All three interviews combined to a total of 2:11:48 in time and a total of thirty-nine pages transcribed.

In conclusion, a variety of sources were utilized in the development of this thesis. Although research material for this thesis was drawn primarily from Baltimore-based archives, other sources of data such as newspapers, internet resources and interviews proved equally important. In regards to previously discussed archival data, the documents and collections listed should not be considered wholly comprehensive. Bits and pieces of this thesis were drawn from dozens of collections; I have endeavored to list only the most important. Additionally, a wide variety of planning documents were utilized and the selected few discussed above represent only the most significant. The vast majority of information gleaned from newspapers was acquired from clippings, not as a result of a
comprehensive sifting of the *Baltimore Sun* or *Afro-American*. Undoubtedly, hundreds of important articles still remain to be found.
CHAPTER THREE: SELECTING THE ROUTES: INSTITUTIONALIZATION, NEGOTIATION AND THE TARGETING OF HARLEM PARK, FEDERAL HILL, FELLS POINT.

That planners select routes for potential highways that weave through low income, often minority neighborhoods is often taken as self-evident. It is assumed, often out of hand, that neighborhoods once described as “blighted” or “obsolescent” would naturally become corridors for roadways. In some cases this belief has led to the rise of truisms such as “if you want to know where the black community is, just follow your ears to the noise of the expressway” (Wright 1997, 144). Additionally, highway planners, local politicians and federal authorities are often portrayed as villainous henchmen intent on ramming concrete through working class, low income or minority neighborhoods simply because these places are labeled “undesirable” or stand in the way of “development.” Yet the development of highways and the selection of the routes that they will traverse is more complicated a matter than selecting areas with the lowest property values or the most “decayed” housing stock. In reality, the planning of highways and the selection of their routes is a complicated, often controversial and lengthy process.

In the case of Baltimore, Maryland, decades of political squabbling, inter-agency backbiting, and significant conflict and compromise between city government and neighborhood associations preceded construction of an east-west expressway. In spite of all of this, the east-west expressway - the dream of a string of city mayors – was never fully realized. The result, as we have already read, was the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere” or what planners referred to as Interstate 170. Today, as a result of the
failure of the east-west expressway project, the former I-170 is part of U.S. route 40 and runs through the neighborhood of Harlem Park. Because I-170 was to run in a right of way between Harlem Park’s primary streets, Franklin and Mulberry, this area was often referred to as the I-170 Franklin-Mulberry corridor or simply the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. Today, the road itself is known simply as the “Highway to Nowhere,” “Interstate Zero” or the “Highway in the Ditch.”

It is impossible to understand how this “Highway to Nowhere” came to be if we simply assume that highways are built to eliminate the undesirable, to take advantage of the politically powerless, or to utilize the properties with the lowest market value. Certainly these things are important, and it is undeniable that the central philosophy of highway building, to facilitate “slum clearance” or the more genteel “urban renewal,” weighed heavily on the minds of highway planners. Yet to understand how the neighborhoods of Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point were targeted as routes for the east-west expressway we must examine the history of Baltimore, the politics of highway building, the myriad highway plans floated by various city, federal and private agencies and the role of regular citizens.

Early Road Building in Baltimore

Franklin Street, the northern portion of what would become the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, has long been a major east-west thoroughfare through Baltimore. In the 19th century, the road connected central Baltimore to its rural hinterland and was a primary route for farmers bringing cattle, sheep and hogs to the Calverton road stockyards (Sherwood 1929). The corner of Franklin and Calvert was, between 1850 and
1950, the southern terminus of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad (Maryland Memory Projects). During the 1850s and 1860s, Thomas Swann the mayor of Baltimore and later the governor of the state of Maryland lived on Franklin Street. It was here that Swann hosted the future Edward III of England when he visited the United States in 1860 (Sherwood 1929). One 1929 article recalled that “the street was an extremely fashionable thoroughfare, where pretty women in hoop skirts and poke bonnets paraded to be admired by gentlemen in tight trousers, long-tailed coats and high hats” (Sherwood 1929). Clearly from the mid 19th century to the early 20th century, Franklin Street was an important artery for traffic of various types. The road played a role in facilitating the movement of traffic through the city, was a promenade for important local figures, hosted a railroad and was the site of various industries.

Major improvements to Franklin Street (and its east side counterpart, Orleans Street) began in the mid-1930s. This series of improvements, variously called the east-west viaduct, the east-to-west highway, and the cross-town boulevard, saw the widening and paving of Franklin Street. One Evening Sun article lauded the construction, stating that motorists “will be able to skirt the congested center of the city and get through town at a fast clip” (“It’s a help…” 1936). A similar article published in the Baltimore Sun followed the exploits of the mayor as he made a timed run of the “East-West Artery” in thirteen minutes, while still managing to keep to the city’s 20 mph speed limit (“Mayor times trip on…” 1936).

Despite this flurry of construction that widened roads, installed traffic lights, removed railroad tracks and laid asphalt some commentators were still unhappy with the
results. One article published in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* in December of 1936 is worth quoting at length due to the nature of the complaints expressed by the author, his prescribed solutions, and its general prescience. While acknowledging that the opening of the east-west thoroughfare via Orleans and Franklin Street was “a help,” the author argued that “this east-west thoroughfare is not, however, a complete solution of the through-traffic problem.” The route, the author stated, “is still laid through a congested area where the vehicular flow is interrupted by many cross streets and many traffic lights.” These major cross streets, namely St. Paul, Paca, Howard, Central, and Broadway, were in turn disrupted in their own north-south flow by the increased traffic on the east-west route. The author stated that “it would be unfortunate, too, if the opening of the new thoroughfare stopped consideration of a more efficient use of Mulberry Street. Little is heard now of the suggestion that it be used in conjunction with Franklin Street to expedite traffic” ("It’s a help..." 1936). The issues identified by this author were recognized by road builders a decade later when the first plans for a true east-west expressway were proposed. For example, early plans utilized both Franklin and Mulberry Street and also advocated depressing these streets to allow cross streets to flow, uninterrupted, above them. Importantly, the author highlights a problem all too familiar to students of urban development be it getting water to Los Angeles or storing excess rainfall in Milwaukee. Development, while mitigating a particular problem, often allows for more development to occur which in turn requires further mitigation by development.
Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The Planning Commission, 1942

In 1939, the city of Baltimore created the Commission on the City Plan. This organization, later known simply as the Planning Commission, was tasked with providing the city recommendations for a variety of public improvements. The Commission employed three local engineers, Nathan L. Smith, Gustave J. Requardt, and lastly, Abel C. Wolman, who served as chairman (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 6-7). This select group was known as the Advisory Engineers. It was the first of several important groups, such as the Expressway Consultants and the Urban Design Concept Team, which would play an important role in the development of Baltimore’s east-west expressway system.

The report of the Advisory Engineers was published in January 1942 and made a variety of recommendations concerning several existing proposals for Baltimore highways that would shunt traffic around the central city. The Advisory Engineers argued for the necessity of a Canton-Fairfield harbor tunnel and also a Baltimore County beltway. Today, both of these plans have become reality. Despite these recommendations, the Advisory Engineers also argued that these by-passes, though necessary, would not obviate the need for a major east-west highway route. Therefore, in addition to addressing the beltway and harbor tunnel proposals, the team examined two primary east-west routes through the central city (Fig. 4).
Figure 4: Advisory Engineers Plan, 1942.

From Study for the East-West Expressway, 1960, Sheet 1.
The first route ran along Pratt Street just north of the Inner Harbor. The second route utilized Franklin and Orleans Streets. The team recommended the construction of a tunnel beneath Franklin Street to preclude having to buy all of the homes and businesses directly along the route. The Advisory Engineers suggested the use of the Franklin-Orleans route, noting that it “was preferable, primarily because it came closer to certain important downtown functions, such as the retail trade center and also because the tunnel would eliminate the time-consuming step of property acquisition near the center of the City and thus allow the project to be completed earlier” (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 6-7). The final route recommended by the Advisory Engineers, flowing from east-to-west, entered the city at Pulaski Highway, continued along Orleans Street (utilizing the viaduct constructed in the 1930s), sank into a tunnel at the juncture of Orleans and Franklin, and emerged into a depressed expressway between Franklin and Mulberry Streets east of Paca Street. As we shall see, the utilization of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor as a depressed expressway was one component of almost every highway plan that was universally adopted.

**Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The Advisory Engineers, 1944**

In 1943, the Master Plan Committee on behalf of the Planning Commission, following up the report submitted by the Advisory Engineers, drafted two new proposals that highlighted its own choices for east-west highway routes (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 7) (Fig. 5). The Planning Commission’s Route A was almost indistinguishable from the Franklin-Orleans route recommended by the Advisory Engineers. The primary differences were the abandonment of the Franklin Street tunnel
and the shifting of traffic to a route north of the Orleans Street Viaduct. The report argued that the Viaduct was not large enough to handle the increased traffic of an east-west expressway and that a tunnel beneath Franklin Street would not be wide enough to accommodate the minimum number of lanes. Route A continued the trend of utilizing the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor as a depressed highway.

The Planning Commission’s Route B proposed a more northerly route that would use Federal, Hoffman, and Biddle Streets. This route was rejected by the Planning Commission and Route A was approved by the Planning Commission on March 30, 1944 ("Study for the east-west…" 1960, 7). The Planning Commission then forwarded its results to the Mayor and the city administration urging them to adopt the recommended measures. The activities and recommendations of the Advisory Engineers and the Planning Commission went unnoticed by the general public during this period and there was little public commentary. One author has suggested that this was a result of the lack of local news due to the coverage of the final months of World War II (Reutter 1973, 6).
Figure 5: Planning Commission Routes A and B, 1943.

From Study for the East-West Expressway, 1960, Sheet 2.
The business community in Baltimore was well aware of the plans to establish a highway and made their feelings known to the city administration. A report drafted by the Baltimore Association of Commerce and entitled “Comparative Study of Various Suggested Express Highway Routes, Jan. 18, 1944” echoed the 1942 Planning Commission report, but proposed an even more ambitious plan for connections with an additional north-south highway route. The Association of Commerce plan notes that these highways would “pass through blighted areas” and neighborhoods “approaching blighted conditions” (quoted in Mohl 2004, 689).

Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The Robert Moses Plan, 1944

The lack of public attention to the plans of the city in developing an east-west expressway changed dramatically in October 1944 with the publication of Robert Moses’ Baltimore Arterial Report. In response to the Planning Commission’s suggested Route A, Mayor Theodore McKeldin had contracted Moses and a group of special consultants to further study the previously recommended routes. The route recommended by Moses in 1944 was, like the original Franklin-Orleans route, identical to the Planning Commission’s Route A.

This proposal, usually known as the Moses Report or the Moses Plan, was met with protest from some residents. A Baltimore Sun article from October 1944 reveals that some residents were calling Moses’ highway plan “the big ditch” (quoted in Reutter 1973, 7). Another resident objected to the plan as well as its suggestion of relocating residents into temporary housing projects. “I think it is a shame to take homes away from
us poor people,” she commented. “If people are so anxious to get some place in a hurry why don’t they take an airplane? And then after they throw us out they’ll want to put us in some old war housing project.” The resident concluded, “What do they think this is, Germany?” (“Expressway plan calls for…” 1944). Another resident stated, “Mr. Moses is from a big city where big highways are needed…. This freeway will not help the city at all. It is too fast and too big and it will take potential shoppers away from instead of to the shopping district” (“How Moses freeway would…” 1944). In an early reference to the hated “Road Gang” of the highway’s later, more controversial years, a third resident argued that “the only people who will benefit by this are bus and transportation companies” (“The Moses expressway and…” 1944). Additionally, a Mr. Cesky asked “why should they take the homes away from these people who have put their everything into them? If they want to clean up the Negro slum area let them put up some housing in the blighted area. Don’t tear down these [homes]” (“The Moses expressway and…” 1944).

Although it appears that the Advisory Engineers report and the 1943 Planning Commission report were not widely known, one resident remarked “this man Moses just gets all that money for adding a few curves to something our engineers designed years ago. I could have done that myself without looking where the curves were going” (“The Moses expressway and…” 1944). Interestingly, opposition to the Moses plan was also couched in the patriotic rhetoric of the war. The title of one article declared “homes, factories, stores, victory gardens, would bow to highway.” In another instance the Evening Sun recorded a storefront sign which read “our boys are fighting for liberty… These boys must have a home to come home to.” The sign featured photographs of
servicemen whose homes were in the path of Moses’ highway route (“The Moses expressway and…” 1944).

Not all of the public outcry was negative, however. A brief examination by this author of the *Evening Sun* paper for the month of October 1944 revealed significant interest in developing an east-west expressway. Perhaps responding to the patriotic rhetoric of some within the anti-highway crowd, one resident argued “we need decent highways in this city, and they will provide work in the post-war period for returning servicemen” (“Expressway plan calls for…” 1944). One resident, the head of a trucking company, stated “this proposed expressway is the best thing that could ever happen to Baltimore. I’ve been in this business for ten years here and I can honestly say that this city is the worst bottleneck on the East Coast” (“Expressway plan calls for…” 1944). Others interviewed by the *Evening Sun* responded in a similar fashion, decrying traffic and praising the relief that the highway would bring. One resident stated “the traffic congestion along Franklin and Mulberry streets is terrible now and I think it is going to be worse after the war. It’s [the highway] the greatest thing they ever thought of” (“Expressway would clear some…” 1944).

Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The Smith Plan, 1945

Prior to the announcement of the Moses Plan, Mayor Howard Jackson, anticipating the need for highways in the aftermath of World War II, lobbied the Maryland General Assembly for a bond issue to raise money for highway construction. The result was the approval of a 20 million dollar bond issue by the General Assembly in early 1944 of which half was finally approved by voters in the fall of that year (much to the delight of Moses). Concurrently, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 established a system in which the Federal government would make money available on a matching
basis for highway construction (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 8; Reutter 1973, 10).
However, when the City requested that the State earmark these funds for the Moses Plan
the General Assembly demurred. Within city government it was widely held that public
opposition to the Moses Plan as well as the lack of a comprehensive overall highway plan
led to the General Assembly’s rejection of the request to gather funding (“Study for the
east-west…” 1960, 8).

The result of this belief was an effort by the City to develop its own
comprehensive highway plan that laid out not only a potential east-west thoroughfare, but
also a complete highway plan for the entire city. This report, often called the Smith
Report after its author Nathan L. Smith, the Chief Engineer of Baltimore and a former
member of the Advisory Engineers team, was wide ranging (Fig. 6). Smith’s plan,
released in May 1945, was the first to advocate for an inner beltway surrounding the
Central Business District (CBD). From this inner beltway, a supplementary route was
proposed which would swing southeast through Fells Point and exit the city in a eastern
direction. It also combined portions of both the Planning Commission’s 1943 Route A
and Route B (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 8). Once again, like every previously
discussed highway plan, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was utilized. The major
difference between the Smith Plan and previous plans was that it utilized only a small
portion of the east end of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor as a giant curve to feed traffic
out of the city to the southwest. At least in the area of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor,
the Smith Plan duplicated the Planning Commission’s Route B.
Figure 6: Nathan L. Smith Plan, 1945.
From *Study for the East-West Expressway*, 1960, Sheet 3.
In essence, Smith’s plan was crafted in response to the rejection of the Moses Plan by the General Assembly. It sought to assure the State that the City had a comprehensive and complete plan for a highway pattern for Baltimore. In the end, however, the Smith Plan was widely unpopular among both citizens and local politicians. While the City Council initially provided $350,000 to develop the precursory plan for an expressway utilizing Smith’s routes, it later refused to fund further more detailed plans. In reality, only one segment of the Smith Plan was built, a viaduct along Russell Street. Construction of this segment did not begin until 1949 because the City Council refused to provide funding for the project until the City administration gave assurances that it would no longer seek the implementation of the entire Smith Plan (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 8-9).


Despite the rejection of the 1944 Moses Plan and the scrapping of the 1945 Smith Plan, a new report from the State Roads Commission was issued in 1946. This report, known alternatively as the Transportation Study Plan or the Childs Report, was an origin-destination survey (Fig. 7). This survey was designed to determine the most efficient routes for traffic through the city center. The report, which was developed with the aid of the City of Baltimore and also the U.S. Public Roads Administration, proposed three routes for a potential east-west expressway. In general, the Transportation Study Plan recommended using components of the Smith Plan as well as portions of the Advisory Engineers Route A. Also, the Report put forth a new route utilizing a corridor between Bank and Gough Streets just north of the Inner Harbor (“Study for the east-west…” 1960,
9). While little serious attention was paid to this plan, it does show the tendency of planning agencies to continually co-opt existing plans. The Bank and Gough corridor for instance could be seen as little more than an extension of the Pratt Street alignment suggested by the Planning Commission in 1943.
Figure 7: Transportation Study Plan (Childs Report), 1946.
From *Study for the East-West Expressway*, 1960, Sheet 4.
Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The 1949 Plan

After the flurry of planning between 1942 and 1946, the next two years saw no significant plans advanced by any agencies. In 1949, however, the sixth plan for a comprehensive Baltimore highway network was published by the Baltimore Planning Commission (Fig. 8). This report, entitled “A Tentative Master Transportation Plan,” brought together a number of the various alignments proposed by earlier plans. For example, the western and central components of the report are identical to those proposed by Smith in 1945. The eastern component which was to cross the Jones Falls was the same as the route proposed by the Planning Commission in 1943 as their Route A. The 1949 Plan also incorporates the inner beltway to encircle the CBD. Most importantly, however, the 1949 Plan proposed a route running from the city center up the Jones Falls Valley (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 9; Reutter 1973, 12). This route was eventually adopted as the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) and completed in 1960. Like all of the previous plans, the 1949 Plan also utilized the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. The 1949 Plan mirrored the proposal that Nathan Smith made in 1945 that advocated for the use of the east end of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor as a curve to push traffic to the southwest. Additionally, the 1949 Plan proposed a depressed highway to run through this area, much like the one that was proposed by the Advisory Engineers, the Planning Commission and Robert Moses.
Figure 8: 1949 Plan.
From *Study for the East-West Expressway*, 1960, Sheet 5.
While construction began on the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) in 1951 and the various plans from the previous decade gathered dust on city shelves, Baltimore’s heavy traffic problems continued to be an issue. By 1952 the Baltimore Traffic Commission estimated that 18,000 vehicles per day were transiting along Mulberry Street alone (Sehlstedt 1952). The *Baltimore Sun* complained that while the 1942 conversion of Mulberry Street into a one-way, east-flowing, “non-stop” thoroughfare was efficient at the time by 1952 the “non-stop plan is hardly more than a pleasant dream of another era” (Sehlstedt 1952). The result of “the street’s three narrow lanes” and the “race to keep with the nineteen synchronized traffic lights” was that “today’s automobiles, trucks and busses are caught up in the reality of traffic jams which sometimes back up six or eight blocks in the downtown area” (Sehlstedt 1952). Clearly, the desire for, and a belief in the absolute necessity of a highway system still loomed large in the minds of planners and the City administration.

The year 1956 was a watershed in the history of highway development in the United States. During this year, the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Interstate Highway Act (FIHA). This critical piece of legislation created the so called 90-10 formula by which the Federal Government would shoulder 90% of the cost of interstate highway systems if they conformed to specific Federal guidelines. This meant two things for Baltimore. First, the massive Federal subsidy provided by the FIHA insured that a highway system could be created affordably and in a reasonable number of years. Second, the passage of FIHA meant that previous highway plans for Baltimore had to be reexamined and revamped to make certain that they met the specific Federal guidelines.
needed to insure funding. By conforming to these guidelines, Baltimore could have 90% of the cost of its highway system shouldered by the government and the system would be incorporated into the 41,000 miles of interstate highway that the FIHA was designed to fund. The result, coming two years after the passage of FIHA, was a new plan for Baltimore highways.

Early Plans for the East-West Expressway: The 1957 Plan

The 1957 Plan, as it was called, was a major revision of the 1949 Master Plan (Fig. 9). It was both expensive and complicated and incorporated almost every major route suggestion put forth by previous plans. The basic alignments for the 1957 Plan called for an east-west highway and a north-south highway as well as a downtown/CBD beltway. A “supplemental” connector highway was also introduced which was to enter the city from the southeast, pass through Canton and Fells Point and then interchange with I-83. This highway’s goal was to link the CBD and the industrial areas of southeast Baltimore with I-95 and I-695. The Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) would continue south, cross the Inner Harbor to Federal Hill using a bridge and link up with the western section of the CBD beltway. This section, which cut across the harbor and through Federal Hill, was called the southwest expressway. Additionally, a southern expressway (I-95) would cross the water from Locust Point to Southeast Baltimore and merge with the circular outer beltway (I-695) that would ring the city. The east-west expressway, as it was now officially being called, would enter the city from the west through Leakin Park. Upon reaching the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor this east-west expressway would be depressed below ground level and would continue this way as it crossed through the center of the
city and jogged north-east to follow Biddle Street. Continuing along this route, the east-west expressway would interchange with the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) before continuing on a northeasterly course out of the city. Upon leaving the city, the east-west expressway would interchange with the outer ring highway, I-695. This outer ring highway would flow around Baltimore crossing the Patapsco River south of the city utilizing a bridge (which today is the Francis Scott Key bridge) ("Study for the east-west…" 1960, 9-11). The total cost for just the east-west expressway along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and Biddle Street route was estimated at $194 million dollars. The total number of properties to be condemned was 5,700 (Reutter 1973, 13-14).
Figure 9: 1957 Plan.
Like the days after the publication of the Moses Plan in 1944, public outcry was loud and clear. Like the Moses Plan, the east-west expressway was alternately lambasted as “the big ditch” or “the Chinese wall” (quoted in Reutter 1973, 14-15). These comments reflect the changing nature of the east-west expressway as the Planning Commission met with Federal authorities to hash out an east-west expressway that would meet Federal guidelines. The initial plan for the east-west expressway called for the highway to remain depressed through the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor to its connection with the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83). This plan would require a steep interchange to move traffic from the depressed expressway to the elevated I-83. Critics of the plan quickly labeled this “the big ditch.” This particular plan met with disapproval from Federal planners who thought it would be “excessively costly and cumbersome” (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, 12). The Planning Commission duly changed their plans in January 1958 to accommodate an elevated double-decked structure that would run from Myrtle Street (beginning at the east end of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor) to I-83. While appeasing Federal authorities, this plan was even more upsetting to citizens who promptly labeled it the “Chinese wall.” In fact, it was the advent of the plan for this elevated highway that sent the first neighborhood association to Washington D.C. to appeal the highway’s construction. In January of 1958, members of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association voiced their opposition to their congressmen in the capital (Reutter 1973, 14-15). The vocal opposition from the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association evidently influenced the Planning Commission because in September of 1958 a decision was made to reevaluate the elevated interchange plan. The Planning
Commission’s goal was to develop an interchange system so that the east-west expressway could remain depressed through the Mount Vernon area. A later planning document records that the decision to reevaluate the elevated highway section was a result of a “strong adverse public reaction” (Study of the east-west…” 1960, 12). In addition, the Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute of Architects as well as the Greater Baltimore Committee expressed their disapproval of the elevated highway scheme (Reutter 1973, 15). A week after the Greater Baltimore Committee expressed its “unalterable” disapproval, Mayor Thomas D’Alesandro, Jr. ordered a comprehensive restudy of the entire east-west expressway. In doing so, D’Alesandro stated “I have requested that due consideration be given to the preservation of neighborhoods and the development of needed facilities for moving people, particularly the people of the Baltimore Metropolitan Area” (quoted in Reutter 1973, 16). Responding to D’Alesandro’s request, Philip Darling, the newly appointed head of the Baltimore Department of Planning and former chief of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), decided to create an alternative route that would shift the East-West highway to the south of the CBD (McCarthy 1998, 141).

The 1957 Plan is particularly important not only because it embodied almost all of the previously proposed highway alignments, but also because it was the first plan to include routes which would run through Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point. Both the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and a southwest expressway had been proposed previously, but in the 1957 Plan they found themselves part of the same arrangement. The east-west expressway’s central segment would run through the Franklin-Mulberry
Corridor which itself was situated in the southern half of Harlem Park. The southwest expressway would run through Fells Point and jog slightly northward to connect up with I-83. In turn, I-83 would run south, cross a harbor bridge and move through Federal Hill. The 1957 Plan is also important as its publication heralded significant public outcry not just from individuals but also from organized neighborhood associations and business concerns. One author, explaining the failure of the 1957 Plan to be implemented in its original form, states that “the proposed routes, most of which cut a swath through a genteel neighborhood along North Charles Street, raised the ire of influential residents” (McCarthy 1998, 140).

A Study for the East-West Expressway

With D’Alesandro’s order for a reexamination of the 1957 Plan for the east-west expressway the discussion of the highway was muted for about a year. On October 26, 1959, a full three months before the official reexamination was to be released, Baltimore’s new mayor, J. Harold Grady, announced the new route that the Department of Planning had selected (Reutter 1973, 16). The new alignment was to follow the same route into the city from the west utilizing the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. At the east end of the Corridor, the route would swing south along Myrtle Street until it connected with Pratt Street just north of the Inner Harbor. The route would then continue eastward cutting across the wharves at the north end of the Inner Harbor and then follow a corridor between Boston and Pratt Streets to a connection with the Baltimore outer beltway (now designated I-95).
At long last, the Department of Planning’s report was published in January 1960 (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11). The report, entitled “A Study for the East-West Expressway,” which was intentionally eye catching and included dozens of maps and aerial photographs, merged highway alignments from all of the previously developed plans. The two segments of the 1960 Plan that had been discussed the most in previous decades were the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and the Pratt Street segment which routed the highway just north of the Inner Harbor along the wharves and then south into Fells Point where it would terminate with at an interchange with the Jones Falls Expressway (completed in 1960). This segment just north of the Inner Harbor was designated the “Harbor Route.”
Figure 10: Department of Planning “Harbor Route,” 1960.
From “Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council” 1972, 109.
Figure 11: Detail, Department of Planning “Harbor Route,” 1960.
From “Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council” 1972, 110.
A critical component of the report was the comparison of the total number of condemnations that would be needed for the “Harbor Route” versus the old Biddle Street route proposed in the 1957 Plan. The “Harbor Route” required the demolition of 1,198 homes whereas the older Biddle Street route would have required razing of 3,593 homes. Additionally, the Planning Commission argued that the majority of the homes along the “Harbor Route” were in “poor” condition while along the Biddle Street route 22% were reported as “good” condition and 53% were of “fair” condition (“Study for the east-west…” 1960, plate 20). Additionally, the report makes the argument that “expressways can serve to reduce blight and to facilitate urban renewal through removing traffic (including truck traffic) from residential streets” (3-4).

Prior to the release of his study, Darling had met with a variety of civic organizations to garner their support for his road plan. Both the Committee for Downtown as well as the Greater Baltimore Committee endorsed Darling’s plan. The Greater Baltimore Committee, in particular, viewed the 1960 Plan as a helpful component of a major urban renewal project that they were planning for the downtown area (“Report on the east-west…” 1960, 4). This project, known as Charles Center, was a 33-acre office development situated north of the Inner Harbor in the city’s center. It would later expand to become part of the extremely successful and popular Inner Harbor development which is a major component of Baltimore’s downtown life today. In addition, the Citizens Planning and Housing Association also supported the Darling’s plan. While the CPHA was concerned about the damage that would be done to neighborhoods, it also recognized that decades of highway planning had led already deteriorated neighborhoods to go
“downhill” ("Report on the east-west…” 1960, 4-5). The uncertainty of where highway routes would be placed led homeowners to put off investing in home upkeep and the CPHA admitted that with this uncertainty it was “folly” to invest ("Report on the east-west…” 1960, 4-5). Unlike the furor over the 1957 Plan, there was little voiced opposition to Darling’s east-west expressway plan when it was released in 1960. This lack of public commentary, however, was short-lived.

Prior to the public release of Darling’s Study for an east-west expressway, Mayor Grady contracted three local engineering firms to assess Darling’s highway plan. It may seem unusual that a Mayor would order a reassessment of a plan designed by his own Department of Planning, but the Mayor’s order reflected the new reality of City and Federal cooperation. Under the FIHA, the Bureau of Public Roads which oversaw highway construction in the United States at this time required that all highway plans be approved by outside engineers. This feasibility study, paid for by the Federal government to the tune of $500,000, was to examine the routes developed by the Department of Planning and also provide all of the blueprints that would be used in the actual construction of the highway (McCarthy 1998, 145).

The Expressway Consultants and the 10-D Plan

The Mayor, in April 1959, turned to the firms of J.E. Greiner, Remmel, Klepper & Kahl and Knoerle, Graef, Bender and Associates. J.E. Greiner was responsible for almost all the road contracts in the state of Maryland and had also worked on the Harbor Tunnel (completed in 1957) and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The other two firms were also experienced road builders who had carried out contracts across the Baltimore and
Washington D.C. region (McCarthy 1998, 145). Together, these firms united to form a separate consulting agency called the Expressway Consultants. Apparently, the lack of public opposition to Darling’s plan convinced Mayor Grady that the reassessment and feasibility study would essentially be a rubber stamp. Few changes were expected to emerge out of the Expressway Consultants work and at least early in their examination of Darling’s plans the consultants seemed to agree (McCarthy 1998, 146).

When the Expressway Consultant’s report was published in October 1961, controversy immediately began to brew. Having examined over twenty potential variations of Darling’s Harbor Route, the final route selected by the Expressway Consultants differed only slightly from Darling’s original, but the proposed changes were of major consequence. While following the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, the Expressway Consultants 10-D plan, as it was entitled, jogged south towards the city center using the more westerly Freemont Street as opposed to the originally proposed Myrtle-Pine Street route (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13). In addition, the Expressway Consultants route ignored Pratt Street and instead utilized Hamburg Street to move further south to cut across the Federal Hill neighborhood and then across the Inner Harbor via a bridge that was to be constructed. Upon crossing the Inner Harbor the 10-D plan called for the highway to run through the Fells Point neighborhood. The biggest change, of course, was the abandonment of the Pratt Street route for a route slicing through Federal Hill and then across an Inner Harbor bridge. While previously I-83 and the east-west expressway had utilized different routes to move across the city’s central section (I-83 moving north-south, the east-west expressway moving east-west), the Expressway Consultants plan had
both I-83 and the east-west expressway sharing a cross-harbor bridge. While Darling had anticipated the construction of a harbor bridge further to the south where the I-95 beltway was to cross the Patapsco and in the city’s center where I-83 required a bridge to continue south, he had never considered that his east-west expressway would follow a similar plan (McCarthy 1998, 146). While the I-95 and I-83 bridge crossings had been proposed in previous plans, much like the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, an Inner Harbor bridge had never been considered by any previously proposed plans for the east-west expressway itself.
Figure 12: Expressway Consultants 10-D Plan, 1961.
From “Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council” 1972, 115.
Figure 13: Detail, Expressway Consultants 10-D Plan, 1961.
From “Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council” 1972, 116.
The changes made to Darling’s original plan, at least according to the Expressway Consultants, stemmed from several factors. First, the Expressway Consultants pointed out that Darling’s Pratt Street route would have to traverse the Old St. Paul’s Cemetery to which the city’s powers of condemnation could not be applied (McCarthy 1998, 147). Additionally, a large power substation was also in the planned right of way for the highway and was believed to be a significant obstacle. Darling himself knew of these difficulties (in fact, he had begun negotiating with St. Paul’s Church to relocate the cemetery prior to when the Expressway Consultant’s report became public) because he had asked Bernard L. Werner, the head of Baltimore’s Department of Public Works, to examine his proposal and highlight potential difficulties. In addition to these obstacles, Werner pointed out that an expressway over the wharves might require pilings driven to depths of up to 125 feet to form a solid foundation. Despite this, he impressed upon Darling the fact that none of these obstacles were insurmountable. Writing back to Werner, Darling commented that while it was possible that the Expressway Consultants had discovered some “insuperable difficulties” in the Pratt Street plan that “I get the impression that this is not the case and the consultants merely feel that their route is preferable” (quoted in McCarthy 1998, 148). In essence, the Expressway Consultants favored their own route because it was “their baby” and not the product of the city’s planning agencies.

The disjuncture between what Darling as well as Mayor Grady had believed to be a formality and the 10-D route of the Expressway Consultants brought the city’s
Department of Planning and the consultants into a head to head struggle to determine which plan – “Harbor Route” or “Harbor Bridge” – would be approved. Both sides of the debate had their own sets of allies and each employed them to influence the agency which would be the final arbiter in the debate, the Baltimore Planning Commission.

The Expressway Consultants plan was immediately attacked by the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. “Why not use the Myrtle-Pine Corridor with its blighted houses thereby sparing the Poe Homes and the many better quality houses west of Freemont Avenue and along Scott Street?” the Association wondered (“Summary of the sub-committee…” 1962). In support, the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (Darling’s former agency) argued that the Poe Homes, the city’s first public housing project, was still one of its best (McCarthy 1998, 148). Utilizing the highway alignments suggested by the Expressway Consultants would result in the destruction of 35.6% of the Poe Homes and the loss of both a Community Building and the Mount Olivet Church (McCarthy 1998, 148). Additionally, by utilizing Freemont Street rather than the Myrtle-Pine Corridor a significant section of deteriorating homes on the east end of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor would be left untouched. The managers of the Charles Center development office also expressed their support for the Pratt Street route and the usage of the Myrtle-Pine Corridor. According to them, a highway route along Pratt Street would help to create a “natural barrier” between the CBD and the land to the south of the city’s center. While the Highway Consultants had argued that their Harbor Bridge route would enhance the CBD by allowing it to spread further to the south, the managers viewed this as a “weakening of the core by continued dispersion.” They added, “the
Central Business District is already too large and the creation of a strong core demands intensification of development” (quoted in McCarthy 1998, 148).

On the other side of the debate, the Greater Baltimore Committee endorsed the Expressway Consultants’ Plan. The GBC argued that the Pratt Street highway would create an “imposing physical and psychological barrier” separating the Inner Harbor and CBD (quoted in McCarthy 1998, 148) It is unclear, however, how firmly the convictions of the GBC were held towards either Darling’s or the Expressway Consultants’ route. When Darling first unveiled his plan for the Pratt Street route the GBC had had no complaints. One author has argued that the GBC supported the Expressway Consultants’ route simply because they wanted some sort of expressway building to move forward (McCarthy 1998, 148).

On December 6, 1961 the Department of Planning released a rebuttal to the Highway Consultants’ October report. For the benefit of the Planning Commission, Darling’s staff summarized the report of their counterparts. The goal was to synthesize and debunk the arguments made by the Consultant’s that theirs was the superior plan. Darling’s staff argued that the consultants’ plan based its superiority on the avoidance of the St. Paul’s Church cemetery, a lower total cost, and expansion benefits for the CBD. As to the issue of the cemetery, the Department of Planning argued that (as mentioned earlier) St. Paul’s Church was not unwilling to allow the cemetery to be relocated. Darling’s staff projected the total cost of the Pratt Street route at $192 million or approximately $16.5 million per mile. The 10-D plan was to cost $171 million total or $16.2 million per mile (Department of Planning 1961, 16). While the Expressway
Consultants’ plan appeared to be less expensive, the Department of Planning argued that their route provided “an additional mile of expressway which would be of greater service to the center of the City” (Department of Planning 1961, 16). Additionally, the Department of Planning’s rebuttal argued that “certain items” such as 158 homes in Lexington Terrace and the Penn Street power sub-station could be saved. The removal of these “items” from the plan would mean a cost reduction of $4 million which would make the Pratt Street and 10-D plans essentially the same price (Department of Planning 1961, 16). As far as the benefits that the Expressway Consultants’ plan would provide to the CBD, the Department of Planning pointed out the criticisms already voiced by the Charles Center development managers. An expansion of the CBD, stated Darling’s staff, “would be to weaken rather than strengthen the heart of the City” (“Staff report on the…” 1961, 17).

This report was presented to a Planning Commission that wanted to see the end of controversy and the start of highway construction. Werner, who had vetted Darling’s plan around the time that the Expressway Consultants’ report had first been released, argued that the consultants should be allowed to respond to the Department of Planning’s criticisms. This memo, byzantinely entitled “Comments on ‘Staff Report on Expressway Consultants’ Report,’” was presented to the Planning Commission on January 8, 1962. In this report the Expressway Consultants again made the argument that their route was cheaper, reflected better research, and contained better figures on traffic, total costs, and Federal construction guidelines (“Comments on ‘Staff Report…”’1961b). The report emphasized the need to save Federal dollars. It was a possibility, the Expressway
Consultants rebuttal suggested, that the Bureau of Public Roads might force the city to shift the highway back to the less costly, but locally controversial, northern route (“Comments on ‘Staff Report…’” 1961b).

Apparently this back and forth rehashing of various plans still left some doubts in the minds of the Planning Commission. Werner recommended that the Expressway Consultant’s plan be adopted, but added that:

the report made by the Consultants is a report in their best judgment that reflects the thinking of certainly the top consultants in this area, some of which are nationally known and represent in excess of 40,000 man hours… we have heard from a rebuttal from the Expressway Consultants where they disagreed with the Staff Report, and we heard from the staff again where they disagreed. We have not heard from the Consultants again, but I say nothing is to be gained by rehashing it. It is a difference in judgment where it [the highway] should be placed – in Pratt Street or Hamburg Corridor (quoted in McCarthy 1998, 157).

Evidently, this “difference in judgment” was enough for Werner and a majority of the Master Plan Committee. They voted 3 to 2 that the consultants’ plan be approved and it was officially accepted by the entire Planning Commission on January 24, 1962 in a 7-1 vote.

On January 30th, 1962 over a thousand people, the majority from East Baltimore, attended a public hearing on the various segments of the proposed 10-D plan. The hearing, attended by local officials and business leaders, “ended,” the Baltimore Sun reported, “in a fashion similar to the city’s entire expressway problem – a shambles” (quoted in Mohl 2004, 691). Immediately controversial, the 10-D Plan not only formed the basis for the many compromise plans that followed it, but also the foundation from which widespread, grass-roots protests sprung. Eventually, opposition to the 10-D Plan
would spark the creation of numerous city-wide organizations, such as RAM, MAD and SCAR, that actively opposed highways for social and environmental reasons. If 10-D was the greatest planning effort put forth by Baltimore’s highway planners and the highway lobby itself, it was also the spark which would ignite what one scholar has dubbed Baltimore’s “freeway revolt” (Mohl 2004).

The 10-D plan was the culmination of two decades of arduous and controversial highway planning. The Expressway Consultants’ plan blended seven previous proposals into one cohesive whole for the construction of an east-west expressway. The major western alignment of the 10-D plan, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor had been utilized in each of the past seven plans. Historically a major east-west artery through Baltimore’s central section, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor had been consistently widened and improved during the 1930s. When the area was first cited as a potential route for an east-west highway by the Advisory Engineers team in 1942, their decision reflected this unique history. The Franklin-Mulberry Corridor became, however, a component of the 10-D Plan not simply due to its past or even its geographic location but because it had been systematically institutionalized as a part of Baltimore’s highway system. So thorough was this institutionalization that by the 1960s the Harlem Park area, despite an on-going urban renewal project, had become filled with vacant homes and deteriorating property. Understandably, residents who knew that condemnations for a highway route were imminent, had ceased to invest in their homes. A twenty-year cycle of highway proposals had had a significant deleterious effect on the neighborhood.
The inclusion of the Fells Point neighborhood in the 10-D plan resulted from a variety of compromises and planning decisions made by local politicians and road builders. An alignment through Fells Point was first proposed in the 1945 Smith Plan. The widespread unpopularity of that plan, however, insured that little attention was paid to a route of this sort until the 1957 Plan was proposed. In this plan, a southwest expressway was suggested that would link the Jones Fall Expressway and a CBD beltway to a highway running through Fells Point from the east. Widespread opposition to the western leg of this plan, most notable from the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association and by local business interests, forced Mayor D’Alesandro to order a restudy of the whole plan in the hopes of finding a less controversial route through the city’s center. The result was the 1960 Plan which saw Darling’s Department of Planning shifting to a new strategy of running a highway to the south of the CBD along the Inner Harbor. This plan, meant to avoid the neighborhoods of central Baltimore, put Fells Point in the path of the highway once more. The Expressway Consultant’s 10-D alignment shifted the entry of highways into Fells Point to two points. The Harbor Bridge would bring traffic from the west through Fells Point along the east-west expressway, while traffic from the north would descend upon Fells Point from an interchange with I-83.

The only major segment of the 10-D system that was not institutionalized by inclusion in numerous highway proposals was the segment passing through Federal Hill. This harbor bridge route had first been proposed in the 1957 Plan as a way for I-83 to cross from the CBD to the area south of the Inner Harbor. The novel new idea put forth by the Expressway Consultants was to utilize this Harbor Bridge as a route not only for I-
83, but also for the east-west expressway. This scheme conceived entirely by the Expressway Consultants and designed to avoid the problems associated with the St. Paul Cemetery, was a major departure from previous proposals. Under this scheme all three neighborhoods, Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point were, for the first time, incorporated into the plans for the east-west expressway.

From Public Hearing to Initial Condemnations

As discussed the previously, the January 30th, 1962 public hearing on the 10-D Plan for Baltimore did not go well. In addition, despite the approval of the Expressway Consultants’ Plan by the Planning Commission, numerous other organizations also had to weigh in with their verdicts. A month after the disastrous public hearing, officials from the Federal Bureau of Public Roads voiced their dissatisfaction with the Consultants’ route and suggested that the original Biddle Street “northern route” was preferable (“Expressway shift is hit…” 1962).

Months dragged by as federal, state and city officials haggled and bargained over the 10-D Plan. A major reason for this extended delay stems from Baltimore’s city charter. A provision of this charter stated that only the City Council could initiate condemnations of private property for the purpose of public works or expressway construction (Mohl 2004, 692). Essentially, the City Council had the ability to prevent State and Federal authorities from proceeding with highway building. In the end, however, the 10-D Plan was officially approved on all levels, Federal, State and local, on October 7, 1963.
The year 1964 was largely a period of waiting for Baltimore city officials and citizens. Thomas Ward, a city councilman and the head of the City Council’s Public Transportation Committee, put forth the proposal that a mass transit system be included in the east-west expressway. Ward recommended that a median between the east bound and west bound lanes could be utilized (Flowers 1963). This suggestion had been voiced by the Metropolitan Transit Authority the previous year, but had been widely ignored. Ward too made little headway in his quest for public transportation and told a group of reporters that he was officially against the construction of the east-west expressway. Ward stated that “the city would be better off without an expressway. What we really need is a well-developed mass transit system” (quoted in Reutter 1973, 24-25). Aside from the debate over the necessity of a public transportation system, city officials continued to wait for Federal approval of a traffic study (the Baltimore Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, BMATS) which had been conducted by Wilbur Smith and Associates, a local planning firm. This study was required by Federal law and contained an origin-destination traffic study and estimates regarding the amount of traffic that a Baltimore highway system would be expected to handle in the year 1980. The BMATS study was reviewed by the Bureau of Public Roads and on February 1, 1965 both State and Federal authorities gave their “final” approval of the Expressway Consultants’ 10-D Plan. Finally, after twenty-three years of studies, re-studies, controversy and delay, the City Council could begin condemnations on the alignments which were to make up the east-west expressway.
On July 20, 1965 the City held a second public hearing on the 10-D Plan. This hearing was meant to allow residents to voice their opinions about condemnation lines. About 550 residents attended the meeting, but rather than offering new suggestions for condemnation lines, the residents demanded that no highway be built at all (Reutter 1973, 25). William Donald Schaefer, a future mayor of Baltimore, but then the councilman from the 5th district, was charged with moderating the meeting, but in the face of angry, heckling citizens he walked out leaving the meeting to be moderated by City Council President Thomas D’Alesandro, III. D’Alesandro recalled, perhaps with a touch of hyperbole:

Every condemnation ordinance was a real bloodbath. And Donald Schaefer was great… The abuse that man had to take. They kicked him in the balls, hit him on the head, and then spit on him. There was one hearing in the War Memorial Building – you’ve never seen anything like it. Finally, Don said, “to hell with it” and walked off the platform. I had to take over (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 29).

Two weeks later, Mayor McKeldin, hoping to assuage the anger of east side residents suggested that the alignments through the Fells Point area could be shifted into the water, thus saving a number of homes and businesses. By September, however, McKeldin had reversed himself citing the slow-down in construction that would be entailed by a change in plans. A second meeting with east side residents on November 17th attracted a crowd of only 200, most of whom appeared to have accepted the inevitability of the highway running through their neighborhood. The City Council passed the first condemnation ordinance for the east-west expressway near the Mt. Carmel Cemetery close to the East Baltimore communities of Highlandtown and Canton. Four months later, on February 21, 1966, the City Council issued the first condemnation
ordinance for the west side of the City. By a 19-1 vote, Thomas Ward casting the sole dissenting vote, the City Council condemned the alignment along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. Bernard Werner, director of publics works and the man whose agency would be responsible for purchasing homes inside the condemnation lines assured the councilmen that displaced property owners would get “top dollar” for their homes (“Expressway leg okayed…” 1966).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is often assumed that the creation and selection of highway routes reflects a desire by city officials to eliminate “undesirable” areas or to clear these same areas for redevelopment. Underlying this assumption is the belief that city, state, or federal officials seek to take advantage of the lack of political power that these areas have knowing that they will be unable to effectively resist efforts at construction. While in some cases, most notably the Moses Plan, urban renewal and “slum clearance” were primary goals, in other cases, planners merely selected the most efficient routes based on traffic volume, street width, and geographic location. Additionally, as we have seen, highway routes rarely die but are often resurrected time and time again to be utilized by multiple plans. It was the reemergence of these various plans and their continual revision that institutionalized Harlem Park as a route for the road. Likewise, political compromise, inter-agency feuding and negotiations with business concerns, neighborhood associations and the public in general laid the groundwork for the selection of Federal Hill and Fells Point as routes for highways. In this way these neighborhoods were targeted as routes for the road. In the aftermath of the selection of the 10-D system, promises for “top dollar”
payments for condemned homes set the stage for the emergence of one of Baltimore’s first anti-road organizations, the Relocation Action Movement (RAM).
During the middle 1960s, opposition to highway construction in Baltimore was erratic and unorganized. Individual neighborhoods opposed the road in isolation from one another and there was little coordinated city-wide protest. In these early days, groups of citizens confronted the highway as it affected their own “small piece of urban turf” (Mohl 2004, 694). It was on this uneven terrain of highway opposition that one of the first major groups to oppose the highway coalesced. This group, known as the Relocation Action Movement (RAM), was established in the winter of 1966 by working class African Americans from the west side neighborhoods of Harlem Park and Rosemont. This section examines the influence that RAM had on construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” As this chapter will demonstrate, RAM’s emergence at a time when opposition to the east-west expressway was still largely nascent had a profound effect on the group’s tactics. As a result, RAM chose accommodation and negotiation with the city over highway construction. Rather than protesting the road, the group elected to insure just compensation for those being displaced from the area. In addition, Harlem Park’s history as a site of urban renewal and promises by the city for “joint development” and green space quieted popular resistance to the road. Both the timing of the group’s emergence and the group’s specific goals dramatically influenced the current highway geography of Baltimore and led directly to the development of the “Highway to Nowhere.”

Bordered to the north by Lafayette Street, to the south by Mulberry Street, to the west by Monroe Street and to the east by Freemont Street, Harlem Park, as shown in Fig.
14, was the site of early experiments with urban renewal. The Rosemont neighborhood, typically referred to as a “stable” African American neighborhood by Baltimore politicians due to its high homeownership and residency rates (“Expressway planning for the…” 1972, 130), was located to the east of Gywnns Falls and Leakin Parks. The organization that grew out of these neighborhoods, RAM, was not simply the product of individuals seeking to resist highway construction. Rather, RAM developed out of the same long held frustrations that would emerge on the national scale in the tumultuous weeks after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. These frustrations over residential crowding, displacement, “urban renewal” and unjust condemnation compensation were felt by African Americans all across the urbanized United States. In Baltimore, these frustrations were exacerbated by decades of highway planning. While these factors led to the establishment of RAM, the group’s divided focus on fighting the highway and securing just compensation had a dramatic influence on the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” With promises of “joint development,” and improved access to public facilities and green space, the city of Baltimore was able to convince west side residents that highways would bring prosperity. The result, however, was the creation of a concrete landscape and a legacy of broken promises.
Figure 14: Harlem Park.
From the Bureau of Urban Renewal and Housing Authority Collection,
Langsdale Library Special Collections.
The Emergence of RAM

The Relocation Action Movement evolved out of simmering resentment about the nature of African American life in urban America. While racial tensions nationwide would boil over such topics as the war in Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement and especially over the death of Dr. King, members of RAM expressed frustrations that had more to do with uneven access to space and the destruction of vibrant communities. Factors such as the unequal “dual housing market,” community destruction, the haphazard methods of condemnation used by the city of Baltimore and the failure to pay “top dollar” for condemned homes were all factors in RAM’s development.

African Americans in Baltimore, as in almost every city in the United States, were crowded into strictly demarcated neighborhoods. While Baltimore’s African-American population had doubled since 1920, recent arrivals and new families were locked into congested neighborhoods that had been traditionally African-American for decades. While segregation ordinances had long been discarded in Baltimore, housing discrimination, “red lining” and White intimidation had worked to prevent African-Americans from establishing new neighborhoods across the city. The breakdown of the old Jim Crow realtor system was creating a new “dual housing market” that was just allowing the expansion of “black pioneers” from previously all African-American central city neighborhoods into the more affluent neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city (Orser 1994). Despite this, African-American housing in Baltimore was at a premium and the highway threatened to reduce the availability of housing even further. Additionally, urban renewal projects in Baltimore which aimed at cleaning up deteriorating
neighborhoods and fixing aging and dilapidated homes often resulted in displacement. For example, the Harlem Park Planning Office, an organization working with the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), identified Harlem Park’s “outstanding problem as being one of too many buildings on the land,” and recommended “clearance and demolition of interior structures… to handle this problem” (“Minutes of Harlem Park…” 1958). The Harlem Park Planning Office then identified two “pleasant” areas to relocate displaced individuals. According to one author, displacement was not uncommon and between 1951 and 1964 90% of displaced citizens came from low-income African-American neighborhoods (Mohl 2004, 694). This history of discrimination combined with the threat of road construction sowed the seeds of discontent from which RAM sprung.

Yet RAM’s opposition to highway construction was not simply a response to unfair housing conditions or the threat of relocation. Rather, RAM viewed the highway as destroying the vibrant communities that African Americans had built within the central city as a result of White prejudice and intimidation. Ignored for decades by the white leadership of the city, often lacking sanitation and police protection, these neighborhoods were now faced with indifferent destruction. Summing up the frustrations of many Baltimore African Americans, RAM’s position statement reads, “for too long the history of Urban Renewal and Highway Clearance has been marked by the repeated removal of black citizens. We have been asked to make sacrifice after sacrifice in the name of progress, and when that progress has been achieved we find it marked ‘White Only’” (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 2).
In addition, “the haphazard method of appraisals and acquisition of property” by the Public Works Department made it seem “like homes were condemned, purchased and demolished almost at random” (quoted in Gioielli 2007, 12). This left residents “with a feeling of constant anxiety over the future of their community, and created a patchwork of empty lots and boarded up homes” (quoted in Gioielli 2007, 12). These methods represented a form of procedural injustice and, as some residents asserted, were an attempt to bully residents into leaving the area. Additionally, relocation assistance for those being pushed from the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was almost non-existent (Mohl 2004, 695).

The Dual Persona of RAM

Lastly, RAM members sought to insure that the city was upholding its promise of paying “top dollar” for homes along highway condemnation lines (“Expressway planning in the…” 1972, 130). RAM argued that the city was offering residents “unreasonably low prices” for property purchased in the Harlem Park and Rosemont areas (“A history of the…” date unknown, 1). Moreover, because of the structure of Baltimore’s segregated housing market, African Americans were already heavily segregated into thin stretches of homes on the city’s east and west sides (Gioielli 2007, 11). The result was increased property prices at a time when hundreds of families were looking for new homes.

In dealing with the city on this issue, RAM exhibited a dual persona. On the one hand, RAM militantly opposed highway construction. RAM’s position paper makes it quite clear the lengths to which RAM members were willing to go to oppose the highway. In the aftermath of the 1968 Detroit riots, MAD stated that “the city of Detroit
stands as an example of what happens when massive numbers of people are uprooted for a prosperity they are not permitted to participate in. We will make our stand in the streets and in the doorways of our homes. Unless black people’s demands are satisfied the Expressway WILL NOT be built [emphasis in original]” (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 2).

One the other hand, RAM’s primary goal, at least in the case of Harlem Park, was to insure that homeowners received not only a fair market value for their homes, but the total replacement value. RAM argued that “we have united not to stymie progress but to demand justice; we do not ask for patronization but for an end to victimization” (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 2). By victimization RAM was referring to the “ridiculously low prices” being offered by the city for homes in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 3). Citing a letter sent from Edgar Ewing to the City Solicitor that stated that displaced residents had to pay “an average of $3,500 for comparable replacement housing,” RAM argued that the city was fudging the numbers (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 3-4). These facts, RAM argued, “cannot indicate the loss that a man undergoes after purchasing a house in 1948 for $6,500 and skimping [sic] and slaving for 20 years to make the mortgage only to have the state offer a pitiful $4,000 for it in 1968” (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 4). RAM argued that the city should establish a formula that would provide enough compensation to finance the purchase of an equivalent replacement home. In addition, RAM argued that the city should end the uncertainty of condemnation acquisitions by buying up all of the homes within the current condemnation lines regardless of possible future route changes.
In 1967, RAM presented their position statement along with 450 resident signatures to Mayor McKeldin. They argued that city “services from the Departments of Sanitation and Police be increased to meet the rising needs of the area and also to correct the negligent method of condemnation which often left one or two families stranded in a block of vacated, boarded-up, garbage-infested, city-owned houses causing increased problems of vandalism [and] rats…” (“A history of the…” undated, 1). In addition, they argued for the substitution of the city’s policy of “fair market value” with one of “fair replacement value” (“A history of the…” undated, 1). In the months after the presentation of this petition, RAM continued to press for just solutions to the problems faced by the displaced. The persistence of the group paid off in July 1967 when the City Council declared a moratorium on condemnations along the route of the East-West Expressway (“A history of the…” undated, 1). The purpose of this moratorium was to allow the City Council time to develop a plan for financing the replacement value of condemned homes. Unfortunately, however, the moratorium proved ineffective and Harlem Park residents found themselves harassed by Department of Public Works officials who continued to force people off their property while denying them the money to purchase a replacement home. The result was an August letter to Mayor McKeldin in which RAM proposed a meeting with the Mayor to “fairly and peacefully” work out a solution. The letter threatened to enlist the help of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and “other more militant organizations” if a solution was not found (“A history of the…” undated, 2).
Enlisting the help of Stuart Wechsler, a representative of CORE, RAM leaders met with Alan Boyd, the Secretary of Transportation and head of the Department of Transportation under President Johnson. They also met with Governor Spiro Agnew. From these meetings, in which RAM members wore lapel buttons with the word “chnge [sic] gotta come,” they were able to extract promises of a switch from the “fair market value” to a “fair replacement value” system (“Homeowners seek fee rise…” 1968). Eventually, and with the backing of their powerful new allies at the state and federal level, RAM managed to influence the creation of a state law that would compensate displaced individuals with not only money to cover the replacement value of their homes, but also a subsidy of up to $5,000 to help homeowners cover the cost of moving (Gioielli 2007, 12).

RAM’s Triumph (?)

While RAM’s achievements were a triumph for those homeowners struggling against the inequitable Baltimore housing market and against a penurious city administration, RAM’s inner paradox helped to shape the broader future outcome for the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. While RAM maintained a militant anti-highway stance, the group capitulated when it came to its goal of preventing construction and substituted that goal for one of achieving fair resettlement assistance for those being displaced. The result was that RAM’s militancy was blunted. The failure of RAM to utilize its full potential for organizing a widespread, “in the streets” protest representing the African-Americans of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor meant that highway construction in Harlem Park was never seriously contested. While city officials believed that “the new resistance to black
removal was a more serious threat because it resonated with nationwide vibrations” (Olson 1976, 64) they were still able to negotiate with RAM and continue preparations to lay pavement. In essence, RAM was able to “jump scales” and take their grievances to the state and federal level. Yet while the group was successful in achieving a relocation policy that would aid those being displaced, their success also meant that construction was able to proceed.

The result of this was that the battle over the construction of the highway through Harlem Park seems muted at least compared to the later raucous battles that were waged over Federal Hill and Fells Point. In the cases of the two east-side neighborhoods, condemnation lines were contested, highway plans were excoriated and sent back to the drawing board, law-suits, injunctions and appeals were filed. In the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, however, the City Council was able to condemn the highway alignment, appease activists with promises for relocation and just compensation, purchase the homes inside the condemnation lines and begin bulldozing them by 1969. This seems remarkable progress for a city which took 23 years to even approve a viable plan for an east-west expressway and then would spend years battling the highway opposition between 1968 and 1978. While RAM’s divided focus no doubt played a role in these developments, widespread resistance in the Harlem Park neighborhood was averted thanks in large part to three factors. First, Harlem Park’s history as the site of Baltimore’s initial attempts at urban renewal imbued the community with the sense that the east-west expressway might enhance the prosperity of the area. Second, almost every highway plan for the area delivered elaborate plans or made promises for a variety of social
improvements, in later years called “joint development,” such as parks and playgrounds.

Third, while the city had studied and restudied plans for a central city highway based on negotiation with neighborhood associations and general public aversion, the single constant of highway building was that it would utilize the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor in some way.

Urban Renewal, “Joint Development” and Greenspace in Harlem Park

The Housing Act of 1949 was a primary driving force in sparking programs of urban renewal in American cities. The Act provided cities with enough funding to purchase areas considered to be “slums” for the process of redevelopment. The Federal government covered approximately 2/3 of the cost of acquiring these properties while the city only had to foot the last 1/3 of the bill. The Housing Act of 1954 amended the 1949 Act by placing a greater focus on rehabilitation and conservation as opposed to just demolition and construction. In Baltimore, the neighborhood of Harlem Park was selected by the Federal Housing Administration and the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA) “as the guinea pig for an intensive joint effort to identify and remove the roadblocks to residential rehabilitation” (“Residential Rehabilitation….” 1962, 10).

Between 1955 and 1965, property owners received eight million dollars to rehabilitate homes. The Federal government and City spent about 8.8 million dollars to renovate two schools, pave roads, install new street lights and plant some 900 street trees (Fig. 15). Many Harlem Park blocks were substantially crowded by homes and other structures built inside the cores of the blocks. This phenomenon, a frequently visible one
in other American cities, stemmed from the high level of housing segregation faced by African Americans. In the case of Harlem Park, the city removed many of these alley houses to “reclaim” the land they occupied for the installation of pocket parks. Construction of these parks was slow, however, and Harlem Park residents complained that too few were being built and that people were being displaced by the destruction of alley homes (Anson 1964). Eventually 29 pocket parks and playgrounds were created in spaces which had previously been deteriorating and dangerous alley homes. BURHA also cracked down on absentee landlords who refused to maintain their properties. The city issued these landlords with orders to meet city health and building codes. Failure to meet city regulations resulted in the seizure of homes by BURHA, their rehabilitation and rental to low-income families (Anson 1964). A survey of the pamphlets, literature and programming of the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council shows a community that was taking pride in the improvements that were being made. Membership in the council had risen; community programs and events were being planned. Street cleaning and tree watering days brought children and parents out into the community (“Harlem Park Neighborhood Council…” undated).
Underlying the acquiescence of residents to highway construction were two factors. On the one hand, BURHA had significantly cleaned up the streets of Harlem Park, brought playgrounds and community spaces, planted trees and fostered community programs. For many residents, the highway may have been seen as the next step in Harlem Park’s redevelopment. In 1968, the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council voiced its wishes for what should be developed in the neighborhood along with highway construction. The Council asked for:

- the construction of low-income housing (not high rise housing) for rent or sale, multi-purpose centers, teen centers, centers for the aged, swimming pools, playgrounds (not asphalt) shopping facilities and a school complex.
- We are also requesting that the people living in the adjacent communities be given first chance of being employed on any construction that is scheduled for the Franklin-Mulberry-Fremont corridor (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 3).

It was perhaps not unrealistic for Harlem Park residents to expect the construction of some of these facilities. The highway, at least as planners had portrayed it, would mean “progress” and with that watchword would come jobs and prosperity. Responding to the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council’s Position Paper (quoted above) Mayor
Thomas D’Alesandro III assured Harlem Park residents in a letter dated October 30, 1968 that “we want the expressway to serve, as you suggest, as the focal point for joint development opportunities, so that new housing, new schools and other community facilities can be built alongside and in connection with the expressway” (“Reply to Harlem Park…” 1968). Another significant factor in pushing residents towards accepting or even welcoming the road were city promises that greenspace, playgrounds and playing fields were to be built nearby.

Many of the early highway plans included dramatized sketches of artfully greened highways. These sketches were used to convince residents that the highway would be visually appealing and also a source of greenspace. In fact, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor today is visible from the air not just because of its wide concrete channel, but because of its singular grass median and the grass strips which run along the edges of the highway. A closer look shows plain grass fields often littered with garbage or other highway detritus. Prior to highway construction, however, the promise of greenspace, ball fields and playgrounds was an enticing one. The 1944 Moses Plan called for the construction of fields and playgrounds across the route the highway would traverse. An article in the Baltimore Evening Sun recounts how one city playground “consists of two sliding boards, a sand pit, four swings, water font and a shelter. It is reached by clambering up gravel and mud banks.” This rather unappealing playground was to be replaced by “softball and baseball fields on the land not required for the expressway proper” (“Expressway plan calls…,” 1944).
These sorts of community improvements were pushed by both city officials and planners as “joint development.” Ostensibly, the purpose of “joint development” was to allow communication between planners and residents to develop needed services which could be installed as a component of highway construction. “Joint development” was also supposed to create temporary services on land which had already been condemned and cleared of homes. The quest for “interim uses” for this cleared land was one that the citizens of Harlem Park pursued for many years.

Condemnation of homes in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor began in 1966 and was not significantly slowed by the actions of RAM. By 1969 the majority of homes in the area had been purchased and the demolition of many of the structures was beginning (“East west highway” 1969). Construction of I-170 through the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, however, was not slated to begin for several years. In actuality, construction on the road did not begin until 1972. Between 1969 and 1972, a swath of land cutting through the southern section of Harlem Park was vacant, surrounded by stretches of chain-link fence. During this period, the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council appealed to the city to create some interim uses for this vacant land.

At a March 1969 meeting between residents of Harlem Park, members of the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council, MAD members and a “Conceptual Review Committee” chaired by Joseph Axelrod, the head of the Interstate Division of City Roads, residents argued for ball fields and playgrounds. In an April letter to Axelrod, David Fisher, a member of Baltimore’s Policy Advisory Board, broached the topic of interim uses. Fisher admitted that interim uses of the corridor had been slow to develop because
“once established as interim uses, the people in the area would be reluctant to give them up when the land was required for construction purposes (Fisher 1969). Fisher went on to argue, however, that there was potential for development of playground and park facilities within the Harlem Park neighborhood. As far as the construction of greenspace, Fisher argued that while demolition contracts called for “temporary seeding” of lots along the condemnation lines, this might not provide areas that were “attractive or even usable.” On the other hand, Fisher suggested that “a stronger and more intensive effort,” while difficult, might make the area more ‘aesthetically pleasing.’” Fisher also suggested that junior ball fields could be laid out and argued that “it is not inconceivable to me that city agencies might install a blacktop basketball court” (Fisher 1969).

While the city debated, residents established an interim community recreational council designed to “provide increased recreational and cultural facilities for approximately 15,000 culturally, socially, and economically deprived people of the Rosemont-Franklin-Mulberry Corridor” (“MAD newsletter…” 1970). Yet despite meetings with Axelrod - and Fisher’s critical letter - it appears that little was done to provide additional greenspace, playgrounds or recreational facilities to the people of Harlem Park. As time went by, homes were demolished and vacant land bulldozed for the highway. Residents continued to request interim uses from the city, but as vacant lots began to fill with garbage and unbulldozed homes began to deteriorate new, more pressing problems arose. At one point, Harlem Park Council members lamented that “the vacant land and houses in the Franklin-Mulberry-Fremont corridor have greatly increased the rat population in the Harlem Park area. This destruction has caused filth and debris to
litter Harlem Park.” Subsequently, the Harlem Park neighborhood Council requested that the city “gas the Harlem Park area to reduce the rat population” (“Position paper of the…the…”1968, 2-3).

These issues are important to note for several reasons. It is important to realize that the negative environmental externalities of urban expressways stem not only from their use (i.e. air and noise pollution, run-off, etc) but also from their construction. The demolition of structures and the failure to maintain the remaining lots was an injustice that the city carried out for years. A similar situation developed in Fells Point where homes were condemned, but not destroyed. In this area, untended property was subject to decay and vandalism, but eventually the city was able to, albeit sluggishly, develop a system whereby owners could return to their homes or new buyers could purchase them. In both Harlem Park and Fells Point, areas regarded as “slums” by the city, there was a failure of the city to respond to environmental degradation. Eventually, the city was spurred by pleas from both the African American community in Harlem Park and the white community in Fells Point to address these issues. Yet, it is hard to escape the reality that the city was far more cognizant of the problems espoused by their white residents in Fells Point than their African American citizens in Harlem Park who eventually found themselves pleading to have their own neighborhood “gassed.”

As the Franklin-Mulberry corridor stood neglected and vacant for years, pressure within Baltimore against the road grew steadily. In 1972 there was significant uncertainty as to whether a road through the area would be constructed at all. Taking advantage of this uncertainty, Baltimore’s Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) reproduced an
alternative to highway construction in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. Established in 1968, the NDC focused on providing planning services to Baltimore neighborhoods. The NDC’s “Franklin Mulberry Linear New Town” was a brief outline designed to highlight the needs of the Harlem Park area, and incorporated mass transit, recreational facilities, cultural attractions and low income housing. While having been designed to address the needs of the Harlem Park community, the NDC plan represented a continuation of the vague and usually illusionary promises made to Harlem Park residents by a variety of organizations throughout decades of highway development.

In the end, the dream of a Franklin-Mulberry New Town was not to be. Condemnations continued throughout 1968 and into 1969 when demolition began. By the end of the year the majority of the homes in the area had been razed. This left a 1.5 mile strip of rubble, tangled weeds and remnant, vacant buildings. Using the state assistance gained for them by RAM, some displaced residents moved into the previously condemned homes in the Rosemont neighborhood. Others moved to other neighborhoods in west, northwest and east Baltimore. According to one study:

> Around fifty per cent of the displacees moved to a new housing unit within ½ mile of the [highway] project. Another 25 per cent moved between ½ and 1 ½ mile from the project. Less than 5 per cent of the displaced families ventured beyond the borders of Baltimore City… (Rubenstein and Ferguson undated, 11).

The Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was opened, not as part of the Interstate Highway System, but as a portion of U.S. Route 40 in 1979. The ball fields, green space, community centers and other facilities promised by the city never materialized. In 1972, The Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point
criticized the concept of “joint development” in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. They wrote:

Residents along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor found out how this was a true bait and switch tactic. Early in the planning stages they told members of the Design Concept Team of definite needs of their community: recreation facilities, a shopping center, a post office, clinics, opportunities for employment. The August 1972 design hearing showed how little of these ideas appeared in the final proposal (“The Road: Beating a…” 1972, 8)

“Bait and switch” or unkept promises aside, the following statement regarding the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor is as applicable to the Harlem Park neighborhood today as it was in 1968 - “people live in jungles of boarded up houses, rats, and Fire Department sirens” (Untitled RAM Statement 1968).

Negotiating Highway Routes

Lastly, while the city of Baltimore was often willing to negotiate the routes that highways would take through the inner city, this was never the case in Harlem Park. A brief examination of the planning documents as laid out in the Baltimore Department of Planning’s 1960 “Study for the East-West Expressway” shows that while highway routes were shifted to the north or south of other areas of the city the same changes were never made possible in Harlem Park. While much of this information has already been discussed in chapter three, a brief review will allow a better understanding of how the city selectively altered highway routes through the central city. The highlighted portion of Fig. 16 shows the 1943 Planning Commission route for an east-west expressway. Notice how the highway was planned to enter the city from the southwest, proceed through the Franklin-Mulberry corridor (circled in red), cut through the Mount Vernon
area of the Central Business District (CBD) and then exit the city by running east along Orleans Street. This plan, as discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, encountered serious opposition from CBD business owners not only because the route was to cut through the center of the city, but because it would be extremely expensive.
Figure 16: 1943 Planning Commission route for the east-west expressway
The result was that the plan was revamped in the 1957 plan (Fig. 17). The alignment for the east-west expressway in this route pushes the highway to the north of the CBD through the Mount Vernon neighborhood. Once again, however, this alignment received significant opposition from community groups and influential citizens.
Figure 17: 1957 Department of Planning route for the east-west expressway
The route was then restudied and resurrected in the 1960 Department of Planning’s “Study for the East-West expressway.” Under this plan, shown below as Fig. 18, the highway route was shifted to the south of the CBD to avoid the expensive city center as well as the city’s northern neighborhoods.
Figure 18: 1960 Department of Planning route for the east-west expressway
If we examine all three of these highway plans, we can see that while the “tails” of the three routes change over time, the central segment, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, does not. While these planning documents cannot be said to represent the “smoking gun” of the city’s unwillingness to consider alternatives to the Franklin-Mulberry corridor, they do show that the city planned for close to twenty years to utilize this area as a route for the road. This is particularly interesting given the city’s willingness to negotiate with the more “influential” and also more white neighborhoods to the north of the CBD. In the end, this institutionalization of the road through Harlem Park was a significant factor that contributed to its construction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere” in Harlem Park was the result of a variety of factors. First, as explored in Chapter 3, the inclusion of Harlem Park in numerous highway plans between 1942 and 1961 led to neighborhood disinvestment and deterioration. Second, the paradox faced by RAM of fighting while also trying to negotiate with the city allowed a negotiated settlement to be reached and for construction to proceed. While the tense racial climate of 1968 combined with RAM’s anti-highway militancy gave it an edge in negotiating with the city, one cannot help but wonder what the group might have achieved if they had refused to negotiate and instead took to the streets. The capitulation of RAM, however, was influenced significantly by Harlem Park’s participation in programs of urban renewal which, while eliminating homes and displacing residents, also helped to clean up the area. Additionally, promises
of green space, ball fields and community facilities allowed Harlem Park residents to believe that a highway might bring increased prosperity. In the end, however, the city failed to keep its promises. It took little time for residents to voice their frustrations. Sadly, in August 1969, as bulldozers and cranes clanked through the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, one Harlem Park resident stated:

Here in Harlem Park since 1956 these people have been under the gun. We spent four and a half million dollars improving our homes. [urban renewal in Harlem Park] was supposed to be an example for the whole country. Then they come along, tear down all of these houses. Now we are overcrowded, [they] are running us out because of this highway. There are 18,000 of us who are getting pretty sick from all this devastation, which is one block from us ("Hearings on the Rosemont…” 1969).

For the Relocation Action Movement and the neighborhood of Harlem Park, the apparition of green space and the pledge of community development and prosperity were the counterfeit coin in a bargain that was ultimately repaid not in prosperity, but in pavement.
CHAPTER FIVE: “THE PROFESSIONALS HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR ASSIGNMENTS”: THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT TEAM

At the same time that RAM was voicing its opposition to the highway and mailing position statements to Mayor McKeldin, another significant group was forming in Baltimore. The formation of this group - an unlikely combination of architects, academics and engineers (one article called them “urban missionaries”) - was hailed as a national precedent. Known as the Urban Design Concept Team (UDCT) this organization was to have a profound effect on highway planning in Baltimore. From the beginning, however, the UDCT was a house divided against itself. Between 1966 and 1968, a power struggle between its two primary actors would result in a spiraling cycle of controversy after controversy. The clash between these two groups not only shaped Baltimore’s highway network, but also contributed significantly to expansion of the “freeway revolt.” While not a community organization in itself, a rogue component of the UDCT established itself as a veritable “fifth column” in assisting the efforts of Baltimore’s highway opposition. In addition, this chapter examines the contentious planning process that occurred after the Expressway Consultants’ put forth their 10-D plan in 1961. The result was the development of two new plans for the east-west expressway, the 3-A and 3-C plans. The struggle over selecting one of these plans divided the UDCT and pushed some members of the group to aid and assist Baltimore’s freeway fighters.

The Urban Design Concept Team was a by-product of the increasingly contested nature of the 10-D plan (Fig. 19). On February 15, 1967 a variety of historic preservation groups voiced their disapproval of the 10-D plan’s route through Fells Point (Reutter
1973, 27). Yet opposition to the road was also brewing within city government. David Barton, the head of the City Planning Commission argued that the entire 10-D plan needed revision. In a letter to Lowell Bridwell, the director of the Federal Highway Administration, Barton called the 10-D plan “an absolutely unworkable scheme (Barton to Bridwell 1968). Barton was in favor of having a “balanced transportation plan,” that was built “for the people, not just for automobiles.” In particular, Barton believed that the extension of the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) through the city center to Pratt Street in anticipation of forming a connector through Fells Point was the “least needed” segment of the highway (Reutter 1973, 27). Adding to the growing protest, the City Park Board refused to approve the condemnation ordinance for the area of Federal Hill unless guarantees could be made that the Hill itself would not be harmed by the road (Reutter 1973, 27). This was a serious challenge to the road as only the Park Board had the ability to condemn park land.
Simultaneously, RAM was issuing statements, harrying the mayor with letters and complaints and staging protests outside of city hall. As we have already read, RAM’s demands for “fair replacement value” of homes were later accepted in 1968. In 1966 and 1967, however, RAM’s voice combined with those of the city bureaucracy to stall plans for the highway.
Responding to these problems, and under Federal pressure, the city of Baltimore gave up some of its powers to enter into a partnership with the State of Maryland. Joining together, the city and state established a joint partnership called the Interstate Division for Baltimore City which was headed by David Axelrod. Furthermore, the city and the Maryland State Roads Commission (SRC) took the unprecedented step of creating an “urban design concept team.” This organization would work towards “more aesthetic highways that blended in with the natural environment and preserved the texture of the physical city” (Mohl 2004, 692). The originator of the idea for the UDCT, Archibald Rogers, a member of the Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Architects, stated that the joint venture “would design an efficient, safe, and beautiful Urban Freeway System as a well-balanced and organized entity related visually and functionally to the surrounding urban physical fabric, both existing and planned” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 10). Essentially, the goal of the UDCT was to reexamine the 10-D plan and produce alternatives which would be less controversial and incorporate joint development. The UDCT hoped to foster public participation and went so far as to establish its own newsletter and opened a “community information office” so that residents could interact with planners (Urban Design Concept Associates 1968a, 1).

The UDCT was comprised of four architectural, consulting and engineering firms. The two dominant firms, however, were the San Francisco-based Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) and the J.E. Greiner Company. It should be remembered that J.E. Greiner was a prominent Maryland construction firm and had the major role in developing the 10-D plan. The Design Team was headed by Nathaniel Owings of SOM, who believed that
“the question of how to lace tubes of traffic through vital parts without unduly disturbing the living organism of the city is symptomatic of a national problem and offers a pilot-study opportunity that can be available as an example for the whole country” (quoted in Mohl 2004, 693). In general, J.E. Greiner represented the engineering component of the UDTC, while SOM with its mixture of architects and academics (including sociologists, political, environmental and behavioral scientists) represented the “urban design” component (Bailey 1969, 41).

From the very beginning, however, the UDCT faced significant challenges. First, the UDCT could not create any new highway alignments. The areas that were already set to be part of the 10-D highway plan had to be utilized. Despite this, the UDCT still had hopes that within those alignment lines it would have a wide influence. Norman Klein of SOM stated that:

…we still have the opportunity in Baltimore, as City Councilman Schaefer and others have stated, to modify these condemnation lines as we built up our information, and our reasoning, and our alternatives, so there is time. We have two years. It is not tomorrow. We have two years to build up a case for an option that would show whether the condemnation lines may be modified slightly, whether the road should be underneath, or elevated, or on a grade, whether schools or housing should go above the road (“Hearings on urban highway…” 1967, 58).

Second, the relationship between SOM and J.E. Greiner, despite the often rosy appearance presented to the public, was a tense one. Even after the creation of the UDCT there was still a question about who exercised ultimate authority, who had what powers and where responsibility for various aspects of planning lay. On the one hand, City Planning Commissioner Barton as well as City Council members from neighborhoods threatened by the road believed that SOM should have the greatest amount of influence
within the UDCT. On the other hand, Jerome Wolff, the head of the State Roads Commission (SRC) and Bernard Werner, the head of Baltimore’s Department of Public Works, argued that SOM should merely be one player in a collaborative effort with the more locally based J.E Greiner. Owings responded to what he saw as a limiting of SOM’s responsibilities by stating “the Design Concept Team will not be content merely to make Baltimore expressways ‘pretty,’” but will guard against the kind of ‘conventional engineering’ that could destroy the fabric of the city” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 12). Owings’ remark about “conventional engineering” was clearly a slap at J.E. Greiner whose engineers had planned and advocated for the widely detested 10-D plan.

Wolff and Werner, however, were incensed by Owing’s refusal to share responsibility with J.E. Greiner. They were even more angered when Owings approached Department of Transportation Secretary Alan Boyd seeking clarity on who was in charge. Wolff and Werner responded caustically stating that Owings would “accept our dicta… or we don’t think he can properly be part of it [highway construction]” and “we are his clients. If he won’t accept that fact, he won’t be our architect,” and “Mr. Owings is not the one to go to the national level. We are. I don’t care if he knows Lady Bird or the President himself. It makes no difference to me.” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 13).

The result of all this bickering, however, did not favor Owings. In the end, SOM and J.E. Greiner split responsibility for the planning and design of each alignment. The “urban design” component, that is to say the melding of the road into the environment and neighborhoods of Baltimore, was to be SOM’s responsibility. The final incorporation
of the designs for each alignment and the “urban design” component would be the responsibility of J.E. Greiner and other local Maryland firms.

In 1967 it appeared as though SOM was hamstrung by Werner, Wolff and J.E. Greiner. In addition to having to battle with J.E. Greiner, the UDCT contract stipulated that no member could “confer with or seek the advice or assistance of any federal official or agency” (Bailey 1969, 42). Additionally, another clause barred members of the UDCT from giving information to the public. One author has stated “small wonder that many people expected SOM to fall flat on its face. It looked as though SOM had not only allowed itself to be bound, but gagged as well.” SOM’s “ace in the hole,” however, was a clause stating that the highway system had to “provide for the social, economic, and esthetic needs of the city’s environment.” It was this statement which allowed SOM to take many of the actions it did to inform the public about the goings on of highway planning (Bailey 1969, 42).

SOM’s first approach to reevaluating the 10-D plan was to reexamine the Expressway Consultants’ 1961 traffic study for the east-west expressway. This study, which essentially provided the reasoning behind the 10-D alignment, had argued that much of the traffic that was to use the proposed east-west expressway was local. This traffic, it was argued, needed a highway route which would swing close to the CBD and provide access to the central city area. The UDCT’s August 22, 1968 “traffic evaluation summary,” however, argued that 43% of the east-west traffic in 1990 would not be “directly related to the inner-city area,” but would be “through trips” (Expressway planning in the…,” 1972, 141). While the Expressway Consultants had argued that an
east-west expressway would be utilized almost solely by local traffic, the UDCT’s report showed otherwise. Noting that a significant amount of the traffic that would utilize the east-west expressway was “through traffic,” the UDTC argued that a highway route be created to the south that would shift traffic around the CBD. They also argued that a Harbor Bridge, ostensibly designed to bring local traffic closer to the CBD, was unnecessary if such a large amount of traffic was going to be through traffic (Expressway planning in the…,” 1972, 141-144). This report also presented the mayor with two alternative highway routes which the UDCT believed would minimize the invasiveness of an east-west expressway. These plans were called 3-C and 3-A.

In light of this report, as well as the increasing pressure from a variety of anti-highway organizations including the newly launched Movement Against Destruction, and the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point (more on these organizations later), newly elected Mayor Thomas D’Alesandro III gave the UDCT six weeks and $48,000 to expand on the alternative routes which they had proposed in the “traffic evaluation summary” (“Southern leg of expressway…”1968, C7). The following months, during which the UDCT was developing its alternative route proposals, were fraught with controversy. While the ultimate decision on which route to select lay with the mayor, numerous actors weighed in on what they believed to be the “best” route for the city.

The 3-C Route

The first route proposed in the “traffic evaluation summary,” labeled 3-C (Fig. 20), was a modification of the 10-D plan (Fig. 19). 3-C represented the UDCT’s answer
to the discovery that an east-west expressway through Baltimore would carry both local and through traffic. Central to this discovery, the UDCT believed that through traffic should be routed away from the city center and that local traffic be provided access to it. Therefore, the 3-C plan featured two main alignments which took the shape of a double prong jutting from the west into the heart of the city. The first alignment, very similar to that of 10-D, entered the city from the west along the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, jutted to the south along Fremont Street and passed south of the CBD through Federal Hill and across the Inner Harbor via a bridge. From there, this first alignment directed traffic across Fells Point to a connection with I-95 on the eastern edge of the city. This first route was designed to meet the needs of local residents. The second alignment, designed to allow through traffic to skirt the CBD, entered the city in the west far to the south of the city center, crossed the Inner Harbor near Locust Point and connected with I-95 on the eastern side of the city. While 3-C still utilized a Harbor Bridge like 10-D, the bridge was to be smaller than the one proposed by the Expressway Consultants, thus making it slightly less invasive than 10-D. Despite this, 3-C would have run a highway directly through the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor (which by this time was a 1.5 mile long vacant strip), through the environs of Federal Hill and across Fells Point. The 3-C plan garnered support from J.E. Greiner and Jerome Wolff (Haeuber 1974, 22).
The 3-A Route

The second plan, called 3-A by the UDCT, was also an attempt at separating local from through traffic (Fig. 21). This route eliminated the Harbor Bridge and utilized a boulevard system (originally proposed by Baltimore’s Planning Commission in June 1968) and the Jones Falls Expressway to provide CBD access for local vehicles ("Expressway planning in the…," 1972, 144). UDCT planners suggested a Harbor
crossing further to the south at Locust Point as a means of routing through traffic around the city. This through traffic route was identical to that of the 3-C plan. Under the 3-A plan, Federal Hill would avoid having a highway built across it. Fells Point, however, would still be impacted by the extension of the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) to meet up with I-95 on the eastern side of the city. This plan was supported by Barton, head of the Planning Commission, the Maryland Port Authority (which hated the idea of a bridge closing the Inner Harbor to large ships), Lowell Bridwell from the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) and William Schaefer, president of the City Council (“Schaefer names route…” 1968) It is no surprise that Barton favored this route. As the chairman of the Planning Commission it had been his organization’s idea to develop a boulevard system on the western side of the CBD (“Expressway planning in the…,” 1972, 144). In addition, MAD and the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point (“MAD meeting minutes” 25 November 1968) tentatively voiced their support of the boulevard system in the 3-A plan.

In the end, the 3-C system could be built at a cost of $649 million, or about $26 million per mile for its projected length of 24.9 miles. It would displace 2,900 families and eliminate 4,500 jobs. The 3-A system would also be an expensive endeavor. It was to cost $590 million ($25.3 million per million), run for a total of 22.4 miles, displace 2,000 families and eliminate 4,800 jobs (Urban Design Concept Associates, 1968b).
Figure 21: Urban Design Concept Team “3-A” alignment, 1971.
From “Expressway Planning for the City of Baltimore: A Report to the Mayor and City Council” 1972, 115.
The battle to Select a Route: 3-A Versus 3-C

A month after the UDCT had delivered their “traffic evaluation summary” to the Mayor, Owings of SOM delivered a speech to the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. In this speech, Owings criticized the 10-D plan and argued that highways were not always good for central businesses districts. Taking a jab at the 3-C plan, Owings stated “if you believe in miracles as I do, then you can hope that a more ideal system than any that have been proposed to date will be devised – one that does not cross the Inner Harbor” (Bailey 1969, 44). This speech appears to have swayed councilman Schaefer who stated as he left the meeting, “I’ve never looked at it [the highway] in those terms before” (quoted in Reutter 1973, 32). In the days after Owings speech, David Axelrod, the chief of the Maryland Interstate Division and nominally the ultimate supervisor of the UDCT eliminated the team’s public relations apparatus. Axelrod stated “the professionals have forgotten their assignments… and gotten emotionally involved with the people” and “we’re not looking for feedback where [citizens] don’t want an expressway because their [sic] going to get an expressway” (Bailey 1969, 45; quoted in Reutter 1973, 32). It was under this cloud of controversy that the UDCT delivered its final recommendations to the city administration on October 18, 1968. In their report, the UDTC put forth the 3-A, the 3-C and the previously proposed 10-D systems.

Between October 18th and October 29th, the Advisory Board for the Interstate System met in closed door sessions to discuss which route they would recommend to the Mayor. These meetings, however, were far from secret and on October 19th, the Baltimore Morning Sun reported that the Advisory Board had settled on the 3-C plan.
The *Sun* also reported the response of a variety of notable figures such as Robert Embry, the city housing commissioner, who argued in support of the 3-A system, stating that it would cause “virtually no relocation of existing residential units. It would also avoid most residential neighborhoods (“Route is set on…” 1968). David Barton, the chairman of the Planning Commission, decried the closed door sessions arguing that “highwaymen” were preventing other city organizations from having a say.

On October 20th, Walter Orlinsky, delegate to Baltimore’s 2nd Ward, argued that the 3-C selection was “not a compromise – it’s a rape (“Road’s route called ‘rape’…” 1968). The following day, Barton blasted Mayor D’Alesandro for allowing what he called “secret” planning meetings. Barton railed against the closed door nature of the sessions telling the mayor that secrecy was causing “a lack of confidence in your administration.” The *Baltimore Morning Sun* recorded Barton as saying “rumor has it that a new scheme known as 3-C has been decided upon. I hope not” (“Route is set on…” 1968). On October 23rd, the *Baltimore Sun* opined that “the road people [J.E. Greiner, Jerome Wolff] favor [the 3-C plan over the 3-A] because it is longer and $58 million more expensive and because the Greiner company is embarrassed that architects [SOM] figured out a better route in a matter of months (quoted in Reutter 1973, 33). Finally, on October 29th, after a week of being relentlessly attacked in the press, the Advisory Board recommended the 3-C system to the mayor. On November 1st, Axelrod supported the choice of 3-C over 3-A, stating that 3-A was “just not politically feasible” (“Team picks more costly…” 1968).
Axelrod’s contention, however, is highly debatable. The 3-A system had garnered significant support from Owings and the SOM component of the UDCT, as well as City Council members, David Barton from the Planning Commission, historic preservation societies and the media. Perhaps most distressing for Mayor D’Alesandro was Council President Schaefer’s promise that he would work to block any highway plan which would utilize a harbor bridge (“Expressway planning in the …” 1972, 145). In general, actors with close links to the Baltimore community such as City Council members favored the 3-A system because they saw it as less invasive than the 3-C plan. That 3-C was, in fact, more invasive is beyond a doubt. Its reliance on a harbor bridge through Federal Hill and the absence of a boulevard system meant that major highways would pass through central Baltimore. Additionally, it did not help the cause of 3-C advocates when it was reported that Jerome Wolff of the SRC had delivered an ultimatum to Owings: support the 3-C plan or be fired. Furthermore, it was reported that Wolff had threatened to withhold payment of SOM’s $700,000 fee if Owings did not get in line behind 3-C (Bailey 1969, 44). By the time that Mayor D’Alesandro had been presented with the recommendation of the Advisory Board, the 3-C plan had been framed in the media as the choice of “the Road Gang” as embodied by J.E. Greiner. Understanding that the decision between 3-C and 3-A had been cast as a choice between “the people” and “the highwaymen” it is not surprising that when Mayor D’Alesandro selected the 3-A system he did so with these words: “If all of you here are in favor of 3-C, it’s got to be wrong. I am adopting 3-A, and I don’t want to hear anymore about difficulties, I want to hear about how it will be done” (Gooding 1970, 129; quoted in Haeuber 1974, 23).
Conclusion

While the Urban Design Concept Team was not a community organization per se, the original purpose of the team was to communicate with stakeholders and to design a highway plan that would be sensitive to the structure of Baltimore’s neighborhoods. The SOM component of the UDCT sought to minimize the impact of the road and also to take into account environmental factors. In attempting to create an “urban design” for Baltimore, SOM established a community information office and published its own newsletter. This publication, uninspiringly entitled “Baltimore’s Interstate Expressway Newsletter,” provided information about upcoming meetings, joint development opportunities, important phone numbers, and details about expressway plans. It aimed to keep the public informed about happenings within the often secretive circle of politicians and planners involved in highway building. The second issue of the newsletter invited residents to “come to the field office: feel free to come in and review what others have done and add to the ideas. Maps and a model of the corridor are available for you to work with.” Additionally, SOM utilized its sociologists and political scientists to give free talks about such topics as “social development along the expressway corridor” and “social aspects of transportation” (Urban Design Concept Associates 1969, 2). So while not a community organization, SOM provided local groups and citizens with important information about highway development. SOM made itself available to interpret and explain the more technical aspects of highway planning to organizations like MAD and RAM. For example, at the 1969 public hearings on a highway by-pass that was to save the West Baltimore African American neighborhood of Rosemont, a Fells Point resident
told highway officials exactly how citizens had become so knowledgeable about construction matters. Tom Fiorello stated: “we’ve been prompted by the best in the business. These young engineers come around at night” to discuss the negative aspects of the roadway “and then we go to their bosses the next day” (Keidel 1969, 2). Likewise, one individual observed in the *Baltimore Sun* that SOM’s

> ostensible purpose was to bring in ‘feedback’ on the community’s feelings about the planed highway. In fact, they were a tremendously valuable source of information themselves, letting the community groups (and reporters) know about new federal road regulations and about what was happening within the team itself as the architects and road engineers vied for control (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 14).

It was this back and forth communication between SOM and citizen groups that pushed Axelrod to muzzle SOM in 1968.

Explaining this decision, one of Axelrod’s staff members stated

> It was the Concept Team [the SOM component of the concept team, that is] that was instrumental in organizing the opposition groups --- MAD, SCAR, RAM. They [SOM] thought, and so did we [the Interstate Highway Division], that it would be a good idea to hear what the public had to say. Finally, these groups said, “we’re going to stop this thing the road.” We could go to a public hearing and see members of the Concept Team [SOM members] out in the audience yelling and throwing paper at us. That was too much. I finally had to tell them, “if you don’t believe in what we’re doing, don’t stay here and take $200 a week.” And, I must say, that some of them did leave (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 14).

The exposure of this struggle within the UDCT highlights the importance that future environmental justice studies needs to devote to historical or longitudinal research approaches. Without significant archival research, the dynamics of the conflict between the SOM component and the J.E. Greiner component of the UDCT would not have come to light. Importantly, this research highlights the fact that neither planners nor community
organizations should be regarded as monolithic. In this particular case, the “renegade” SOM component played an important role in informing anti-highway groups and providing them with technical information and consultation.

In the end, SOM and the UDCT had a significant impact on the development of Baltimore’s road network. Without the advocacy of Owings and the subtle partnership of SOM with many Baltimore organizations such as MAD, the Inner Harbor Bridge would not have been eliminated and the boulevard system would never have been implemented. The struggle between J.E. Greiner and SOM within the framework of the UDCT resulted from the differing ways that each group viewed the road. For the engineers of J.E. Greiner, highway construction was a job based on traffic numbers and carefully studied reports. The architects and academics of SOM took into account the needs of citizens and the desire to preserve Baltimore’s neighborhood structure. This struggle, which was eventually reduced by the media to a struggle of “people” versus “planners,” or “the road gang” versus “citizens,” resulted in the selection of the 3-A system. Of primary importance for the road fighters, the selection of the 3-A system meant that the highway would not run through Federal Hill. While the 3-A system was less invasive than previous proposals, it failed to appeal to all parties and would soon be under direct attack as Baltimore’s “freeway revolt” began to coalesce.
CHAPTER SIX: TRAPPED IN THE SYSTEM: THE TACTICS OF THE MOVEMENT AGAINST DESTRUCTION

On August 30th, 1968 a little known organization called the Movement Against Destruction was featured in a story published in the *Baltimore Morning Sun*. Only five days after the publication of the UDCT’s “traffic evaluation study,” this tiny organization, which had only had its first official meeting on August 19th, was making big statements to the press and to city officials. In a letter to the City Council, the Policy Advisory Board, and Mayor D’Alesandro, MAD president Stuart Wechsler (a former member of CORE) declared that MAD “rejected” the UDCT’s proposed routes as “totally inadequate” (“Letter to D’Alesandro…” 1968). Calling the highway a “330 million dollar boondoggle” and arguing that planning decisions were being made without input from the people, “90 per cent either poor or black,” MAD asked the mayor to put the “anachronism” of the highway “to rest.” Wechsler was shrewd enough to praise the mayor’s courage and even took note of the “highway advocates breathing down your neck and muttering about the need for speed.”

This letter and the points reprinted from it in the *Baltimore Morning Sun* offer a glimpse into MAD’s broad understanding of highway issues in Baltimore and the strategies that they would later use to oppose the road. To begin, MAD unilaterally rejected highways for Baltimore and then went on to discuss specifically why the UDCT’s proposals were ill conceived. Citing facts and figures with an obvious comprehension of the complexities of the “traffic evaluation summary,” MAD sought to undercut the authority and knowledge of planners. MAD also cited the ballooning costs
of road construction and argued that “efficient modes of mass transit” would complement the city far better than a destructive highway network. They brought up divisions within the city administration by questioning why the Planning Commission, the city’s own planning agency, had been excluded from the meetings of the Policy Advisory Board. They also cast highway planners as reckless implying that their “need for speed” would make Baltimore into a “concrete wasteland” (“Letters to D’Alesandro…” 1968). Finally, they stressed the need for public participation and democratic decision making, even reminding the mayor of statements he had made earlier arguing for wider public involvement. This letter, the first arrow in a volley which would continue into the middle 1970s, can best be described as a microcosm of MAD’s long-term strategy to “stop the road.”

Between 1968 and 1975 MAD was able to dramatically change the dynamic of the battle against highways in Baltimore. Prior to MAD, neighborhoods stood against the road in isolation. By the middle 1970s, however, road builders faced an informed and united group of community organizations. MAD also worked to change the political landscape within Baltimore to one in which road building was highly contested. MAD achieved these goals by first, injecting itself into the political process and, second, by acting as a savvy disseminator of knowledge about the highway. Additionally, MAD also sought to attack and discredit planners at public hearings on highway construction. At these hearings, MAD demonstrated a knack for community organization and also a complex grasp of the methods, procedures and internal intricacies of highway building. Lastly, MAD actively challenged Baltimore’s highway network in court. Problematically,
however, MAD’s efforts at blocking the road were largely carried out within the sphere of high hearings. This setting, which was controlled by politicians and planners and specifically designed to control public participation and protest, provided MAD with a forum but also limited the group’s influence. The failure of the group’s one effort to escape this system by “jumping scales” had an impact on MAD itself and also on construction in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. Before turning to examine MAD’s strategies and the group’s overall efficacy, however, it is important to examine the origin of the group and its changing constituency.

The Origins and Composition of MAD

While the exact date of MAD’s birth remains murky, it appears that MAD first emerged in the summer of 1968. During that period, a group of Catholic social workers hosted a city-wide meeting to discuss the impact of highway planning in Baltimore. Carolyn Tyson, arguably the most visible of MAD’s presidents, stated that MAD was first organized from “people who had been seeing one another protesting at highway hearings” (Tyson 1972, 9). In any case, the summer of 1968 saw the creation of a multiracial coalition composed of members of RAM, other west side residents, preservationists and civil rights advocates (such as Stuart Wechsler). MAD’s meeting minutes and membership records from that period indicate that the organization was composed of between twenty-five and thirty-five neighborhood organizations (Mohl 2004, 674; “MAD meeting minutes…” 1968). The meeting minutes for September 1968 note the inclusion of the Harlem Park Community Council and the United Western Front, both organizations from the west side of the city.
In general, the early constituents of MAD were African American middle class and working class residents from Rosemont and the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor area and white liberals (Gioielli 2007, 16). As a result, much of MAD’s early focus was on the west side of the city. As MAD’s policies began to crystallize and the group began to challenge construction across the entire city the demographics of the group’s membership began to change. Beginning in the spring of 1969, citizens from the southeast neighborhoods of Canton, Highlandtown and Fells Point began to make an appearance at MAD meetings. As opposed to the African American residents who made up much of Baltimore’s west side, those from the southeast of the city were a mixture of working class Italians, Poles, Germans and Greeks (Dilts 1969; Gioielli 2007, 16) These groups, which had initially supported the highway because it was believed the road would reinforce a deindustrializing port and harbor industry were shifting their allegiance as they saw the impact of road building on their communities. Like in Harlem Park, the city’s seesawing support and general indecision about the highway in this area meant incomplete condemnations which left boarded up and vacant buildings (Gioielli 2007, 17). This, in turn, invited crime and vandalism.

This shift in allegiance was a dramatic change and stands in contrast to earlier attitudes towards highway construction and preservation. At a February 1967 hearing on highway planning held by the City Council, working class Poles had squared off against “WASP preservationists with strange accents from the suburbs” (Dilts 1969). While the preservationists carried signs reading “Save Fells Point!,” southeast residents heckled them into submission. Later, at a May meeting of the Society for the Preservation of
Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point local residents, the majority of whom opposed the preservationist aims of the group, shouted down speakers. One resident, among the three hundred who walked out of the meeting, snorted “let’s let the silk stockings hold their own meeting” (Durr 2003, 157). With the coming of the road in the form of condemnations, however, antipathy between southeast residents and preservationists quieted and MAD slowly expanded its organizational umbrella to encompass the entire city.

Invading City Hall

One of MAD’s earliest successes was in achieving access to the political figures who controlled road building in Baltimore. With its cry for more public participation, MAD was able to pester the mayor into allowing a MAD representative to sit in on Policy Advisory Board meetings. In response to MAD’s request to be allowed a position on the PAB, D’Alesandro, somewhat grudgingly argued that the group’s insistence that there was “a lack of opportunity for open exchange between the citizens’ group and the various city departments represented” was unfair. He was, however, “delighted” to allow MAD representatives to attend PAB meetings (“MAD Correspondence” 1968). MAD members were then able to accompany the PAB on trips to Washington and attend meetings with Interstate Highway Department officials. While the PAB had been severely criticized in the past for its secrecy and lack of transparency, MAD was able to inject itself into the inner sanctum of highway planning in Baltimore.

MAD also assumed a “watch dog” role by diligently attending City Council meetings. They also met frequently with members of the UDCT, the city Planning
Commission and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. MAD members also moved beyond the city administration and into more shadowy halls of power by meeting and corresponding with members of the Greater Baltimore Committee. As a result, MAD was made aware of any visitations to the city by federal or state authorities and went to great lengths to meet with these officials. For example, when John Volpe, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, planned to visit Baltimore in early May 1970, MAD sought an “audience.” Despite frequent, somewhat suspicious delays, the group was able to present their case on June 25th. MAD established a “Volpe Task Force” which provided the secretary with a sweeping “mini-tour” of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and six presentations regarding threatened areas of the city including Fells Point, Rosemont, Canton and Leakin Park. MAD did much the same for state highway officials such as David Axelrod when he visited Baltimore. MAD also requested “audiences” and sent out “delegations” to meet with individual city council members and also the mayor (“MAD meeting minutes…” 1968-1971).

While MAD members sat in on policy meetings, harassed council members, and harried the mayor with position statements and letters, they also looked to the future of politics in Baltimore. In a series of questionnaires MAD tested and weighed the opinions of candidates for City Council, the Maryland General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. MAD also attacked the mayor’s bid for the governorship of the state of Maryland. In a three-page statement issued to three Baltimore television stations, the Baltimore Sun and the News American, MAD argued that D’Alesandro had “abrogated his responsibility to the citizens of Baltimore, and forfeited his right to run for Governor of the State.” They
also connected D’Alesandro with corrupt planners stating “perhaps he is proving to the ‘road gang’ that his loyalty knows no bounds and he will build roads to suit them come what may” (“MAD opposed to Mayor…” 1969). In the end, D’Alesandro did not become governor and eventually retired from official city politics altogether. While MAD cannot be credited with “bringing down” D’Alesandro as mayor, the highway fight and the contentious political terrain it created certainly helped to block his attempts at political advancement.

Politics in Baltimore

The battle over highways itself took place in an atmosphere of both political and cultural change in Baltimore. In the ethnic neighborhoods of southeast Baltimore, a backlash against the dominant American culture and assimilation had been brewing. According to Kenneth Durr, “a new generation, having grown tired of the sterility of mainstream American culture, was reclaiming an ethnic heritage partly lost” (Durr 2003, 162). This reclamation meant an explosion of ethnic community organizations. For example, Durr points out the growth of the Sons of Italy whose membership had been concentrated in ten lodges during the early 1960s, but had risen to 40 lodges by 1970 (2003, 162). Similarly, ethnic festivals hosted by Poles, Italians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Estonians, Irish and Hispanics became increasingly visible attractions not just in ethnic neighborhoods, but also expanding into the Inner Harbor (Durr 2003, 162).

This cultural change also meant a change in politics. That change, however, was not only linked with new understandings about ethnicity and heritage, but also to the dangers of road building through the city. This linkage between new ethnic politics and
road building was, in part, a result of MAD’s (and especially in SE Baltimore, SCAR’s) active information campaigns which were increasingly persuading neighborhoods and their associated community organizations that road building would offer destruction, not prosperity. This political change was something new. For example, Durr writes:

Blue-collar Baltimoreans were not used to making noise or crusading on issues. Usually they appealed quietly to local politicians for employment or city services. The politicians’ helpfulness, in turn, depended on the reliability of their vote. Previously, city council members from blue-collar districts and their constituents had been in agreement on issues that deeply concerned working whites. The road changed that (Durr 2003, 159).

The battle over highways in southeast Baltimore was extremely contentious. The debate split neighborhoods between those that did and did not want the road. Some believed that a highway would reinvigorate their communities and this was the message being pushed by many industries in the area. Along with this fracturing of political lines came the emergence of a variety of smaller anti-highway organizations. These organizations quickly fell under the umbrella of MAD (especially if these organizations were from west Baltimore) and SCAR, which represented southeast Baltimore.

In addition, the rise of politics based off of the “new ethnicity,” as the resurgence of ethnic identification and pride in past ethnic roots was called, allowed new Baltimorean politicians to rise from outside of the traditional “club-based political system” (Durr 2003, 169). Combining ethnic politics with an anti-road agenda, campaigners from ethnic neighborhoods were able to win decisive victories. First, Paul Sarbanes, the child of Greek immigrants, managed to unseat long time congressman George Fallon from Maryland’s fourth congressional district, a position he had held since
1945. Fallon had been an ardent supporter of the road, while Sarbanes became one of its biggest critics.

Second, Barbara Mikulski, a southeast Baltimore native descended from Polish ancestors, who had established the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR) ran for a position on the City Council. During her campaign, Mikulski attacked the highway and became a champion for “ethnic unity” (Durr 2003, 159). Drawing support from Fells Point, Highlandtown and portions of the Canton neighborhood, Mikulski was also ushered into office by MAD’s active support (Haeuber 1974, 35). Once in office, Mikulski supported MAD and SCAR by pushing their anti-highway agenda within the City Council. From her First District seat, Mikulski badgered Governor Marvin Mandel, testified before the Public Works Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, asked pointed questions about the reliability of planning figures and sought alternatives to road building.

Likewise, other council members such as Tom Ward (2nd district) and Alexander Stark (5th District), the council member for the Leakin Park area, sought to prevent highway construction. MAD gained a potential ally when Walter Orlinsky became City Council President. Known as a “political wild card,” Orlinsky, at 33, was the youngest City Council president ever elected. Seven years before his election to the presidency in 1971, Orlinsky held the lofty post of water boy and was charged with refilling the glasses of the seated councilmen (Friedman 1971). It should also be remembered that Orlinsky was an early and ardent road critic who labeled the 3-A system “a rape” (“Roads route called ‘rape’…” 1968). The major difference between Orlinsky and his incumbent
opponent William Donald Shaefer was their stance on the highway. Schaefer for, Orlinsky against. At the 1969 Rosemont hearings, Orlinsky had vehemently denounced planners stating:

…every single blasted person associated with the State Roads Commission… and with every other form of planning here is living off the roads money… Everything they do is tied to first and foremost and primarily justifying the existence of the road (“Hearings on the Rosemont…” 1969)

Orlinsky’s ousting of Schaefer was viewed positively by MAD and yielded some positive results for the organization. A brief examination of Orlinsky’s correspondence during the years that he was council president show numerous exchanges between him and road opponents, most notably Carolyn Tyson, the president of MAD. Orlinsky, a one-time MAD member, made sure that MAD representatives were provided equal time at highway hearings and planning sessions (“RE: Expressway…” 1972; “MAD meeting minutes” 1969). Orlinsky also communicated with other anti-highway groups such as the Volunteers Opposing Leakin Park Expressway (VOLPE), which opposed construction through Leakin Park. Despite increased communications, mutual respect and sympathy, Orlinsky’s position on the road softened. In November 1971, in an interview for Baltimore Magazine, Orlinsky was questioned about whether or not he would support efforts to stop the road. Vacillating, Orlinsky replied “yes… and no.” He added further “I am willing to listen to plans for better roads, and that can include an interstate expressway. But you will have to show me plans that are not negative in terms of pollution and housing” (Friedman 1971). By 1974, one article in the Baltimore Sun declared, “the wally-is-a-traitor sentiments are widespread, but it is questionable whether
they run very deep” (Jay 1974). While Orlinsky had initially appeared to be a great boon to the anti-road crowd, it seems that the political pressures of managing the city council forced him to make compromises. As the above mentioned quote shows, however, few were deeply bitter towards Orlinsky and he did maintain, throughout his presidency, an openness towards groups like MAD and SCAR which had not been the case with other City Council presidents.

Aside from inserting itself onto the PAB and taking advantage of changing ethnic politics to support anti-road politicians, MAD also waged an aggressive media campaign. In this battle, MAD used a variety of different strategies to appeal to the citizenry of Baltimore. Through these strategies MAD was able to disseminate information about the road not only to its constituents and member organizations, but also to politicians, local, regional and national media outlets and to “freeway fighters” in other cities.

MAD’s Media Campaign

MAD’s first level of information distribution was simple. Almost every week between 1968 and 1975, MAD held meetings at the Baltimore Catholic Center. These meetings, unlike the meetings of the PAB and other closed door groups, were advertised as open for all. Public participation was encouraged, guest speakers, oftentimes local politicians or activists, were given time to speak. These meetings frequently attracted citizens from all across Baltimore. These types of open door meetings were mimicked all across the city at meetings of MAD-associated community organizations such as the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council and The Rosemont Neighborhood Association. Primarily, these meetings were designed to provide updates on the activities of MAD and
its member organization, decide on strategy, outline position statements, vote on important issues, plan protests, report on national anti-highway news and distribute and interpret pertinent, sometimes technical highway information (“MAD meeting minutes…” 1968-1975). Additionally, MAD meetings highlighted the actions that other groups, such as SCAR and VOLPE, were taking. At many of its meetings, MAD distributed information from national sources. An example of this is a 1970 paper entitled “the highway transportation story – in facts.” Distributed in 1970 by the National Coalition on the Transportation Crisis and the Highway Action Coalition, this document described the growth of the highway system, its use of land, the environmental impact of construction, the detrimental effects of road salts on plants and animals and the impacts of pollution and congestion (Sullivan 1970). MAD also promoted anti-highway literature to its guests and members. Specifically, MAD highlighted several of the popular anti-highway works of the day including Helen Leavitt’s “Super-highway, Super-hoax,” and Road to Ruin” by A.Q. Mowbray (“MAD meeting minutes…” 1969). In particular, Mowbray’s work reads like a textbook on various means of fighting the road. More than an informational text, “Road to Ruin” is a training manual. MAD also used its meetings to coordinate booths at festivals, develop anti-road buttons and bumper stickers.²

Outside of its meeting hall, MAD also distributed their anti-highway message through numerous press releases, flyers, handouts, and advertisements. In these

² MAD’s original “Stop the Road” bumper stickers are being re-distributed by the staff in the Special Collections Department of the Langsdale Library at the University of Baltimore. Many students are taking these bumper stickers from the 1970s and reusing them to fight the Maryland Inter-county Connector, a 13.8 mile long highway being constructed between the city of Gaithersburg in Montgomery County and the city of Laurel in Prince George's County.
documents MAD sought to frame the highway as 1) an expensive system that would not benefit the tax payer, 2) the product of a corrupt “road gang,” 3) a source of pollution and environmental degradation and 4) a threat to Baltimore’s unique history.

The Expensive Road

MAD’s attacks on the expense of the highway system were specific and incisive. In a paper entitled “what the 3-A expressway system is costing us” MAD dissected the publicly available budgets of the Planning Department, Department of Recreation and Parks, Police Department, Comptroller’s office and Department of Public Works. MAD pointed out how taxes generated on the sale of gasoline were being diverted into an enormous general fund with limited oversight and accountability. Breaking it down for the average citizen, MAD made the claim that without all of this excess spending from various departments on highway construction that the average tax payer could save 31.8 cents on their tax rate (Tyson 1973). “How many more hundreds of thousands or even millions have been thrown into road building funds by this dubious, thoroughly reprehensible method?” a MAD release cried (“Press Release, MAD…” 1972).

In another paper, MAD explained “why ‘Baltimore is broke.’” Once more they pointed out that the diversion of taxes from the motor vehicle fund to the general fund to pursue highway building was costing the tax payers money. They also highlighted the “hidden costs” of road building including the costs of demolition, lawsuits and the purchasing of new homes. The accumulated totals for these purchases, MAD asserted, were not known, as a result, corruption in the system was rife. The decreases in taxes on gasoline as citizens shifted to smaller automobiles in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis also
meant that more and more of the city’s budget was being made up out of property taxes. Yet, MAD pointed out, expressway condemnations meant that the city’s total amount of property was being reduced and that nearby properties were being devalued. MAD argued that “the 23 miles of expressway will use over 900 acres of land. This is forever lost to the tax rolls” (“Why ‘Baltimore is broke’…” 1974, 2). Perhaps most damningly, MAD alleged that the finances of city departments were “wildly in error” and that “policy mistakes and fiscal irresponsibility must be corrected” (“Why ‘Baltimore is broke’…” 1974, 2).

The issue of property loss and decreasing city revenues was hammered home time and time again by MAD. A 1972 press release lamented that “more destruction or evacuation for roads that may never be built has taken place over the past few years in the South Baltimore, Canton and Fells Point areas, and resulted in a tax base loss of close to $8 million” (“Press Release, MAD…” 1972). In the same release, MAD decried the widening of Cold Spring Lane for the road as it “resulted in the permanent loss of close to $300,000 in the city’s tax base” (“Press Release, MAD” 1972). Along with these high costs of property destruction, MAD highlighted that money was being pulled away from other important city services such as street lighting, road maintenance and trash removal. Overall, MAD’s message on the city’s finances sought to present the idea that “the financial condition of the city does not allow for the building of unnecessary, destructive roads” (“MAD opposed to Mayor…” 1969).
The “Road Gang.”

MAD also tied the expense of road building to the “road gang.” “The truth is,” MAD asserted, “that Baltimore’s road gang and its City Hall toadies constitute a major cause of our sad economic plight” (“Press Release, MAD…” 1972). The message that planners, politicians and business owners were conspiring to drive highways through Baltimore’s neighborhoods was a consistent argument. In tying the construction of the road to a corrupt “road gang,” MAD sought to portray highways as a vast conspiracy designed to help construction companies, trucking firms and engineering concerns. In a paper entitled “3-A is a political plum” MAD pointed out the connections of road builders to various politicians and their legal troubles around the United States. Citing eight prominent firms, MAD examined how two were facing legal trouble over political contributions and bribery (“3A is a political…” 1973). They also showed which firms were members of the Greater Baltimore Committee, an ardent road proponent. A later pamphlet stated “the membership of the Greater Baltimore Committee feels it will be good for their business if the 3A interstate highway system were built” (“who does want the…” 1973). A map on the pamphlet as well as a detailed listing described the locations of homes of the 103 members of the GBC. The point, implicitly implied, was that none of these road advocates lived beneath the shadow of the impending road. Drawing on this same method, MAD had great success with their facetious “Route A – Number One,” which when printed in Baltimore newspapers showed an alternative highway system running through the homes of D’Alesandro, Schaefer, Joseph Axelrod, Bernard Werner and William Boucher, the director of the GBC (“Proposed new expressway for…” 1970).
The overt message distributed in numerous publications, press releases, pamphlets and flyers was that a cabal of firms such as J.E. Greiner allying with powerful business interests like the GBC had Baltimore’s political leadership in their pocket. MAD’s continual argument focused on how special interests and private consulting firms were steamrolling the best interests of Baltimore’s citizenry.

The Environment

In the aftermath of Earth Day 1970 and with the passage of the Clean Air Act, MAD began to incorporate environmentalism into its broad arsenal for attacking the highway. During the early years of the 1970s, MAD focused on issues surrounding air pollution and noise and also highlighted the environmental services provided by the threatened Leakin Park. As environmentalism seeped into the popular culture, MAD found a receptive audience that could understand not only the loss of park space, but also the threat of air pollution to inner city neighborhoods.

First, MAD focused on discussing the increased amount of automobile pollution that would be generated by the construction of the highway network. In a MAD “memo,” the group used the pollution studies conducted by the city for the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and found that peak concentrations of carbon monoxide would exceed Federal standards as laid out by the Environmental Protection Agency (“Memo from M.A.D…” undated, 1-2).

Second, MAD focused on the noise that highways would generate. They pointed out the numerous times people at condemnation hearings had complained about the “rumblings of trucks,” and the “whine of tires.” Additionally they argued that people
“harassed by traffic noise in their homes, jobs, schools and parks” might suffer “psychological stress [sic] and loss of efficiency on the job” (“Memo from M.A.D…” undated, 3). Returning to the subject of property, MAD cited a Toledo study which made the case that homes near highways were decreased in value 20% to 28% “principally because of noise” (“Memo from M.A.D…” undated, 3). Delving into the complexities of the highway plan, MAD asserted that the $3.5 million dollars worth of noise protection supposed to be erected along the highway would be ineffective. Citing a Chicago urban noise study, MAD argued that the anticipated noise level of Leakin Park, 47 db PSIL\(^3\), would destroy the ambiance of the area. Additionally, MAD charged that the noise protection designed for I-83 “would still not be enough to allow outdoor band concerts to be held anywhere in Fells Point, and not enough to allow outdoor dancing within 600 feet of the highway” (“Memo from M.A.D…” undated, 4).

Third, MAD highlighted the environmental benefits provided by Leakin Park, a 324-acre green space, 150 of which planners wanted as a route for the road. In their letter “prevent the un-greening of Baltimore,” MAD argued that “Leakin park is a unique park that works for all of us year round: it cools and purifies the air, holds water run-off, & provides many open-space opportunities for this densely populated area” (“prevent the un-greening of…” 1972). Without the park, MAD claimed, citizens could expect “flooding, increased traffic congestion, air and noise pollution.” In the end, MAD’s appeals to citizens on environmental issues struck a chord. VOLPE, an organization closely tied with MAD, was able to solicit the support of the Sierra Club in launching a

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\(^3\) The Preferred-octave Speech Interference Level (PSIL) is a measure used to rate the speech interference of background noise.
lawsuit against the I-70 portion (typically referred to as “segment 9”) of the road planned through Leakin Park.

Historic Preservation

MAD also sought to highlight the historic nature of specific areas of the city. In Fells Point and Federal Hill, MAD teamed up with preservationists to provide walking tours for citizens and school children. MAD appealed to teachers in a 1969 mass mailing that stated “when an eight year old told us recently that it was a shame to destroy Fells Point now, since the British didn’t do it in 1812, we were impressed with your history teaching” (“Dear teacher…” 1969). MAD went on to highlight the condemnation ordinances in Federal Hill and Fells Point and advised teachers on who to contact to set up touring opportunities. Additionally, MAD created an “anti-highway” exhibit at the Baltimore City Community College which attracted school tours and highlighted historic areas of the city threatened by the road (“MAD meeting minutes…” 1969). In general, MAD played a supporting role for the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street, and Fells Point. This organization, composed primarily of preservationists, took the lead in advocating for these areas’ inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. They surveyed both areas in order to document historical structures and were charged with placing historical markers. In general, MAD followed the lead of this organization in framing these areas as historically significant.

The primary result of MAD’s media campaign was a growing awareness among Baltimore’s citizenry of the dangers of highway construction. Those who remained unconvinced about the need for green space or the efficacy of “environmental services”
could relate to an increasing tax burden stemming from condemnations, relocation settlements, construction and payouts to special contractors like the UDCT. As well, many Baltimore residents could remember the paternalistic “experts know best” approach that had been taken by highway planners such as Robert Moses and many could easily connect the ballooning costs of the road to a corrupt “road gang.” Additionally, the 1973 oil crisis brought transportation concerns to the front pages of not only Baltimore newspapers, but papers all across the United States. Fuel shortages, skyrocketing prices and mile-long lines helped to strengthen claims by “freeway fighters” that highways, and the sprawl that they helped create, were bad for cities. Lastly, MAD’s activities helped to catapult it into the national spotlight. Baltimore’s battle against highways became the subject of articles in *Fortune, Architectural Forum, Innovation Magazine* and daily papers along the east coast. MAD also joined the ranks of highway fighters in New Orleans and Boston and was featured in a variety of anti-highway publications such as *The Concrete Opposition, Rational Transportation* and the publications of the Emergency Committee on Transportation Crisis (ECTC), the National Coalition on the Transportation Crisis (NCTC) and the Highway Action Coalition (HAC) (Mohl 2004, 697). The end result was a well organized anti-highway coalition on two scales. Within Baltimore the coalition was composed of MAD and the forty community and citizen organizations that were its members or supporters. On a national scale, MAD joined the ranks of numerous other organizations that sought to communicate and swap strategy in battles against their own local highways (Mohl 2004, 697).
MAD, Public Hearings and the Battle Over Rosemont

The primary battlegrounds on which the debate over highways played out were the numerous public hearings that occurred between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s. During these hearings, politicians and planners were able to launch their own assaults on the inadequacies of Baltimore’s road network. They argued that highways would ease inner city congestion, aid industry, attract jobs and promote neighborhood improvement through “joint development.” While the highway would raze homes, demolish schools, cut through parks and relocate people, the result would be better parks, more playgrounds, more affordable and well kept homes, better schools and a transportation system meant for the 21st century. The highway could help prevent inner city decline and was consistently tied to the idea of “progress” by other politicians and planners. At almost every stage, those in positions of power, the mayor, planning officials, state and federal authorities and business leaders pushed for highway construction. In response to these arguments, as MAD President Carolyn Tyson wrote in 1973, “MAD now counter-attacks” (1973, 6). MAD’s incessant cry for participatory democracy and the necessity for residents in the way of the road to become knowledgeable about highway construction meant that “ordinary citizens are no longer ‘snowed’ by the ‘experts.’ These citizens, in fact, are teaching themselves to become experts with a different point of view” (Tyson 1973, 5). The result was that at public hearings MAD inundated those in authority with statements from dozens of MAD satellite organizations and directly attacked the facts and figures presented by planners.
Between 1966 and 1975 there were public hearings on at least twenty-one separate occasions. These hearings varied in their structure and purpose. In 1969, the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) established new regulations on where, when and why public hearings were to be carried out. Most importantly, the FHA ruled that for any one segment of a highway two public hearings were to be conducted. The first hearing, typically called a “corridor public hearing” or a “location hearing” focused on whether or not a highway was indeed needed and presented proposals for various potential highway routes. Once this hearing was concluded, state and city officials would seek to appropriate funds for the selected route location from the federal government. Once funds were allocated, a second hearing was held. This hearing, typically called a “design hearing,” focused on the specifics of where the highway would run and what it would look like. For example, determining whether the route would be elevated or depressed and what types of “joint development” would be included. In general, corridor hearings were designed to create a public forum between planners and citizens. In addition, these corridor hearings typically (at least in the later years of road development in Baltimore) included a “pro-road” segment and an “anti-road” segment in which proponents and opponents laid out their particular positions.

Usually corridor hearings were events of major importance. While MAD had a presence at almost every hearing, design hearings typically attracted local residents and members of which ever local organization was protesting the road. For example, at the location hearings on the Gywnns Falls/Leakin Park segment local organizations such as the Windsor Hill Improvement Association and the Volunteers Opposing the Leakin Park
Expressway (VOLPE) were prominent participants. In general, these organizations played the role of local road opponents, while MAD stayed in the background. At corridor hearings, however, MAD acted as the primary organizer and spokesperson for the anti-highway crowd. Generally, MAD would introduce itself and present a brief position paper. After this, MAD would introduce other, smaller organizations which would voice their own reasons for opposing the road. These smaller organizations typically prefaced their introductions by stating that they were members in, or supporters of MAD. In general, MAD’s strategy at these general public hearings was to overwhelm city officials and planners with dozens of organizations opposing their highway designs.

While there are significant data available to analyze each public hearing, one hearing was of particular importance to MAD. It should be recalled that in 1968 MAD’s constituency was largely composed of white liberals, catholic social workers and working class African Americans from West Baltimore. Given this, it should come as no surprise that MAD’s first assault on the highway system would come at the public hearings regarding the Rosemont neighborhood.

Rosemont was an African American neighborhood situated just west of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor on the edge of the Gywnns Falls and Leakin Park area. The neighborhood was considered “stable” by Baltimore politicians because it had a high homeownership rate (71% compared to a city-wide average of 55%) in which a significant number of residents had lived in their homes for more than a decade (“Expressway planning in the…” 1972, 130). Despite this, the Expressway Consultants’ 1961 10-D plan had proposed that a highway utilize the area as a route in approaching the
Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. Condemnations in this area began at the same time as condemnations within the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor itself and the Relocation Action Movement was the first organization to protest the road in this area. Having reevaluated the 10-D plan, the UDCT had issued a warning that any expressway through Rosemont would damage the social fabric of the area and essentially destroy the neighborhood (Mohl 2004, 695). Subsequently, the UDCT argued that several alternative routes for the road could be used to spare the Rosemont area. When Mayor D’Alesandro selected the 3-A highway plan as advocated by Owings and SOM, he also promised that a by-pass would be constructed that would preserve Rosemont. Unfortunately, the uncertainty of years living under a condemnation ordinance had replicated the conditions of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. Many residents had moved away by taking advantage of the settlement won by RAM. In any case, official location hearings for the various alternative Rosemont by-passes were schedule for August 6th, 7th and 9th 1969.

The Rosemont by-pass hearings opened inauspiciously. Protesters carrying signs reading “urban freeways are White Man’s Roads thru Black Man’s Home!” hurled insults at planners. The mayor, who was not present at the hearings, along with other members of the City Council, were referred to as the “City Hall Mafia,” while planners were excoriated as “smiling idiots,” “pip-squeaks,” “finks,” and “knuckle-heads (Keidel 1969, 2). Somehow planners were able to lay out their plans and UDCT members presented their suggestions for their four alternative routes. Despite the arguments for the various routes, one news article reported that “only 1 out of 49 witnesses during the 10 hours of hearings, spread over three nights, bothered to comment at all on the four alternate routes.
To a man, the rest concentrated on damning expressways through the city period” (Keidel 1969, 2).

In addition, the same article stated that “the hearings also reflected a growing sophistication about highway issues on the part of the ordinary citizen, along with the furious shouts and threats that predominated at the hearing, there was a good deal of needling that displayed an expertise the public had acquired during its long fight to stop the road” (Keidel 1969, 2). A significant amount of this needling stemmed from the work that MAD had done distributing information prior to the hearings. For example, MAD diffused maps of the alternative routes, flyers with questions to ask planners, “fact sheets,” MAD newsletters, and “condemnation kits” which spelled out the rights of those being displaced (“MAD meeting minutes…” 1968-1969). In addition, MAD had been in contact with West Baltimore groups opposed to the highway for the purpose of coordinating their testimony for months (“MAD meeting minutes…” 19 May 1969). MAD had also gathered official “Rosemont By-Pass Study Manuals” which laid out the positions of planners and begun an analysis of these documents at group meetings (“MAD meeting minutes…” 23 June 1969). At meetings in the weeks prior to the Rosemont hearings, MAD developed a series of themes and topics which they hoped to address. These topics ranged from housing destruction and the impact of roads on the tax base to mass transit needs and concerns about historic preservation (“MAD meeting minutes,” 28 July 1969). MAD even went so far as to inform its members and member organizations about the physical layout of the hearings, the acoustics, the various official groups and representatives who would be attending and various ways in which the
hearing might be conducted (“MAD meeting minutes…” 4 August 1969). This included laying out the connections between groups like J.E. Greiner, the Department of Transportation, the State Roads Commission, the Interstate Division and the Policy Advisory Board. Lastly, on the eve of the hearings, MAD distributed a flyer discussing the federal regulations governing the hearing.

The Rosemont by-pass hearing was MAD’s first substantive period in the spotlight. For the group it was a moment of tension. Would citizens and supporting groups show up? Would racial tensions between working class Whites and African Americans undermine anti-highway unity? Would the hopes of “some officials” that “the expressway issue would pit Negroes against whites” prevail? (Keidel 1969, 2; “Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 4). As we have already seen, angry citizens, both white and black, showed up in droves, many carrying anti-highway placards. Six hundred citizens attended the hearings the first night and dozens publicly took the microphone to denounce road building. On the first day alone, fifty citizens representing more than a dozen community organizations testified at the hearings (“Witnesses for August 6…” 1969). Fears of racial disunity proved unwarranted as “white residents from Canton, Highlandtown and Fells Point… expressed warm sympathy and support for the Negroes of Rosemont” (Keidel 1969, 2). In fact, one angry attendee told officials “you did one good thing. You brought white and black together and this is a beautiful thing” (Keidel 1969, 2). Another witness added “the threat of the road is acting like a zipper. It’s pulling the people together” (Keidel 1969, 2). In this atmosphere of almost overwhelming citizen
disapproval, MAD launched its first major public volley against the road. It was an attack that would be repeated time and time again at public hearings over the next six years.

After a brief introduction in which MAD laid out its position and contrasted its open-door, all-volunteer nature with the veiled meetings of the Policy Advisory Board, MAD’s president Art Cohen set about challenging the facts and figures presented by planners. First, Cohen pointed out the inadequacy of the traffic figures for the various alternative bypasses being proposed. These figures, Cohen argued citing the testimony of UDCT members, were not the result of further research, but rather figures based on the 1961 10-D plan (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 2). Along with these outdated figures on how many vehicles would be using the road and their pollution impact, Cohen also took aim at the by-pass alternatives’ environmental impact statements. These statements were deemed totally inadequate as they made the assumption that some of the traffic around the Rosemont area would be handled by a mass-transit system that was entirely in the theoretical stage. The conflation of road figures with possible mass transit figures, Cohen argued, was “like the false seduction provided by joint development” which “serves only to confuse the public as to the real and direct impact… of the road itself (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 2-3). Cohen stated that “we have bypass alternatives with unmeasurable environmental impact because they are tied to speculative rapid rail transit routes, which in turn are based on the assumption that the road would follow the now-rejected route, 10D” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 2). Concluding, he added that planners consistently tied unfunded projects like mass transit and joint development to the already funded road as a bribe to garner citizen support.
Switching gears, Cohen referenced the widely distributed MAD flyer “who wants or needs… the red road?” He pointed out that officials had raised serious doubts about the necessity of an inner city highway for Baltimore. Cohen cited a 1967 letter from Rex Whitten, former director of the Federal Highway Administration to the Federal General Accounting Office in which he stated that:

these [inner city highway] segments are not vital links of a ‘unified national network’ and failure to complete these sections will not prevent the completion of an integrated and completely operational interstate system. It is possible either to delete the controversial route segments from the Interstate System entirely or to make substitute interstate connections (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 3).

Cohen continued citing an aide to Governor Mandel who stated “what Maryland needs is not another 90 miles of expressway, but 90 miles of rapid transit in Baltimore and the Washington suburbs” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 6). He even cited President Nixon who had argued that “until we make public transportation an attractive alternative to private car use, we will never be able to build highways fast enough to avoid congestion” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 6).

Turning to the four alternatives presented by the UDCT, Cohen suggested that there were actually two more alternatives that had not yet been discussed. The first was what MAD called the “No-Road” alternative (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 3). Simply put, this proposal argued that no highway was needed. The second unexamined alternative was a return to the old 10-D route which would cut straight through the heart of Rosemont. Cohen argued at length that while the City Council and the Mayor in particular, had promised that bypasses would be examined, they had failed to lift the condemnation ordinance in Rosemont itself. This, Cohen alleged, was an attempt by the
city to “browbeat and intimidate” Baltimore citizens into accepting one of the alternative bypasses. The threat implicit in the unlifted ordinances was that should citizens press for the “No Road” alternative, the city would return to the old 10-D route and plow down the neighborhood (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 4).

Turning from this jab, MAD argued that while the city had sought to frame support for the highway as monolithic among planning agencies, the reality was far more troubling. Cohen brought up the power struggle that had occurred in 1968 within the UDCT between the SOM component and the engineering (read: J.E. Greiner) component. He also highlighted the conflict between the Planning Commission and the Policy Advisory Board by quoting David Barton who had stated “not only is the public being excluded… from the decision making process, but key city agencies [I.E. Barton’s Planning Commission] have not even been informed of the consultant’s recommendations on the alignment” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 7). Cohen also presented a variety of court room style “exhibits” of letters between key officials. In particular, these letters highlighted the conflict between Nathaniel Owings and David Axelrod and Bernard Werner. According to Cohen, one letter to a Hawaiian planning official from Axelrod was filled with “bitter invective against ‘environmental considerations” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 8-9).

Cohen also attacked the methods used by planners to bypass public opposition to construction. He pointed out that post-hearing recommendations from the UDCT to the State Roads Commission were being made before those recommendations were fully available to the public. Citing the newly revised Federal Highway Administration Policy
and Procedure Memorandum (PPM) 20-8 “public hearings and location approval,” MAD argued that the public was being denied “effective participation” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 10). According to Cohen, the inability of citizens to obtain copies of and reply to the post-hearing recommendations made by the UDCT violated Federal hearing procedures. In addition, Cohen charged that planners were attempting to obfuscate their highway plans by using “highly technical jargon” and delivering it too rapidly. While this, Cohen noted, resulted in significant heckling from the crowd, it made the idea of a public forum farcical (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 11).

Ultimately, the strategies employed by MAD and voiced by Art Cohen at the Rosemont hearings reflected the way in which MAD was trying to sway the debate. By delving into the complexities of highway proposals and highlighting the conflicts between planners, MAD sought to undercut the authority of those who claimed “to know best.” Similarly, MAD attacked the planners’ thesis that the construction of an urban highway was even a necessity. Rather than alternatives for bypasses, MAD asked “would it not be wiser to pass over construction of expressways which were useful in the 1950s but are going to be obsolete after the ‘70s and move on to more modern forms of future transportation?” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 5). Cohen also hinted at what would later be called the “Rosemont neighborhood doublecross.” Noting the lack of a “No Road” alternative, Cohen suggested that the threat of a return to the 10-D plan was being used to intimidate neighborhood residents. Perhaps Cohen’s most forceful argument, was that the city and planners were attempting to prevent meaningful debate. Most disappointing to Cohen was that while citizens had taken extra steps to attend the
hearings, many city council members and even the mayor himself had failed to show up. Cohen pointed out the off-hand way that the mayor had dismissed the hearings when he [the mayor] had remarked that he “had heard all that stuff from the public before” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 12). Just as he had rebutted the facts and figures of planners, Cohen used the rules established by Federal highway authorities to issue a rebuke to the mayor. Cohen stated “since Baltimore is peculiarly autonomous and yours the final decision, clearly it falls under the purview of Sect. 8-B-4 of PPM 20-8 to consider you a responsible highway official who should be present to answer questions.” Cohen continued “be courageous. Technocracy is no substitute for wisdom” (“Testimony of the Movement…” 1969, 12). In the end, the strategy of framing the debate as unified citizens against an embattled and divided group of politicians and planners influenced by the “road gang” would become a central tactic in the group’s anti-highway efforts. As MAD expanded in the early 1970s they continued their efforts at numerous other highway hearings and did so with a deepening level of sophistication. The increasing complexity of MAD’s attacks on the highway would culminate in 1972 when MAD launched its first lawsuit against the entire 3-A system.

MAD Versus 3-A

On October 10, 1972 MAD filed suit against John Volpe, the Secretary of Transportation and Joseph Axelrod, the head of Maryland’s Interstate Highway Division. The goal of the suit was to seek both temporary and permanent injunctions on construction of the 3-A highway system. MAD hoped that a favorable decision would stop work on the highway for at least eight months and compel City, State and Federal
authorities “to review, and perhaps change, decisions made so far about the expressway system in Baltimore” (“summary of suit, filed…” 1973). The filing of the case, entitled MAD versus Volpe, coincided with a rising tide of anti-expressway lawsuits in Baltimore. In 1970, the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street and Fells Point filed suit to prevent the construction of the I-83 connector that was to run through Fells Point (Mohl 2004, 697; Tyson 1973, 2). The group was successful in stalling the project largely due to the fact that Fells Point had been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Another group, the Volunteers Opposing Leakin Park Expressway (VOLPE) filed the humorously titled suit VOLPE versus Volpe in 1971 in order to challenge the legality of a 1962 location hearing. VOLPE managed to win the case and the city’s appeal was defeated (Tyson 1973, 3). In addition, the court ruled that a restudy of the Leakin Park route was required because the National Environmental Policy Act prohibited construction through park land unless no other “prudent and feasible alternative” route could be found (Tyson 1973, 3).

In the fall of 1972, the highway appeared to be grinding to a halt all across Baltimore. Mayor D’Alesandro’s selection of the 3-A system had spared Federal Hill in 1968 and now court injunctions raised the hopes that the western and eastern legs of the 3-A system could be defeated. It was in this environment, that MAD chose to target the Franklin-Mulberry segment of the road as well as the entire 3-A plan itself. Unfortunately, the outcome of the court cases pressed by MAD would have a destabilizing effect and by 1977 the group would essentially be dead. This section addresses the court battles waged by MAD, examines the broader reasons for MAD’s
“failure” to “stop the road” and concludes with a discussion of how MAD’s overall efforts, despite the group’s dissolution, changed the dynamics of Baltimore’s “freeway revolt.”

MAD’s 1972 decision to file suit against the entire 3-A system was not one taken lightly or without due consideration. In fact, MAD had been weighing its legal options since the fall of 1968. An examination of MAD’s meeting minutes from that year show a cash strapped organization with little knowledge of court proceedings. For example, meeting minutes from October 1968 show several questions being considered that reflect MAD’s unfamiliarity with the legal system. They asked “can this group pay to hire a law firm?... How long does it take to get a suit?... What right does this group have to challenge public authorities?...” (“MAD meeting minutes…” 28 October 1968). In the aftermath of this meeting, Art Cohen approached several local Baltimore law firms. Reporting back in November, Cohen told the group that the firm of Piper and Marburg had declined to accept an anti-highway suit citing what they believed to be the prematurity of bringing such a case to court (“MAD meeting minutes…” 18 November 1968, 2). Undeterred, Cohen contacted the Washington law firm Covington and Burling. Convinced that Covington and Burling, which had worked with expressway opponents in the past, would work with them, MAD members were disappointed when the firm declined to participate. MAD’s meeting minutes reflect this decision and also highlight the inexperience of MAD in dealing with legal matters. Reporting this situation, the meeting minutes read “there are four different types of law suits, but D.C. law firm
doesn’t believe we really have a case yet (“MAD meeting minutes…” 25 November
1968, 2)

In the face of these defeats, MAD turned increasingly to influencing the highway
fight at public hearings and in the media. In 1969, MAD was instrumental in having
condemnation ordinances lifted in Rosemont and in advocating and insuring the creation
of a Rosemont by-pass. MAD also supported other groups such as VOLPE in their legal
battles and even became a plaintiff in the Society’s suit against the I-83 Connector.
Despite this, MAD admitted in the spring of 1972 that the “prospects for any other suit
look dim at the moment” (“MAD meeting minutes…” 10 April 1972). During that spring,
however, Baltimore’s new mayor William Donald Schaefer set the completion of the
highway system as one of his primary goals. He began to plan design hearings and
despite the injunctions placed on the Leakin Park portion of the highway, titled I-70N, he
expressed a desire to begin construction in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, an area that
had lain vacant since 1969. In addition, Schaefer, who had been City Council President
during the Rosemont hearings, was clearly perturbed by the expensive indecision the city
had shown in the past several years. Of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor Schaefer stated “I
simply am not going to let that land sit there” (“Schaefer firm on x-way” 1972). With
regard to Rosemont, one newspaper recalled that:

The neighborhood deteriorated, the city bought $5 million worth of homes
– and then the route of I-170 was changed to a different location.
Rehabilitating Rosemont homes costs another $5 million. Schaefer said he
will not make a similar mistake of indecision during his remaining three
and a half years in the mayoralty (“Schaefer firm on x-way…” 1972)
The result of Schaefer’s stance was an increased tempo of construction in areas not under injunction. The area closest to being ready for construction was the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and it was Schaefer’s goal of getting a portion of the road built that MAD sought to thwart. The switch to an anti-highway strategy based on legal action, however, reflected MAD’s belief that “we have fairly well exhausted the other recourses open to us (reasoning with officials, administrative appeals, etc.)” (“RE: Background data on…” 1972).

It is important to note that the Schaefer administration’s push to rapidly complete the I-170 alignment was, to some extent, a result of the various lawsuits that had been brought against the east-west expressway by other groups. Suits filed by VOLPE and The Society appeared to threaten completion of the road by stalling construction. While other anti-highway organizations viewed their suits as protecting their own neighborhoods, these suits had the unintended consequences of pushing the city to build in the one area where homes had been condemned, Harlem Park. MAD’s lawsuit against the 3-A system, while designed to block construction of the entire east-west expressway, also sought to place an injunction against further construction in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. While the anti-highway organizations may have been working for the same goals, it is clear that they were not always working together. This dynamic of common goals, but uneven cooperation was actually detrimental to those in MAD and in Harlem Park who were trying to prevent the construction of I-170. The lesson to be learned here for environmental justice researchers is that preconceptions about unified group positions need to be reexamined. Meeting minutes, group literature and other archival sources
provide the details that can allow researchers to move beyond conceptualizations that cast debates over environmental degradation into shades of black and white. Assumptions that all groups opposing a particular disamenity have the exact same goals or aspirations inevitably lead scholars to miss critical insights. Researchers who focus only on broad patterns or distributions while ignoring the details that longitudinal research can provide should tread lightly and be prepared to rethink their assumptions in the light of historical data. As Saha and Mohai have written, scholars should “not assume that sociopolitical conditions and policy environment in the past were the same as they are today or that conditions in previous periods were uniform” (2005, 639).

MAD’s October 10, 1972 lawsuit had four primary contentions. First, MAD argued that no environmental impact statement had been prepared which addressed the entire 3-A system. Specifically, MAD alleged that while there was no comprehensive environmental impact statement for the entirety of 3-A, even the existing impact statements for individual road sections “were written after the basic decision was made to build [the highway] and are merely ex post facto rationalizations of said decision” (quoted in Dilts 1972, 24). Second, “coordinated transportation planning” had not been part of the planning process. MAD stated that “none of the documents issued in the past four years by the Interstate Division prior to public hearings say significantly more about mass transit or other transportation being coordinated with the expressways than the assumption… that the mass transit system would be built” (quoted in Dilts 1972, 24). They added that “the only reference to coordination with mass transit or other forms of transportation consists of a single phrase” (quoted in Dilts 1972, 24). Third, no public
hearings had considered a “no road” alternative or suggested a mass transit plan as opposed to a highway. Fourth and finally, MAD charged that public participation had been restricted and that the process of public hearings had been abrogated (“summary of suit, filed…” 1973). Specifically referencing the 1968 Policy and Procedure Memorandum (PPM 20-8), MAD claimed that “there was no public hearing of any kind concerning the 3-A system between the Mayor’s [D’Alesandro III] decision December 24, 1968 [selecting 3-A] and the decision of the Bureau of Public Roads in January 1968 [approving 3-A]” (quoted in Dilts 1972, 24). MAD argued that the failure to address these issues was a breach of federal laws and highway planning regulations.

MAD’s case, a lawsuit involving eleven Baltimore anti-highway groups which would eventually encompass several other cases and evolve into a class action lawsuit, was opened in the Federal District Court of Maryland on April 16, 1973. The case was heard by judges James R. Miller, Jr. and Roszel C. Thomsen. The case did not go well for MAD and in June of 1973, the court ruled against MAD and gave the go ahead for the city to proceed with construction in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. The judges ruling attacked MAD’s assertion that environmental impact statements had to be created for the entire 3-A system. Miller and Thomsen argued that an overall environmental impact statement was not required, but stated that future impact statements for individual road segments would need to be more comprehensive (Dilts 1973, 8). In addition, while the court ruling allowed construction to proceed in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, the judges were careful to make clear in their decision that their ruling was by no means a green light for construction in other areas of the city. MAD quickly appealed this
decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Arguments over the appeal began in February 1974 before judges John D. Butzner, H. Emory Widener, Jr. and Albert V. Bryan. In a March 19th decision, the judges upheld the decision of the Federal District Court (“U.S. Court of appeals…” 1974).

In 1974, MAD filed a second lawsuit against the 3-A system. This lawsuit, entitled MAD, et. al. vs. Trainor, Richard H., et al., alleged that the environmental impact statement for a portion of I-95 between Caton Avenue and Russell Street was “unlawfully approved” (“MAD, et. al…” 1974, 2). In addition, MAD argued that highway officials had acted improperly in the procedure for awarding construction contracts to engineering firms. The “major thrust” of MAD’s lawsuit was that the highway was being constructed using an environmental impact statement that was “so technically inadequate as to be legally incapable of constituting the basis for reasoned decision making on the part of the responsible federal officials” (“MAD, et. al…” 1974, 3). Judges Miller and Thomsen once again heard the case and issued a response on March 17, 1975. In their conclusion, Miller and Thomsen found that the methodology used to create the environmental impact statement was appropriate, that it “was used in good faith and not solely for justifying a pre-conceived result,” and that it “produced a result which could have justified rationally the various decisions required to be made under the law” (“MAD, et. al…” 1974, 69).

The unfavorable decisions handed down to MAD by the courts, especially in the 1973 lawsuit, were major defeats for the group. William Burkin, a future president of MAD, admitted that the group “had put all of their eggs in one basket – the court case” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 61). In the aftermath of the 1973 court case, MAD continued to
fight the road as they had done in the past, by attacking statements made by planners, bringing media attention to issues of the road, advocating for mass transit, participating in festivals and manning public information booths. This return to their old system of protest was a direct result of the group’s inability to “jump scales” via their court case and maneuver outside the realm controlled by planners and politicians.

While the group returned to their old ways, construction continued in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor and the “Highway to Nowhere” was slowly constructed. The boulevard system proposed by the original 3-A plan was completed in 1982 and designated as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Today, it forms a 1.5 mile long, six lane wide connector that sweeps traffic from the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor in the north, skirting the edge of the CBD, to I-395 which connects to I-95 south of the city. It is circled in blue below (Fig. 22).
Figure 22: Baltimore 3-A Interstate and Boulevard System.
From Interstate Division for Baltimore City, 3-A System Current Status Map, 1981.

The construction of I-70N (Fig. 23), which was to run through Leakin Park, bypass Rosemont and connect to the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, was stopped and then finally defeated by VOLPE. I-70N was officially canceled in 1981 with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) citing the “unacceptable impacts to Leakin Park and to Gwynns Falls Park” as the reasons (Kozel, 2007).
The battle over the I-83 connector (circled in yellow in Fig. 22) that was to sweep through Fells Point continued until 1980 when Mayor Schaefer admitted that the city could not come up with the necessary money to meet the Federal government’s 90/10 formula. William K. Hellmann, the mayor’s transportation coordinator, admitted that “the city did not have enough money to pay its 10 percent of the project, unless the General Assembly raised taxes for the purpose” (“The cost of I-83…” 1980). In September 1982,
the I-83 extension through Fells Point was officially canceled. A December brochure from MDOT and the State Highway Administration (SHA) stated:

I-83 was planned as an Interstate Route connecting the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) to I-95. In 1979, the proposed extension of the I-83 Expressway was advanced to the Final Environmental Impact Statement stage of project planning. The cost of this Recommended "Full-Build" Alternative, however, was $609 million (1979 dollars) and could be expected to approach $1 billion in construction costs with inflation. Baltimore City reviewed the cost estimate for the Recommended "Full-Build" Alternative and concluded that it would be unable to fund the project (quoted in Kozel 2007).

By the time that the last vestiges of the 3-A plan were implemented, the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere” had been open for three years. Even prior to the opening of the “Highway to Nowhere” in 1979, a newspaper headline about MAD read “highway opponent reaches the end of the road.” By 1977, MAD was, as John Armor, MAD’s lawyer, told the Baltimore Sun, “a corpse” (“Highway opponent reaches the…” 1977). Armor blamed MAD’s “failure” to stop the road on a variety of factors. Implicitly, Armor admitted that the failure to defeat 3-A in 1973 and then again in 1975 contributed heavily to the break up of the group. He also cited MAD’s failure to adopt civil disobedience as contributing to the group’s decline. Armor’s comments only cement in place the idea that the failure to “jump scales” either by winning legal challenges filed against the road or by turning to protest limited the group’s other options.

It is important to note that while MAD failed to “kill” the 3-A plan, only a small segment of the system was ever implemented. The delays caused by MAD’s court cases as well as its efforts at grass roots organization prevented speedy completion of the entire 3-A system. In the end, only two segments of the initial 3-A plan were ever implemented.
The first, the I-170 Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was built, but connects to no other highway. The 3-A boulevard system was implemented, but it should be remembered that MAD had voiced support for this system as an alternative to a full blown highway in 1968 (“MAD meeting minutes…” 25 November 1968). The other segments of the plan, namely the I-70N Corridor through Leakin Park and the I-83 Connector through Fells Point (both segments opposed by MAD) were stalled by community activism and legal proceedings and finally canceled. While Armor suggested several factors that contributed to MAD’s “failure,” a variety of other considerations deserve to be addressed in order to explain MAD’s inability to prevent the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.”

Assessing MAD’s effectiveness

Three factors contributed significantly to MAD’s inefficacy when it came to stopping the road outright. First, MAD’s primary goal was to prevent the construction of the road in its entirety. While MAD’s court cases were aimed directly at this goal and provided the organization with a central rallying point, MAD’s city-wide highway ban diffused the group’s focus. Because MAD was opposing the highway in Leakin Park, the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, Federal Hill and Fells Point, the group was not able to selectively target individual council members (Haeuber 1974, 62). MAD had to spend much of its time implementing a strategy that made the most of contributions from suburban preservations, southeast Baltimore workers, African Americans and environmental protectionists. And while MAD was effective in distributing information to these groups to increase their own effectiveness, this diffusion conversely weakened MAD. MAD could not shape a common ideology that could link all of these variegated
groups (Haeuber 1974, 62). The result was that MAD generally played a supporting role by hovering over smaller organizations and providing them with information and technical interpretation. MAD’s primary success came as an organizer of numerous smaller groups and a disseminator of knowledge to these groups and also to the wider public. Groups such as SCAR and the Society, while MAD members, largely pursued their own goals outside of MAD’s coalition. SCAR itself was effective because it could generate localized support in southeast Baltimore and focus that anti-highway sentiment on political actors from that area (Haeuber 1974, 63).

Second, MAD was unable to present serious alternatives to urban highways. While MAD advocated for mass transit and alternative transportation models such as bike paths, they never presented a comprehensive plan to city officials. Mayor D’Alesandro took note of this when he stated “it is really easy to be against the road. But try to be for something. If all those people who are anti-highway were for an alternative, we might be able to accomplish something” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 63). In addition, MAD’s efforts took place largely within the established framework created by planners to allow citizen protest. We have already seen the extensive preparations that MAD undertook to prepare for the 1969 Rosemont hearings. Had MAD eschewed this official framework, the group might have been able to spend more of its energy coming up with alternatives to highways. One journalist and author supports this conclusion and contended that:

A major cause of MAD’s ineffectuality lies in federal expressway procedures which forbid citizens from exercising any control over highway plans that directly affect their lives. Being superfluous to expressway decision-making, MAD can only protest at officially sanctioned highway hearings which are held after road plans have been privately agreed upon by local officials. Of course, the more time MAD
spends protesting such highway proposals in official channels, the less it has to develop alternatives to these plans or build up its own political muscle. The end result is being dependent on the system it opposes (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 64).

The MAD’s realization that they could not affect change from within the system of highway hearings led them to wage their court battles in 1973 and 1974. The tossing out of the case and the subsequent appeal, however, meant that MAD’s options for opposing the road narrowed considerably. Unlike other groups such as SCAR and The Society, MAD was unable to effectively “jump scales” and target the road outside of highway hearings. The result was that while other groups were attempting to prevent construction in their own neighborhoods, MAD’s inability to defeat the 3-A system meant that construction in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor would proceed unimpeded.

Third, MAD had a relatively small base of highly active members from which to draw funding and support. The result of this, of course, was an inability to finance the development of alternative plans. MAD’s lack of cash was consistently a problem, especially during battles in court. At one point, MAD failed to pay its attorney, John Armor, who responded with understandable indignation. Writing to George Tyson, Armor stated “considering the tens of thousands of dollars of time which I have donated for MAD over the years, I consider it inexcusable that MAD did not pay my bill for costs in full.” He added “quite frankly, I consider it a prime example of looking a gift horse in the mouth to seek and accept upwards of $40,000 in free services, at all hours of the day and night over 2 ½ years, and then balk at paying a few hundred dollars…” (Armor to Tyson, 1975). When MAD’s 1974 court case was dismissed from the District Court, MAD was subjected to a humiliating letter from the law firm that had represented the city
demanding court ordered payments. MAD’s feeble reply contained a small payment of $274.22 and the remark “unfortunately, this payment leaves our treasury empty; we cannot pay the other $1,342.00” (Tyson to Rodowsky, 1975). The cash-strapped nature of MAD meant that it was unable, unlike similar organizations in Boston, to hire professional staff members and lobbyists to work for its cause (Haeuber 1974, 64-65).

In conclusion, the combination of these factors meant that MAD was fighting an uphill battle against the road. Yet, despite the group’s failure to stop the road via lawsuits, MAD was able to fundamentally change the highway fight on a variety of levels. While some, like John Armor, have argued that MAD failed to defeat the highway, it is only from the distance of thirty years that we can see that MAD’s success was merely incomplete. While the boulevard system and the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor were implemented, MAD triumphed in a number of other battles. First and foremost, MAD successfully organized the communities of Baltimore into a solid, bi-racial, anti-highway coalition. Before MAD, Baltimore was a fragmented city with neighborhoods fighting alone or in isolation. After MAD, groups like VOLPE and SCAR had emerged to battle the highway on their own unique terrains with their own distinct tactics. Second, MAD’s early west side focus helped to pressure the city into creating the Rosemont by-pass and preserving that neighborhood. Third, as MAD’s constituency expanded, the group brought together African American and White residents from across the city. Groups such as VOLPE, SCAR, RAM and the Society were bolstered by MAD’s activities and were the primary beneficiaries of MAD’s interpretation and dissemination of technical information. Fourth, by insinuating itself into such groups as the Policy Advisory Board,
MAD was able to provide detailed information about what highway planners intended. This information was then utilized in MAD’s media campaign. This operation, which linked the expense of the highway to a corrupt “road gang” who were supported by the business interests of the Greater Baltimore Committee, was effective in rousing discontent among neighborhood groups and ordinary citizens. This discontent combined with changing attitudes about culture, heritage and assimilation to produce anti-road politicians who side-stepped Baltimore’s traditional roads to power and instead rose out of the city’s ethnic neighborhoods. The political terrain of Baltimore was reshaped by the fight over the road as southeast Baltimore became a seething mass of anti-road sentiment championed by newly elected politicians such as Barbara Mikulski. Just as the city’s political terrain was being reshaped to make pro-road political sentiments untenable, VOLPE and the Society launched their lawsuits against the road. These lawsuits successfully delayed construction of the eastern and western legs of the 3-A plan. Likewise, MAD’s lawsuits and appeals ate up valuable time and consumed the resources of highway planners on the city, state and federal levels. By the time that John Armor was declaring MAD “a corpse,” the groundwork had been laid for the ultimate defeat of the road. While MAD had vanished from the scene by the 1980s, John Armor’s prescient statement that “MAD’s influence still may be felt in the future” (“Highway opponent reaches the…” 1977) was playing out as both the city of Baltimore and the State of Maryland admitted that the 3-A system would never be fully realized.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE FREEWAY REVOLT IN SOUTHEAST BALTIMORE: THE SOCIETY AND SCAR

It was a cool and cloudy day in Baltimore when two groups, one of citizens and one of soldiers, clashed in the city’s streets, leaving sixteen people dead. Rifle fire and volleys of rocks injured dozens and crowds barricaded bridges and surrounded Camden Station. In the aftermath of this conflict, artillery was emplaced on one of Baltimore’s most commanding heights and trained toward the city’s rebellious center. The weapons perched on this hill and the small fort that soldiers constructed were not intended to quell racial tensions between whites and African Americans, nor were they sent to quiet protest over a proposed east-west highway. Rather, they were sent by Abraham Lincoln to secure the city’s allegiance in the opening days of the American Civil War (McPherson 1988, 285). Today, Federal Hill, as the summit overlooking Baltimore’s harbor is known, is a dominating feature of Baltimore’s landscape and the guns, well preserved relics, still point towards Baltimore’s business district. The hill itself, a landscaped and manicured park where dog walkers roam and tourists scan the harbor, was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1970. Since that time, the working class neighborhoods surrounding it have submitted to redevelopment, yielding shops, piano bars and restaurants. Decaying row houses have been renovated and housing prices have soared. Buoyed by the redevelopment of the city’s once crumbling waterfront, the Federal Hill neighborhood has benefited from the tide of reinvestment. Since this redevelopment began with the opening of Harbor Place, Baltimore’s waterside “festival market” in 1980, the Federal Hill neighborhood has seen tremendous changes.
Less than a mile away across the harbor lies another treasured historic community. Once a home to warehouses, ship builders, and privateers, Fells Point was also a port of entry for thousands of Polish, Czech and Irish immigrants who arrived in the United States in the latter half of the 19th century. Today, the area is host to the annual Fells Point Fun Festival. This raucous gathering, which began in 1967, is meant to highlight Fells Point’s nautical past and raise monies to maintain the dozens of historic structures that form the raison d’être for the Fells Point Historic District. Like its cross harbor neighbor, Fells Point has also prospered as a result of Baltimore’s waterfront development. Cobbled streets, boutiques, pubs, and museums all stand in stark contrast to the dilapidated and boarded up structures that once lined Aliceanna and Fleet streets.

The current state of these two neighborhoods as tourist attractions, high-rent districts and cherished communities owes much to the efforts of several small community organizations that sought to prevent the construction of a major east-west arterial highway. As we have already read, the planned construction of I-170 through Federal Hill and the I-83 connector through Fells Point were thwarted. No ribbons of concrete spanned Baltimore’s Harbor to plow eastward towards Baltimore’s beltway. We have noted the important roles of MAD, the UDCT, and RAM. Yet while MAD played a significant role in preserving these two neighborhoods, it was the Southeast Council Against the Road and the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point that ultimately assured the neighborhoods’ survival across nearly two decades (1960-1980) of bitter controversy over the construction and route of Baltimore’s east-west expressway. This chapter considers the actions that these two organizations took to prevent highway
construction and how this East Baltimore “road fight” impacted the current, highway-free geography of these neighborhoods. In particular, this chapter focuses on the importance that “jumping scales” to maneuver outside the political system controlled by highway planners played in preventing construction through Fells Point. Both groups, The Society and SCAR, utilized politics of scale to contest the appropriation of the spaces that they sought to defend. The Society did so by relying on the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, creating a specific historical vision of both waterfront neighborhoods and by challenging the road in court, while SCAR set out to change the political dynamics of southeast Baltimore as a whole.

The Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point

A Baltimore Sun editorial published on February 26, 1992 recalled the 1967 founding of the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill, Montgomery Street, and Fells Point (the “Montgomery Street” was later excised for concision) with the simple phrase “they stopped the road.” Celebrating the 25th anniversary of The Society, the author neatly ticked off the group’s achievements: preserving Federal Hill as a National Historic site, establishing the United States’ second historic district surrounding 75 acres of the Fells Point neighborhood, challenging highway planners and officials at all levels, suing the Federal government to prevent construction of the I-83 connector and, ultimately, blocking the construction of the eastern legs of the proposed east-west expressway (Fisher 1992). In comparison to the less evident achievements of RAM and MAD, both of which failed to prevent the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere,” The Society appears incredibly successful. And while the author does reference MAD
(neither SCAR nor RAM make an appearance), it is clear that it was “they,” The Society, who “stopped the road.” Despite the author’s praise, lingering questions remain. What actions or factors contributed to the success of The Society in preserving two threatened neighborhoods, while less than two miles north Harlem Park was being smothered in pavement? Research suggests that the Society’s success rested on three factors including the nature of the group’s members, the group’s specific focus, and the nature of the areas being defended. Before exploring these factors, however, it is important to briefly examine The Society’s struggle against the highway between 1967 and 1980.

In February 1967, the Baltimore City Council held a public hearing regarding the newly established condemnation lines that had been laid down in Fells Point. As we read earlier, this meeting quickly degenerated into a shouting match between local blue-collar residents and preservationists who had driven in from Baltimore’s suburbs (Keidel 1967). In the aftermath of the meeting, Lucretia Fisher, a suburbanite from Ruxton and the owner of six Fells Point properties, teamed up with Thomas Ward, the irascible 2nd District Councilman who had voted against establishing the condemnation lines through the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor (Dilts 1969). Together, on February 23, 1967, they established The Society. The first meeting was held on the second floor of 1732 Thames Street, the first home purchased by Fisher and situated in south central Fells Point directly north of the waterfront. Twenty-three people attended (Fisher 1992).

The Society’s first goal was to catalogue, categorize, and classify the hundreds of historic structures in the neighborhood. Many of the homes in the area were built in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The oldest home in the area (now a museum) was constructed
in 1765. The group, however, was faced with several immediate problems. They needed to publicize Fells Point, attract attention to the area’s historic value, attract new Society members, and solicit funds to continue operations. In the early days of The Society, Fisher recalled begging friends to buy houses:

I'd say, ‘You have to buy houses down in Fells Point. They're very cheap, but that's the only way we can save the city. And I said, ‘Our friendship depends on it.’ They said, ‘That's a good way to lose friends!’ (Fisher 2003)

This tactic proved less than effective as many people had never heard of Fells Point and the area had a reputation for being run down. When asked about Fells Point’s pre-Society reputation, Fisher stated:

No, I hadn't heard anything about it until I came down, and then I heard [that] the [city] councilmen told their constituents, "You're so lucky that the City wants to buy your houses because you are living in a slum." And, they told everybody, "You're just in a slum. You're in a slum. That is what it is!" And some of the people really still owned houses, but a lot of them were vacant. And it, it was sort of like a place for ships to come in, and sometimes people who were on the ships to spend the night, sort of. They had some places where they could stay overnight, that kind of thing, for a few days. And, so that's really what it was! (2003)

A colleague pressured Fisher into creating a sort of historic art fair festival. This event, first held in the fall of 1967 (and every fall since) was known as the Fells Point Fun Festival. Hundreds of people from Baltimore and its surrounding suburbs flocked to the Fells Point waterfront for living history events, walking tours, art bazaars, and beer. The first Fun Festival not only made hundreds of people aware of the area, but also attracted new homeowners and Society members. Importantly, it also provided The Society with funds to conduct surveys of the area’s historic buildings. Fisher remembered
“It's the way, actually, that we have been able to survive, because we had enough money to make our group work” (Fisher 2003).

By November 1967, The Society had well over one hundred members (“Membership roster” 1967). It was a fortuitous time for Fisher and her preservationist colleagues. In 1966 the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) had been passed establishing the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Sites which qualified for the Register were not exempted from State or Federal alteration (by the introduction of a highway, for example), but were protected by strident regulations on construction.

Specifically, Section 110(f) of the NHPA:

Requires that Federal agencies exercise a higher standard of care when considering undertakings that may directly and adversely affect NHLs [National Historic Landmarks]. The law requires that agencies, "to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to such landmark." In those cases when an agency's undertaking directly and adversely affects an NHL, or when Federal permits, licenses, grants, and other programs and projects under its jurisdiction or carried out by a state or local government pursuant to a Federal delegation or approval so affect an NHL, the agency should consider all prudent and feasible alternatives to avoid an adverse effect on the NHL (NHPA 110 (f)).

Over the course of the next year, Fisher and the other members of the Society undertook the Herculean task of surveying the historic buildings in Fells Point. These surveys were later organized and compiled into reports by Robert L. Eney, an architectural historian who was a founding member of The Society. In 1967, Eney published “Fells Point: A Part of the Baltimore Scene since 1773.” This illustrated booklet contained detailed information about a variety of the structures in Fells Point (Eney 2003). In November of 1968, the Governor’s Consulting Committee on the NRHP
reviewed the materials sent by The Society. The group, sitting for the first time to judge the worth of a potential historic site, declared

That the area of Fells Point… has been studied with considered care for its resources of 18th and 19th century architecture and history, and that the potential worth and value of landmark buildings suitable for rehabilitation and restoration are unusually extensive and compared favorably with the renewal accomplished in other early American cities… (Ridout 1968)

The findings of the Committee were forwarded to Governor Spiro Agnew and the Department of the Interior as the first Maryland nomination for a historic district. On March 28th, 1969, the Fells Point Historic District was official added to the NRHP. Over the course of the next two years, a similar survey would be conducted in Federal Hill and that landmark would be added to the National Register in 1970.

The addition of these two sites to the NRHP slowed progress on highway construction. As will be recalled, Mayor D’Alesandro III, under pressure from the public and fighting to control the quarreling elements of the UDCT, selected the 3-A highway plan in 1968. The selection of this plan vetoed the idea, first set forth by the Expressway Consultants’ 10-D alignment, for a cross-harbor bridge. This decision meant that Federal Hill would not be bisected by an east-west expressway. The area would later be threatened by I-395 (a component of the 3-A plan), but this crisis would also pass leaving the Federal Hill neighborhood unscathed.

In the years after achieving historic district status for Federal Hill and Fells Point, The Society did not rest on its laurels. Highway planners, as discussed above, continued to study the Fells Point area and produce new alignments. The city of Baltimore showed little intention of abandoning the dream of the east-west expressway simply to save some
old buildings. Society meeting minutes reported that City Council President Schaefer “was still totally committed to the road through Fells Pt. which he says has top priority in the city administration’s viewpoint. He said if we win the lawsuit he would build the road to Wolfe St. and then disperse the traffic into Fells Pt!” (“Meeting minutes of the…” 1971). This information, although recollected by The Society and thus possibly prone to exaggerating Schaefer’s zeal for road building, rings true in light of his earlier statements regarding the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. It was these statements and the increased tempo of construction under Schaefer’s administration beginning in 1969 that pushed both MAD and The Society towards legal action. In 1970, the UDCT hired a company called the Urban Design Group to produce their own historical and architectural survey of Fells Point. Society meeting minutes recall that “their intent is to discredit the grounds for inclusion of Fells Point in the National Register. This firm is known to have produced unsatisfactory surveys in Annapolis and Providence and has a poor reputation among architectural historians” (“Meeting minutes of the Society” 1970). In 1971, the company released its report which admitted that some Fells Point structures “demonstrated historic and architectural values,” and that the area “had more than passing historical value even though the men and events associated with the district are largely anonymous (“Expressway planning for the…” 1972, 155-156). To prevent further property acquisition, demolition and construction, The Society hired the law firm of Semmes, Bowen and Semmes. Over the course of the next several years, The Society would pursue a variety of legal actions against city planners. Although their court case would never go to trial, The Society managed to win an injunction against highway building in Fells
Point in 1972 (Mohl 2004, 697). Despite this, The Society and the city would continue to squabble over unlifted condemnation lines through both historic districts as well as vacant homes that had been acquired by the city during the late 1960s. Eventually these condemnation lines would be lifted and dilapidated homes would be sold off through a convoluted and lengthy process. By 1973, one highway official admitted that a road through Fells Point was “not being actively pursued” (Dougherty 1973)

The city’s final halfhearted push at creating the I-83 connector would begin in 1975 with the proposal of three Fells Point alignments, two via land and one, a new “Harbor Route,” through the water. All three proposals involved underground tunnels. In 1978, the submerged “Harbor Route” option, referred to in the planning documents as “depressed alternative B” was endorsed by The Society in the February issue of the *Fells Point Gazette*. By 1980, however, the inability of the city to cover its 10% of the Federal 90/10 formula and the high estimated cost of the I-83 connector ($609 million) would force the cancellation of the project (“The cost of I-83…” 1980).

By 1985, both Federal Hill and Fells Point were undergoing dramatic changes. Gone were the vacant boarded up structures of the past. They were replaced by dozens of renovated and restored homes. The *Evening Sun* reported that in places the streets were blocked by “cinderblock mountains” and that “deafening jigsaws” rent the air. But this new construction was all a “part of the volatile equation that is the ‘New Baltimore.’” Certainly it was profitable for the city. The Baltimore City Taxpayers Coalition reported that tax assessments had risen more than 300% in both historic districts. Similarly, one owner recalled “the tax assessments are very steep. Our house was literally assessed for
30 percent more than what we put the house together for in the first year” (Shapiro 1985).

Durr writes:

The newcomers multiplied, intrigued by the picturesque and historic neighborhood. By the late 1970s they started to gain the upper hand. From 1970 to 1980 the proportion of professionals in Fells Point increased from 9.4 to 24.5 percent, while incomes rose from 44.6 percent of the city median to 77.5 percent. In 1970 less than 5 percent of the area’s inhabitants had finished high school. Ten years later nearly 17 percent had. In South Baltimore also, renovation and mounting real estate prices drove long-term residents out of the market. One row house there sold for $8,000 in 1977 but resold for $35,000 only two years later (2003, 210).

The remarkable transformation of Federal Hill and Fells Point from blue-collar to high-rent neighborhoods was not without tragedy. While vacant structures yielded to lovingly restored homes, those who could not afford the steep taxes were forced out. The blue-collar workers who had called home the “foot of broadway” were replaced by suburban dwellers who (re)christened the place “Fells Point” in honor of the Quaker, William Fell who first established warehouses along the waters of the Patapsco. Bars, coffee houses, shops, and an eclectic music scene sprang up and today gawking tourists roam the area on colonial house tours. Not much remains of the old working class society that was pre-Society Fells Point. Yet there exists no roaring freeway either. This success, The Society’s most noted, is where we next turn our attention.

One major factor that contributed to the success of The Society in their efforts to defend Federal Hill and Fells Point was their membership. In comparison to RAM, which drew its constituency from the inner city neighborhoods of Rosemont and Harlem Park, and MAD, whose membership included west side African Americans and east side blue collar workers, The Society drew many of its members from affluent city neighborhoods
or suburban Baltimore County. Lucretia Fisher, the first president and founder of The Society, is an excellent example. The wife of a Ruxton (Baltimore suburb) doctor, she and her brother (a New Yorker) first visited Fells Point waterfront in 1965 to examine some of the old colonial structures. In a recent interview she recalled finding the 1732 Thames Street home that would become the meeting place for The Society:

We finally found the real estate office, a little office off Broadway, and oh they said, ‘Yes, it's for sale.’ It turned out it was for sale at such a low price so we were sort of astounded! And so right away we put some money down and let them know ‘We want it.’ And then we were so excited. My brother spent the weekend. We were so excited at what had happened, we couldn't stand it. We went down here again, and we were walking along the waterfront, and this man who sort of looked as if he lived here. He was kind of in working clothes. I said ‘We just bought that house over there.’ I couldn't contain myself. And he said, ‘Oh yes, that is where they are going to put the expressway’ (Fisher 2003).

The urge to save her new home and preserve the colonial waterfront drove Fisher to start The Society with the aid of Tom Ward. Yet, as we have already noted, few working class residents sympathized with Fisher’s preservationist desires. As a result, the early membership of The Society was largely composed of suburban realtors, speculators, architecture buffs, and preservationists. Kenneth Durr categorized The Society’s membership as being made up of “newly arrived middle-class gentrifiers” who had “deep pockets and generated a great deal of fast publicity” (Durr 2003, 157). A brief examination of The Society’s membership records for 1968 reveals members living in New York, Reisterstown, College Park, Hampstead, Cambridge, Frederick, Rosedale, Towson, and several other Baltimore suburbs. Few were actually residents of Fells Point or Federal Hill. Over the years, the geography of the group’s membership changed little. An examination of the zip-codes connected to the leadership of The Society between
1972 and 1974 reveal a group still dominated by members from Baltimore suburbs. A shift began in 1976, however, when almost all of The Society officers listed addresses in either Federal Hill or Fells Point (“Officers…” 1968-1976).

While it is impossible to directly determine the socioeconomic status of The Society’s members from meeting minutes, pamphlets and other material readily available in the Langsdale archives, we can draw some conclusions. First, many Society members purchased homes for restoration in Federal Hill, Fells Point or both. As we have already noted, Fisher, at one time, owned six properties. This points to a level of increased affluence. Second, a comparison of The Society meeting minutes with those of MAD suggests The Society’s wealth. While MAD’s treasury rarely exceeded $200 at any given time, The Society consistently boasted $500 or $600. Additionally, while MAD hosted fund raising booths at various Baltimore events, The Society threw the Harbor Ball and the Baltimore Fun Festival. Not only did these events require significant capital to begin, but they also generated cash for The Society. The 1971 Harbor Ball, a black tie event with live music, brought The Society a profit of $2,000 while the 1970 event had only garnered about $900 (“Meeting minutes of the Society” 16 June 1971; “Meeting minutes of the Society” 24 June 1970). This profit, according to meeting minutes, bolstered the Society’s account to $5,646.53 (“Meeting minutes of the…” 21 July 1971). While cash-strapped MAD often had difficulty generating the funds to pay their attorney John Armor (who worked practically for free), The Society had little trouble paying its bills to Semmes, Bowen and Semmes. Lastly, while MAD’s meeting minutes are rife with complaints about members not paying their dues, The Society’s are comparatively free of
complaints about debtors. By 1976, The Society employed an Executive Director at an annual salary of $9,500 and boasted a membership of over 700 (“Meeting minutes of the…” 21 April 1976, 2). Jazz Concerts, charity events, historic walking tours, and a visitors’ center all garnered profits for The Society.

Based on this evidence, it is clear that The Society had far more resources than anti-highway counterparts MAD and RAM. These resources allowed them to create advertisements, host events (lavish in comparison to those hosted by other groups), purchase and restore buildings, and finance historic and architectural surveys. Beyond their ability to finance these measures, The Society’s wealth likely gave them access to avenues of power unavailable to the working class members of MAD and RAM.

While The Society was certainly successful due to the affluence of many of its members, a major factor in achieving its goals was its narrow focus. We have already read about the divided focus of RAM, which sacrificed the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor for promises of joint development and monetary assistance. We have also read about MAD’s broad coalition which attempted to protect every threatened Baltimore neighborhood from the east-west expressway. While these were the strategies that RAM and MAD adopted at the time, we also know with hindsight that neither strategy, be it negotiation or city-wide focus, was effective in stopping the road. In truth, neither RAM nor MAD possessed much power, for the decision-making process “forbid citizens from exercising any control over highway plans that directly affected their lives. Being superfluous to expressway decision-making, MAD could only protest at officially
sanctioned highway hearings which were held after road plans had been privately agreed upon by local officials” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 64).

The Society, however, was able to exercise power through a separate system which, although unconnected to the system of highway building, could impact highway construction. While RAM and MAD could only urge citizens to protest at highway hearings, The Society could rally its members, and their formidable resources, to conduct architectural surveys and publicize the historic waterfront that they wanted to protect. While both RAM and MAD were forced to fight the apathy that had been created by decades of highway condemnations, Society members were more motivated by monetary concerns. Durr is both blunt and accurate when he writes that The Society “was more interested in safeguarding members’ investments than in preserving urban neighborhoods” (Durr 2003, 157). The result of this focus on preservation, albeit preservation for the profits of speculators and “gentrifiers,” was the creation of the two historic districts and ultimately the preservation of Fells Point and Federal Hill. While both RAM and MAD sought to preserve Baltimore’s “urban fabric” from the beginning, it is ironic that the most successful anti-highway organization sought and achieved preservation for far more mercenary reasons. In any case, The Society was able to challenge road building by jumping scales and utilizing alternative avenues, such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, that were unavailable to both RAM and MAD.

The success of this approach, however, had much to due with the specific nature of the geographies that The Society was seeking to protect. It is certainly fair to say that
The Society’s success would not have been possible if they had faced the same dismal circumstances as those in Harlem Park. RAM, for example, had no historical monuments, colonial structures or “nautical pedigree” to champion. The historic nature of Fells Point and Federal Hill allowed The Society to construct a specific image of the two places as historically significant. While the colonial homes and warehouses that graced the waterfront of Fells Point certainly had architectural value, the Urban Design Group’s statement that the area “had more than passing historical value even though the men and events associated with the district are largely anonymous” (“Expressway Planning for the…” 1972, 155-156) is accurate. Lacking colonial heroes like George Washington or Paul Revere, The Society quickly set out to shape the image of Fells Point as an unruly place of privateers, pirates, and revolutionaries as well as the home of ship builders and sailors. Ironically, the “every day” people of Fells Point’s colonial era were being emphasized even as wealthy realtors occasionally clashed with “every day” working class residents. The result was the creation of a popular image that could attract tourists and visitors with tales of ghosts and swashbuckling while maintaining the area’s less theatrical, but more historical architectural importance.

The Society was able to capitalize on the historic nature of the area by offering colonial home tours, waterborne harbor tours, ghostwalks, living history events, talks on early immigration and sailing as well as by hosting charity events such as the Harbor Ball and Fun Festival. All of these events, as Durr earlier pointed out, “…generated a great deal of fast publicity” (Durr 2003, 157). The result, of course, was that Fells Point not only quickly became a new hotspot for preservationists and those who locals cursed as
“gentrifiers,” but also for tourists and visitors, 50,000 of whom attended the 1996 Fun Festival. In the end, the historic nature of the area allowed The Society to fight the highway by utilizing the National Historic Preservation Act. The creation of the historic districts not only offered Federal Hill and Fells Point a measure of protection from highway planners, but also gave The Society a domain in which to generate funds to continue the road fight.

In conclusion, the success of The Society in fighting the road rested on three factors. First, The Society’s affluent membership allowed the group not only to purchase homes to restore, but also provided the capital needed for publicity events, attorneys, and, most importantly, architectural and historic surveys. Second, Society members were motivated by the twin desires of preserving their own investments as well as preserving the historic landscape of the waterfront neighborhoods. This stands in marked contrast to the somewhat powerless residents of Harlem Park and the many blue collar residents of Baltimore’s Southeast neighborhoods who (at least initially) wanted to take advantage of the buyouts offered by the city. While the actions of The Society might have been self-serving, the long-term efforts of The Society belie the judgment that its members were solely driven by profit. Lastly, The Society’s success in defeating the road was primarily based on both the real and constructed image of the waterfront as historically significant. The hundreds of architecturally important structures in Fells Point and the prominent lookout of Federal Hill gained the areas’ status as historic districts, but it was the efforts of The Society to promote the areas that attracted new homeowners and brought attention to the road fight itself. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 allowed these
three factors to be effectively utilized. The advent of the NHPA provided Society members a means withheld from MAD to contest highway construction outside the boundaries of city politicians and their hired consultants. Despite the successes of The Society, not every neighborhood in Southeast Baltimore had Fells Point’s architectural assets and fewer were fortunate enough to be situated along the waterfront. Canton and Highlandtown, bastions of ethnic blue collar workers, still faced the threat of the road and it was not to the suburbanite preservationists of The Society to which they turned. Rather, these neighborhoods turned to the ethnic politics of the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR) and its founder, Barbara Mikulski.

The Southeast Council Against the Road

The Southeast Council Against the Road, established in 1969, arose out of widespread popular disenfranchisement with Southeast Baltimore’s “councilmatic” or “club-based” political system. While this system of patronage had functioned in the past to provide blue-collar Southeast Baltimoreans with the services they desired, deindustrialization combined with the polarizing effect of the road fight made this system increasingly unstable. Residents of Fells Point, Canton and Highlandtown soon found themselves faced with condemnation ordinances, decaying property and political representatives more interested in serving the needs of highway planners. The result of this was a disenfranchised group of blue-collar workers who established SCAR to challenge the road. SCAR, however, was only the harbinger of broader changes that would lead to the creation of a new social and political coalition that would effectively protest the road and simultaneously change Southeast Baltimore’s old political
arrangements. Before turning to SCAR, however, we must consider the environment in which it developed.

During the first half of the century, Southeast Baltimore was a place of iron, steel, and rivets. Sparrows Point, a huge industrial complex owned by Bethlehem Steel, was the city’s largest employer turning out hundreds of thousands of tons of steel per year including the girders of the Golden Gate Bridge and the suspension cables for the George Washington Bridge (Durr 2003, 8). Shipyards dotted the waterfront churning out new vessels and repairing the old, while stevedores hauled freight sent from half a world away. During the Second World War, the sprawling industrial might of Baltimore turned out Liberty Ships, while Glenn Martin, the world’s largest aircraft plant, pumped out B-26 Marauder and A-22 Maryland bombers by the hundreds (Durr 2003, 22). In 1939, the aircraft factory employed 3,500 workers. By 1943, 53,000 employees crowded into its massive assembly hangars (Durr 2003, 29). Likewise, Baltimore’s manufacturing labor force had skyrocketed by over 100,000 workers between 1939 and 1942 (Durr 2003, 30). This kind of mobilization of labor, however, could not last and in the post-war years companies, weaned off military contracts, needed far fewer workers. Yet, the post-war prosperity of Baltimore’s white working class, concentrated into the neighborhoods of Southeast Baltimore, was impressive. In 1954, *South Baltimore Enterprise Magazine* crowed “today every 6th person in the South and West Side has an auto; every 8th person has a television set, 3 persons to every radio. Two out of every three families have a telephone” (quoted in Durr 2003, 71). By the beginning of the 1950s, homeownership in Baltimore reached 57.9%, one of the highest rates in the nation which stands in stark
comparison to the fact that in 1947 the average working class family still rented a rowhouse (Durr 2003, 58).

By 1960, one in three of Baltimore’s workers was employed in manufacturing. In Southeast Baltimore, however, this ratio was higher. In Canton and Highlandtown, almost one half of the working population found work along the waterfront at Sparrows Point or the adjacent dry docks. Durr provides an excellent summation:

There was relatively little occupational diversity here; few urban professionals lived anywhere near blue-collar workers. Those who ‘belonged’ either worked in a factory, were members of a family supported by a factory worker, or, like tavern owners and small business people, served factory workers. ‘I can never recall in the 1950s as a kid seeing somebody coming home from work with a tie and a suit on and a brief case,’ Highlandtown native George O’Connor recalled. ‘You had your choice whether you wanted to build cars or work on steel...but you were gonna do that.’ (Durr 2003, 90).

Yet, like the boom of the war years, this époque of working class affluence was bound to end. By the late 1960s, Southeast Baltimore was undergoing wrenching changes. Between 1947 and 1963, Baltimore had lost 123 industries and more than 17,000 manufacturing jobs (Durr 2003, 192). Certainly not an insignificant number, but it pales in comparison to the loses suffered between 1963 and 1972 (9 years) when 15% of Baltimore’s manufacturing jobs (16,000) vanished (Durr 2003, 192). Between 1968 and 1972, 159 plants closed their doors including Canton’s American Standard, which had been producing plumbing fixtures for 47 years (Durr 2003, 213). Even Baltimore’s mighty steel industry was not immune. In 1975, layoffs at Sparrows Point left 7,000 workers unemployed out of a total labor force of 22,000 (Durr 2003, 199). The Catholic Church, always an important part of the lives of Polish and Czechoslovakian immigrants,
also suffered as the population of the Archdiocese of Baltimore declined by 15%. This drop was exceeded only by the halving of the student population of the Church’s parochial schools between 1962 and 1977 (Durr 2003, 193). The demographics of Baltimore’s Southeast neighborhoods were also undergoing great changes. Children, raised in the prosperous times of the 1950s, were abandoning the city for the new suburbs. This is exemplified by the 20% decline in Baltimore’s population between 1960 and 1970. In addition, the 1960s saw the median age of Southeast residents increase by 46%. According to Durr, by 1973, the Third Congressional District (encompassing Southeast Baltimore) had the highest median age in the state (Durr 2003, 153).

Just as the economy of Southeast Baltimore was undergoing significant changes, so was its political system. By the late 1960s, deindustrialization had significantly reduced the powers of local unions, while a younger generation of workers was developing a growing indifference towards organized labor (Durr 2003, 154). The increasing instability of the waterfront economy pushed many working class young people to look for new solutions to social problems outside of the traditional Southeast political system. One Baltimore native recalled:

Years ago in the neighborhoods of Highlandtown-Canton, almost every block had its own leader. He was a person with contacts in the community. If anyone had a problem, he would go to the “block leader” for help or a “favor.” Usually the leader had a strong interest in his community. His payment was in the form of community standing, prestige and respect. Over the years, however, block leaders have been replaced by political leaders who seem to be more “professionally” oriented. Today many people seem to feel that to get their street light fixed, storm sewer cleaned, alleyway repaired, or light pole replaced they must “know someone” or have a political friend. Many ask why such favors are necessary, when taxes are high and city employees make good salaries (Bauman 1969, 14-15).
This unhappiness with the political system of Southeast Baltimore soon met with the first of two ingredients which would light a fire under the working class cauldron.

First, as briefly mentioned in an earlier chapter, the culture of Southeast Baltimore was changing. Working class whites, “sick and tired of institutions not being responsive to the people they were instituted to serve” and in “anguish at all the class prejudice that was forced upon” them, set out to rediscover their ethnic roots. This movement, alternately known as the “new ethnicity” or “ethnic power” was a backlash against Baltimore’s traditional political structure that had sought assimilation and working class obedience, but was increasingly failing to deliver (Mikulski quoted in Durr 2003, 161). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this new movement manifested itself via the (re)growth of old ethnic organizations such as the Sons of Italy (Durr 2003, 162). With the coming of the road to Southeast Baltimore, however, the final ingredient needed for change was added to the pot. The issue of the road, which for a time polarized neighborhoods, became a focal point around which residents could rally. While working class Fells Point residents had “hooted” down members of The Society who were seeking to stop the highway, the arrival of condemnation ordinances, controversy, and delay with its attendant vandalism and property decay pushed many Southeast Baltimoreans into the anti-highway camp. In these early days, working class residents were loath to turn to The Society for leadership. The preservationists, who wanted to save the “foot of broadway,” as Fells Point was locally known, were snubbed. “The city,” one worker complained, “chased two-thirds of the Poles away from Fells Point to get all these fancy people in” (Rich et al. 1981, 133). As a result, in the spring of 1969, the last major anti-highway
organization, the Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR), which came to represent the working class people of Southeast Baltimore, joined the ranks of The Society, MAD, and RAM in their fight against the road.

It is important to note the interesting dynamic of the “road fight” in southeast Baltimore. Though having generally the same goal, The Society and SCAR found themselves in conflict. The primary factor that divided the groups was one of class. Society members were regarded as suburban meddlers who were pushing out working class locals, while locals, prior to establishing SCAR, had hurled insults at “silk stocking” preservationists and supported their city councilmen’s approval of the road. In the three years between the founding of the Society in 1966 and the establishment of SCAR in 1969, attitudes in the working class neighborhoods of southeast Baltimore had changed. The antipathy between the groups, especially at first, was still ever present. This dynamic, once again, highlights the importance of taking a longitudinal approach to investigating these groups. Both groups developed in a specific historical context that prepared them to pursue similar goals, but to harbor mistrust towards one another.

The Emergence of SCAR

The Southeast Council Against the Road\textsuperscript{4} was established by Gloria Aull, a forty-five year old Canton housewife and part-time bank teller, and Barbara Mikulski, a

\textsuperscript{4} SCAR remains perhaps the least explored of any of the anti-highway organizations involved in the road fight. While the Langsdale Library Archives possesses a “SCAR collection,” this collection in fact comprises records kept by The Society related to SCAR and thus reveal more about the former than the later. The actual documents related to SCAR in this collection are scarce and incomplete. Special Collections Director Thomas Hollowak has stated that much of The Society’s records were destroyed in a fire and that the SCAR portion may have only been partially saved. Another interesting anomaly is that SCAR is often times cited by different names. This author has seen the organization referred to as the Coordinating Council Against the Road, the East Coalition Against the Road, the Southeast Community against the Road, and the Southeast Committee Against the Road.
Highlandtown social worker. The pair had been involved in Catholic social services across Southeast Baltimore (Truelove 1977). Mikulski first became aware of the road’s impact when she spoke with a Rosemont native who said:

That his home was going to be taken; two, his neighborhood was going to be destroyed; and three, because he was black he had no place to go. We asked him what did he want. He said ‘I want to have a roof over my head, I want to send my kids to school, and I want to have a little stake in my community.’ We thought that wasn’t too much for a World War II veteran to ask for (‘Hearings on the Rosemont…” 1969, 62-74).

Aull, a Southeast Baltimore native, put her own views on the record at the Rosemont hearing in 1969. She stated:

Quite frankly I do not want the road because I am a city girl. I don’t like june bugs, I don’t like the songs of birds in the trees. I have never had them, so how can I miss what I have never had. But I do know concrete city streets and human life in the city, and I don’t believe the concrete roadway is conducive to human life in this city. I don’t think we are compatible. Boys, you can build your roads around Baltimore and I say amen, we love you. But don’t come through my neighborhood… (“Hearings on the Rosemont…” 1969, 62-74).

SCAR’s personal battle against the road varied little from the war being fought by MAD. Both organizations used similar tactics, issued similar pamphlets and handouts on the destructive nature of the road, and attended the same highway hearings. SCAR had an organized education campaign featuring flyers, press releases, car signs, banners, television commercials, newspaper advertisements and even a sound truck (truelove, SECO history 1977, 21). WCBM radio hosted a three-hour program involving SCAR members in 1970 (Meeting minutes of the…” 24 June 1970).
SCAR itself grew out of not only anti-road sentiment, but also out of southeast Baltimoreans’ frustrations that their elected representatives were not supporting the interests of their constituents. One SCAR report stated:

A number of people felt that they were not getting enough information about what was being planned [in terms of the highway]. One person stated that he felt as if… “his whole neighborhood was being sacrificed to make it easier for non-city residents to get to work.” People who are trying to do something about the expressway report that those who are responsible for its construction – the Mayor, the City Council (especially councilmen from this area), the city planners, the state and federal highway experts and administrators – don’t seem to care about the opinions of those citizens whose neighborhoods will be effected [sic]. A feeling of being left out – of having no part in the decision to build the expressway – seems to be common. Several people have said that they felt their elected representatives had let them down (Bauman 1969, 13-14).

It was this political disenfranchisement that drove SCAR to fight the road and become the primary organizational committee for the creation of a larger, more powerful and all encompassing organization (Truelove 1977, 22).

This group, known as the Southeast Community Organization (SECO), was created in April 1971 when over a thousand representatives from various Southeast Baltimore community organizations gathered at a “founding congress” (Durr 2003, 162; “History of S.E.C.O…” 1977, 1). The purpose of SECO was to act as a broad social and political organ in support of Southeast Baltimore. Lee Truelove in her history of SECO, writes that the founding of SECO out of “the road fight represented a change in the relationship of Southeast Baltimore and the city government. The road fight was the beginning of the end of the old paternal councilmatic system whereby the resident went directly to his elected councilman to obtain a city service or get a job” (Truelove 1977, 22).
Over the next several years, both SCAR (in a gradually diminishing role) and SECO worked to forge a coalition of Southeast Baltimore organizations that could badger the city into providing services, put pressure on city councilmen and, eventually, elect its own leadership to the City Council. The first of their new leaders was Paul Sarbanes who unseated ardent road supporter George Fallon. Yet, it was Barbara Mikulski who would become the most famous beneficiary of SECO’s support, rising to become a city councilor in 1971, a Congress-woman in 1976 and a U.S. Senator in 1987. As has been briefly discussed in a previous chapter, Mikulski carried her anti-road sentiments with her and eventually supported the works of MAD and SECO from within both the city and federal government. Durr writes that “both Mikulski and Sarbanes established their careers independently of the city’s old political clubs. Instead, they built their electoral bases largely on the invigorated neighborhood groups emerging from the road fight” (Durr 2003, 159). Aside from electing its own representatives, SECO fought to repair Southeast Baltimore’s deteriorating infrastructure, rein in absentee landlordism, establish a medical clinic in nearby O’Donnell Heights and fund social programs for youth and the poor (“History of S.E.C.O…” 1977). SECO eventually became, in essence, the social and political mouthpiece of Southeast Baltimore.5

Conclusions

The failure of the road in Southeast Baltimore owes much to the efforts of The Society, SCAR and SECO. The Society’s actions in seeking protection under the National Historic Preservation Act stalled the plans of highway planners. The Society’s

5 For more on SECO, especially early suspicion and mistrust of the group, see Kenneth Durr’s excellent Behind the Backlash : White Working-Class Politics in Baltimore, 1940-1980, 161-165.
deeply involved membership, whose deep pockets bought publicity and political clout, were instrumental in challenging the city. While their challenge did extend into the courtroom, The Society was able to challenge the city by promoting the redevelopment of Fells Point and Federal Hill, converting them from crumbling waterfront to nautical tourist attractions. While the animosity of blue-collar Baltimoreans to these suburbanite preservationists helped SCAR to coalesce, it was the crisis of leadership that developed in southeast Baltimore due to the road fight that ultimately gave birth to SCAR. The inability of southeast Baltimore’s councilmembers to clean up the streets and provide basic social services angered local residents. Initially supportive of the road because it meant a city buyout, residents of Canton, Highlandtown, and Fells Point quickly joined the anti-highway crowd when the deleterious effects of condemnation ordinances became clear. While the highway would mean a buyout for some, for others it meant falling property values and vandalism of city-owned properties. The result was the development of Barbara Mikulski’s “new ethnicity,” and the establishment of SECO to not only fight the road, but to take back the City Council. Importantly, it was the ability of these organizations to “jump scales” and maneuver outside the limits of control established by local politicians and planners that made both The Society and SCAR successful. Both of these groups challenged the road in ways that mirrored the efforts of MAD. Yet, The Society and SCAR were also able to effectively confront the road in court, challenge pro-road politicians and use federal policy to create formidable barriers to highway construction. It was the combination of these efforts that protected Southeast Baltimore from the “concrete monster” and also made pro-highway political sentiments untenable.
“We live in the 1300 block of Franklin Street. This is a part of the great national highway [U.S. Route 40] that extends from coast to coast. We are proud of our one block of this highway. Nearly all of the homes have flowers in gay colored pots on the front. Just look at them as you drive by.”

“Someone has ‘planted’ some blue plastic flowers around a tree on Lauretta Avenue, perhaps the last vestige of the kind of loving care that this old street once received. For the most part, though, the families that used to polish their rowhouses’ marble steps and the kids who used to skate down safe and narrow streets have long since moved away. But next month, they’ll get back together for a picnic. They’ll eat; they’ll catch up; They’ll remember the old West Baltimore neighborhood that many of them left more than 30 years ago. They just won’t go anywhere near it. ‘Oh no!’ said Clementine Holmes Giles, 63, one of the organizers of the reunion. ‘It’s horrible down there now.’

CHAPTER EIGHT: “IT WAS A HAVEN OF SORTS:” DISPLACEMENT AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF HARLEM PARK

In the preface of Mark Gornik’s *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*, LaVerne Stokes writes about the West Baltimore community that she was raised in:

[It] was an exciting place for a little girl growing up in the 1950s and early ‘60s. The streets were teeming with neighbors; the corner stores were run by friendly shopowners; nearby Pennsylvania Avenue was vibrant with jazz clubs, movie houses, and seemingly every variety of shopping; and active churches were packed every Sunday. There were no vacant homes, and jobs, while certainly not high-paying for black workers, were available. I never knew we were “poor.” We never had much money or many material possessions, but tight-knit extended families, a strong sense of community, a depth of faith in God and the joy of life were abundant (2002, xii).

In a 2008 interview with Ta-Nehisi Coates about his memoir on life in West Baltimore during the 1980s, National Public Radio’s Neal Conan called West Baltimore the “archetype of black inner city America.” It was, according to Conan, an area “plagued by murders, gangs, crack, prostitution and AIDS” (Talk of the Nation 2008).
The preceding quotes represent two eras in the 20th century experience of West Baltimore and, in the case of this study, the neighborhood of Harlem Park. These two eras, one of community cohesion tied to slow decline and one of poverty, drug abuse and violence tied to community frustration and hopelessness, are divided by a stark line in time. This line is represented by the years 1966 to 1968. In 1966, the city of Baltimore passed the ordinance that condemned Harlem Park’s Franklin-Mulberry corridor and started a chain of events that would see the destruction of 971 homes and the displacement of hundreds of families. The damage that this event wrought on a community already weakened by decades of overcrowding would be exacerbated in 1968 when serious civil disturbances wracked Baltimore in the aftermath of the Martin Luther King assassination. While earlier chapters in this thesis dealt with community activism, highway planning policy and decision making on the part of the city, this chapter’s focus rests on the experiences of those whose lives were intersected by the events of 1966-1968. While other authors have tackled Baltimore’s highway development schemes and the freeway revolt these efforts precipitated, few have examined how the lives of those who were displaced were affected by the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Segmented into three parts, this chapter first examines Harlem Park in the decades between 1940 and 1968. The second section examines the Harlem Park of the present that was born out of the deindustrialization and displacements that marked Harlem Park in the late 1960s. The third section deals specifically with the experiences of those who were displaced by the construction of the failed I-170 project. This section examines a seriously understudied area. Specifically, the issue of where displaced residents resettled
and how their lives were impacted by Baltimore’s east-west highway program are addressed.

Harlem Park: 1900-1968

Between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War II, West Baltimore, an area of 175 city blocks, became the primary zone of African-American residence in Baltimore. Originally an area of German settlement, African-Americans began to purchase homes along the periphery of the white community as early as 1900. By 1904, over half of Baltimore’s African-American community was settled in this area. Many African-Americans, who worked in the households of local West Baltimore whites, established their homes in the alleys between the area’s hundreds of working class residences. As this period of transition continued, middle-class African-Americans, doctors, educators and government employees began to purchase homes as white residents left the area for new homes in the north of the city and newly constructed suburbs such as Edmondson Village (Orser 1994; Ryon 1993).

By 1940, West Baltimore was predominantly African-American. In the neighborhood of Harlem Park, like many neighborhoods in Baltimore, the primary dwelling type was the brick row house. These multi-story structures, joined side by side, housed single working class families. Harold A. McDougall, author of *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community Development*, perhaps one of the best works yet written on community life in African-American Baltimore, writes that Harlem Park “was characterized by large, gracious mansions (many of which have been cut up into kitchenette apartments) as well as large, single-family, three story row houses that are
still quite elegant” (1993, 81). At this time, the area was well cared for. During the 1930s, the *Baltimore Afro-American* established a “clean block campaign,” the goal of which was to tidy up yards, alleys and houses. Prizes were awarded for the cleanest blocks and hundreds of people, most of whom were children, participated. The result in West Baltimore was lovingly landscaped yards, hundreds of flowering window boxes, neighborhood benches and newly shined marble steps in the front of each row house (a widespread Baltimore tradition). To be sure, the west side neighborhoods were becoming more crowded and many structures were in need of serious rehabilitation. Race ordinances and later, restrictive covenants prevented the spread of the growing African-American population. This problem, however, was compounded as the United States geared up for World War II.

The insatiable demand for war-time workers drew thousands upon thousands of African-Americans from the south to the north’s military industry. This, the earliest moments of the Second Great Migration, meant a wholesale reorganization of life in West Baltimore. One author writes “defense workers and their families crowded alley and main-street houses alike in the 1940s with basements, garages, hallways and even boiler rooms converted to makeshift bedrooms” (Ryon 1993, 118). The row houses of Harlem Park, which had originally housed individual families, were divided and then subdivided again. Alley homes, much like those of earlier African-American residents, sprang up anew. Renters became increasingly common as absentee landlords swooped in to purchase properties. Homeownership declined. The war ended in 1945 and “was greeted with sighs of relief for it was commonly felt that the ‘old days’ would return”
The end of the war, however, brought no relief as thousands continued to move from south to north. One 1958 report recalled that “by the same token the overcrowded housing brought overcrowded schools, parks and playgrounds, as well as ever increasing pressure on other public facilities and services – police, fire and sanitation” (Frank 1958, 4).

By 1957, the 44-block area of Harlem Park was composed primarily of renters. Only 30% of residents owned their own homes. A report from that year stated:

There is scattered commercial and business use in the area. In some sections houses are badly dilapidated; in some sections overcrowding exists. Traffic and parking constitute problems; there are insufficient school and recreation facilities. However, much of the housing is structurally sound (Frank 1957, 1).

In truth, this report probably downplays the serious disinvestment that the area was undergoing. Aside from being dramatically stressed by the influx of thousands of new residents, the Harlem Park area had also been targeted by numerous plans, as we have already read, as a route for the east-west expressway. The result of myriad plans that the city put forth from the 1944 Mose plan to the so called “1957 plan” helped fuel the area’s decline as absentee landlords as well as homeowners began to ignore upkeep on their properties.

The city itself was cognizant of this disinvestment and the Harlem Park area became the city’s first urban renewal project under the newly established 1949 and 1954 Housing Acts which provided federal funding for “slum clearance.” The result of this, as has been previously discussed, was the removal of alley homes, the rehabilitation of many badly deteriorated structures, the establishment of Harlem Park’s numerous pocket
parks, the installation of street lighting and the planting of over nine-hundred street trees.

In addition, Harlem Junior High, with room for 2,160 students, and Harlem Elementary with room for 750, opened for classes in 1963 (Ryon 1993, 123).

What city reports and urban renewal plans cannot adequately account for is the lively community that was post-war Harlem Park. One author writes:

One could sit on freshly washed marble steps greeting all who passed by with friendship, respect, and neighborly concern. During this time, the first black woman to own a home in Baltimore bought one in this community. In the 1950s, the bustling community of West Baltimore provided a home to Baltimore’s first burgeoning black middle-class… This was a vibrant community. There were stores on every corner and the community had all of the social and economic services they needed. Residents recall that Morgan and Coppin State Universities opened their doors in spaces above the storefronts in this West Baltimore community… This was a community capable of expressing its tastes and values. The community understood how to maneuver around the social and economic barriers in Jim-Crow Baltimore to maintain its status (Milburn 2007, 7).

Images of the area as printed in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, as well as the meeting minutes of the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council give lie to the assertion that this area was a badly degraded slum.
While the area had seen better days, it was a central hearth of African-American society in postwar Baltimore. African-American churches and community organizations provided solid community leadership. Ryon, in his history of West Baltimore, writes:

Postwar demographic shifts brought in more children, with African-American churches and civic organizations taking the initiative for neighborhood betterment and converting older spaces to new uses, especially for the young. St. James Episcopal launched a settlement house with classes and athletics, the genesis of the Lafayette Square Community Center. The Northwest Improvement Center agitated for electric lighting along Edmondson, and tot space in staid Harlem Park. The Harlem Bears neighborhood football team won citywide fame during the 1950s (1993, 118).

Remembering his old neighborhood one resident recalled “we used to sit on the front marble steps, and everybody got along. It was like we lived in little villages” (Maemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A). Another resident remembered “everybody knew everybody there. Everyone knew whose child you were. That was when neighborhoods were truly neighborhoods” (Marbella 2007, B1).
As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s Baltimore’s west side neighborhoods, including Harlem Park, began to change. In 1960 and 1961 the first truly developed plans for the east-west expressway were put forth. The knowledge of impending condemnations combined with the effects of deindustrialization took a toll on Harlem Park. An older area of the city even before becoming majority African-American during the 1930s, the overcrowding of the war years and the destruction of alley homes during the urban renewal projects of the 1950s strained Harlem Park’s ability to take in new residents. Despite the erection of nearby low-income residences such as McCulloh and Gilmor Homes and later high-rise housing projects, Murphy Homes and Lafayette Courts, the infrastructure of Harlem Park was badly strained. The same was true of many neighborhoods in West Baltimore. The nearby neighborhood of Upton, once the wealthiest African-American community in the United States, also suffered conditions similar to those that existed in Harlem Park. One Upton resident stated:

Upton just burst at the seams. It used to be a delightful neighborhood, achievers in every area. Good conduct, participation in church life, community uplift, great contacts. Even when times were hard, like during the Depression, the people were good. People left their doors open, they reported to parents when kids misbehaved. Every child was everyone’s child (quoted in McDougall 1993, 54).

As the city began to feel the bite of deindustrialization and “white flight” continued to send Caucasian residents fleeing for the suburbs, city services in Harlem Park began to suffer. The plight of the neighborhood was not helped when the city condemned the blocks in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in 1966. By the late 1960s, 971 homes had been demolished and hundreds of families had been forced to evacuate as
chain link fences and vacant weedy lots replaced white washed window boxes and newly scrubbed marble steps.

The Baltimore Riots

On Thursday April 4, 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee. That night isolated fires and vandalism occurred in scattered parts of Baltimore, but the following day was without incident. In Detroit and Washington, D.C. angry crowds were confronting police officers armed with tear gas and water hoses. The first reports of serious civil disturbance flashed across Baltimore’s police radios at 5:00 PM on April 6th when a group of individuals began smashing storefront windows in the 400 block of Gay Street on the city’s east side. By midnight violence had spread north along Gay Street and buildings on adjacent blocks were on fire. By the end the first day, Governor Spiro Agnew deployed the National Guard and established an 11 PM to 6 AM curfew. A lull in the violence fell over Baltimore’s streets during the early morning of April 7th, but this was to be the day’s only respite. The University of Baltimore’s “Baltimore ’68: Riots and Rebirth Project” provides a concise summary of the second day:

Fires, looting large-scale disorderly crowds. Sunday's police reports include 400 episodes of looting, for a two-day total of 600. A 40-block swath of the east and west mid sections of the city have been impacted by rioting. More than 700 businesses have been robbed. Looting increases, while fires decrease from Saturday. The riot area comprises 1,000 square blocks, bounded roughly by 25th St. on the north, Poplar Grove St. on the west, Baltimore St. on the south, and Broadway on the east. For the first time since railroad strikes in the 1870s, Baltimore is patrolled by federal troops. By evening, the force equals more than 9,000 soldiers. There are 300 injured, 420 fires, 550 cases of looting, and 1,350 arrested. A hit-and-run pattern of looting means that there are few clashes
between looters and troops. Amidst the damage in riot areas, streets are filled with broken glass (“Baltimore ’68 events timeline…” 2008).

Despite widespread looting and numerous fires, Harlem Park remained largely outside the impacted areas. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, there were only two incidents of looting in the neighborhood. The majority of looting remained to the north along North Avenue, while the majority of fires were still occurring on the city’s east side. The third day of the disturbance, however, saw considerable looting along Edmondson Avenue in Harlem Park. According to the “Baltimore ’68 project” firebombing occurred along the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. By the end of the day, 10,848 troops were deployed in the city and firefighters had battled over 900 fires. During the final day, disturbances on the city’s west side were isolated to a roughly triangular area encompassing the blocks of Harlem Park.

Harlem Park Today

The 1968 Baltimore riots mark a stark turning point in the 20th century experience of West Baltimore. In the aftermath of the riots, “white flight” increased dramatically and the city’s west side became almost exclusively African-American. One former resident recalled that after the riots “it was almost like a permanent wall went up” between city and suburbs (Michael 2008). Large sections of Edmondson Avenue through Harlem Park westward to Edmondson Village were devastated by looting and fires. Many of these areas have not yet recovered. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, homes and businesses have long since been replaced by “abandoned houses with collapsed roofs, vacant lots overrun with trash and weeds, and residents desperate for something better” (Kiehl 2008, B1). The total cost of the disturbance was over 5,000 arrests, seven deaths and damages
in excess of twelve million dollars. The long-term costs of those few days in April are harder to quantify.

Today, Harlem Park, and West Baltimore in general, is a landscape of boarded up, abandoned buildings. Many of these boarded up structures, adorned with the square, block lettered stencil “assistance for trapped animal call 311” sit across the thirty foot strip of grass that separates Franklin Street from the “Highway to Nowhere.”

Figure 25: Present day. Boarded up row houses in the 600 block of Fulton Street one block north of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. Photograph by Cham Green.
Once a community of over 22,000 residents, only 4,720 remain today (Frank 1957, 1; Baltimore City Department of Planning 2000). According to Ryon, the population of Harlem Park fell fifty-percent between 1950 and 1970 (1993, 123). One author has called the 1993 17% homeownership rate of Harlem Park “impressive” in comparison to the rest of West Baltimore (McDougal 1993, 83). To the north of Harlem Park, the neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester has one of the highest crime rates in the city. In 2007, this neighborhood, which residents refer to as “zombietown,” ranked in the “top ten most murderous neighborhoods” according to the *Baltimore City Paper* (2008).

In the early 1990s, McDougal wrote:

The social statistics and patterns of Harlem Park, however, are bleak. Closer than other West Side neighborhoods to the city core from which blacks originally migrated, Harlem Park is the worst of the four. It is the only one, for example, which showed an increase in the crime rate (robberies, burglaries, and larcenies account for most of the increase). Crime seems most severe in a two-square-block area in the southern part of the neighborhood, bounded by Franklin and Calhoun Streets and Edmondson and Carrollton Avenues on the southern edge of the neighborhood, across from the Murphy Homes and [the now demolished] Lafayette Courts public housing projects (1993, 83).

This area, on the eastern side of the neighborhood lies within sight of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Drugs and alcohol abuse are serious problems as is gang violence. In a 1999 *Baltimore Sun* article, reporter Jim Haner described how one of Baltimore’s most notorious gang members was developing an “empire” of rental properties across West Baltimore. Haner writes, “beset by caravans of suburban drug buyers, addicted squatters and gun-wielding enforcers, once-picturesque enclaves of working-class families have disintegrated, leaving behind blocks of empty houses that become epicenters of crime in the region” (1999). On Harlem Park’s western edge, in the
2000 block of Edmondson Avenue, “narcotics dealers traded property deeds like baseball cards for two decades, leaving in ruin a street once famed for its brand name ‘Cronick’ heroin” (Haner 1999). While Haner puts a dramatic spin on tragic circumstances, statistics collected by the Baltimore City Department of Planning reveal the plight of Harlem Park in hard, uncompromising numbers. According to the 2000 census, 1,270 homes or 41% of the total homes in Harlem Park stand vacant. Seventy-eight percent of occupied homes are rentals with a median monthly rent of $373 ($498 Baltimore City median rent). Only 200 homes are occupied by residents who moved into the area prior to 1969. A full 67% of resident earn less than $25,000 per year (43% Baltimore City average). Forty-nine percent of homes were constructed prior to 1940 and the average value of residential property in the area is less than fifty-thousand dollars. Sixty-two percent of residents lack access to automobiles (Baltimore City Department of Planning 2000). According to Haner, one in four residents is addicted to drugs or alcohol and one in two residents is a high-school dropout (Haner 1999).

In his book *Spaces of Hope* David Harvey writes:

Baltimore is, for the most part, a mess. Not the kind of enchanting mess that makes cities such interesting places to explore, but an awful mess. And it seems much worse now than when I first knew it in 1969. Or perhaps it is in the same old mess except that many then believed they could do something about it. Now the problems seem intractable” (Harvey 2000, 133).

For many residents of Harlem Park and, in particular, for resident who remember the neighborhood’s better days, the present “mess” was the doing of the city. As previously discussed, promises of “joint development” went largely unfulfilled and in the aftermath of the I-170 debacle it seemed like city government just wanted to forget. Jelile
Ogundele, the director of the St. Pius V Housing Committee, a church-based neighborhood development organization, remarked in 1993 that:

The history of the neighborhood is very sad in that respect. The Harlem Park Urban Renewal Plan hasn’t been touched in thirty years since it was first adopted. Neighborhood people feel the city just doesn’t care. There is a sense of anger, a sense of distrust of the system. People’s morale is very low, there’s a lot of apathy. You have sporadic protests, especially to drugs and crime, but they die out quickly (quoted in McDougall 1993, 82).

One former resident, 77-year old Lena Boone opined of the I-170 project, “what a waste – a waste of money and a waste of good solid homes” (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A). It is telling that in Mark Miller’s Baltimore Transitions, a work with over two hundred photographs of Baltimore depicting the city as it was “then” and as it is “now,” that not a single photograph is included of the Harlem Park neighborhood or the “Highway to Nowhere” (1999). Incredibly, one of the largest physical transformations of the city is left entirely out of this work. It seems to have been forgotten.

The city, however, has not forgotten about the “Highway to Nowhere” and presently there are plans to build a new mass transit system through the area, but many residents are fearful of what may happen. Donald Halligan, the assistant director of planning for the Maryland Department of Transportation, stated “I think there is a lot of fear. The highway to nowhere is a living example of that. Obviously, they [residents] have a reason to be distrustful” (Reddy 2007, 1A). In large part because of the “Highway to Nowhere” “Harlem Park people are bitter and suspicious of the ‘powers that be.’ No one wants to be taken advantage of, some do not even want to participate” (McDougall 1993, 86).
While the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere” and the 1968 riots form a convenient dividing line between a community in decline and a community in utter disarray, these two events should largely be viewed as benchmarks. While the I-170 project helped to destabilize a community already damaged by overcrowding, property decay and deindustrialization, the 1968 riots were just a symptom of these pre-existing conditions. To be clear, neither the development of I-170 nor the riots pushed Harlem Park from working class community to urban ghetto. This trend, already underway before either of these two events, was simply exacerbated. As a result, it is difficult if not impossible to disaggregate the impact that the construction of I-170 had on Harlem Park from the impact of deindustrialization as a whole. There is one segment of that community, however, who was directly impacted by the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” This group, many of whom are today over the age of seventy, are the displaced.

In the fall of 2003, five friends gathered to tour a neighborhood that no long exists. The group, all of whom once called the square block bounded by the 400 blocks of Monroe and Payson and the 1900 blocks of Franklin and Mulberry home, were displaced in 1968 by the construction of the I-170 project. The neighborhood of their childhoods is today an unused section of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Where their homes once stood is the gaping hole of the road, six lanes divided by an unkempt grass median. A lonely green road placard stands vigil over an area in which close to seventy families once made their homes.
A Baltimore Sun article chronicled the group’s neighborhood tour and also the reunion that they hosted that evening (Willis 2003a). Alton West, one of the originators of the plan for a neighborhood reunion and a former superintendent of housing in West Baltimore, stated “we’re doing this because of the friendship, the love. We need to get back together. That’s all I’ve been hearing from people since we started this thing, that they still think about those days” (Willis 2003a). The “Old Neighborhood Gang Reunion,” as it was called, attracted residents, many in their fifties and sixties from all across Baltimore. One attendee even came from New Jersey. As the night went on residents were able to reminisce about times gone by and old friends while playing chess, bid whist and pinochle. More about catching up than remembering the destruction of their former homes, the reunion, according to Mr. Reggie Green, was a chance “to see my old buddies and talk about old times and listen to the old tunes. I want to have a few drinks, play some cards, have fun like we used to when we were younger” (Willis 2003a). Despite the joy of the reunion, a palpable sense of loss still hangs over that core group of friends even forty-one years after being forced to move. In 2003, Mr. West stated that moving “was like going to the funeral of a loved one… you just don’t want to go” (Willis 2003a). This sentiment still remained when I interviewed residents in 2009.

The Impact of the Road

Despite hundreds of newspaper articles, numerous planning documents and a variety of scholarly works which deal with the I-170 project, little has been said about the experiences of those displaced from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. The interviews conducted for this thesis were meant to remedy this dearth of information. As far as this
author knows, only two official sources of information exist detailing displacement in the city of Baltimore for the period of highway building. The first report written in 1965 provides information on displacement caused by urban renewal. It provides information on the characteristics of displaced and other statistical data. It does not, however, have figures for displacement caused due to highway construction (Hartman et al. 1965). The second and more helpful report was written by James Rubenstein of Miami University and Robert Ferguson of the Relocation Division of Baltimore’s Department of Housing sometime during the late 1970s. This undated report is entitled “the impact of relocation activities.”

According to the report, some 3,170 families were displaced from their residences by highway construction in Baltimore between 1965 and 1975 (Rubenstein undated, 8). Of West Baltimore, the report states that 553 families were displaced from the neighborhood of Harlem Park, while a further 1,402 families were relocated due to the construction of I-170. Interpreting these numbers, however, remains difficult. The total displacement number for the I-170 project accounts for both those displaced from Rosemont as well as those replaced from Harlem Park. Despite the fact that I-170 runs through Harlem Park, a separate number is used to represent displacements for that neighborhood. Presumably those displacements listed as from “Harlem Park” as opposed to “I-170” represent displacements not associated with highway construction. This, however, is never clarified. In addition, the report does not provide an accurate count of the total number of persons displaced, nor does it address the problem of accurately

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6 This document was forwarded to me by another researcher and while it is identified as being stored at the Langsdale Library, I have been unable to determine the specific collection from which this document comes. See my references cited section for more information.
cataloguing displacement among renters. According to one interviewee, rental properties were often sold to the city prior to the eviction of the tenants by their landlord. The result was a situation in which tenants had to make a rapid departure from the area in search of new homes. This undoubtedly complicates any attempt at reaching an accurate total of those displaced by the highway. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, 971 homes were destroyed in the Harlem Park area alone (Dilts 1971).

According to Rubenstein and Ferguson:

> Around fifty per cent of the displacees moved to a new housing unit within ½ mile of the project. Another 25 per cent move between ½ and 1 ½ mile from the project. Less than 5 per cent of the displaced families ventured beyond the borders of Baltimore City to suburban jurisdictions or outside the SMSA [standard metropolitan statistical area] altogether (undated, 11).

In West Baltimore, this formula, however, did not exactly apply. According to the report, fifty-seven percent of residents relocated within:

> A two-square mile area bounded by North Ave., Madison Ave., Baltimore St., and Pulaski St., the historic core of the black community in West Baltimore... Around 7 per cent of the displacees moved towards the east, either into the East Baltimore community or the York Rd. corridor. Around half of these people moved into public housing especially Lafayette Courts [housing project], The Broadway, West 20, and Somerset Homes (undated, 14).

Neither of these formulas, however, accurately represent the displacement pattern for residents who were interviewed for this thesis. All of the residents interviewed moved to houses that were more than a half mile from their former residences. Two residents moved between .85 and 1 mile from their former homes. Only two settled in what the report calls the “historic core” of Baltimore’s African-American community. One settled
in East Baltimore and one settled in the Gwynns Falls area. The average distance that interviewees were displaced was approximately 1.77 miles.

The report also provides a demographic profile of those being displaced. According to Rubenstein and Ferguson, the vast majority (85%) of residents who were displaced were African-American. The average income of displaced families was approximately $5,500 or some $3,300 dollars less than the city’s median income of $8,815. Only ten percent of those forced to relocate did so from homes they themselves owned and, interestingly, only half of the displaced were family households (Rubenstein and Ferguson undated, 10). This last stands in marked contrast to the experiences of those interviewed who recalled the displacement of numerous families in the proximity of their neighborhood. Only one of those interviewed was a renter, while the other two interviewee’s families owned their own homes. One interviewee’s family had only owned their home for a period of two to three years before being displaced. Previously, this family had rented the home for over a decade. West recalled:

And, you know, I’ve talked to a lot of people because I went to junior high or what is now middle school and elementary school with a lot of people who lived maybe eight, nine, ten blocks east of me. And a lot them were in rented houses and then you had a landlord telling you ‘well, I’ve sold the building. You’ll have to move by…’ And that is what was going on in a lot of places. In the area that I was in, I would say starting probably at Fulton Avenue, maybe even Mount Street which was two blocks east, I would say you had a lot of homeownership. You get up to Fulton and Monroe and you find probably about 90% of those houses were homeowned.

Clearly, rates of homeownership varied widely across the city. A report from 1957 indicates that Harlem Park’s homeownership rate was approximately thirty percent. During the intervening years and especially in the aftermath of intense highway planning
between 1960 and the issuance of the condemnation ordinance for Harlem Park in 1966 homeownership may have declined as families voluntarily relocated to other areas.

A significant point of contention for those displaced from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor was the money paid to absentee-owners and homeowners for their properties. A former resident of N. Stricker Street, Alvin Franklin recalled that the city paid him $4,800 dollars for his home in 1966. This was not enough to cover the $6,900 dollars that the home he relocated into cost. “It makes me mad,” Franklin stated, “because I never got the money that I was supposed to get…. [The city] just told me to get out” (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A). Mr. West said that his grandparents were given only a “pittance” for their home on Monroe Street. The condemnations, according to Mr. West, did not bring about financial disaster or ruin for his family. His grandparents:

Had a little bit of money in the bank… we weren’t rich by a long stretch, but they were savers. But then you’re depleting your resources over something this feckless… but no, there were some things we had to buy in the way of moving and that sort of thing and, you know, but like I said, I would say it depleted the savings somewhat but it didn’t, you know, it didn’t destroy the savings.

Ms. Rochelle Davis, another organizer of the “Old Neighborhood Gang Reunion,” recalled that “my grandmother did not want to sell to the city, but it got to the point where there was hardly anyone else on the block, and she just sort of gave in” (Willis 2003, 1A). Similarly, Robert Tolson recalled that his mother “didn’t think the compensation that they were giving her, she didn’t think it was enough so she waited and waited. I think… she got more than the average person because she waited so long… almost the last person to move from the block.
Rubenstein and Ferguson’s report provides an interesting glimpse into the compensation provided to displaced residents which is worth quoting at length.

According to their report:

All families who had been in occupancy for ninety days prior to the acquisition of the property by the City are eligible to receive financial benefits. Since 1970 [author’s emphasis] the Federal government has required all eligible individuals to receive up to $300 for moving expenses and up to $4,000 in “replacement housing payment” (RHP) to rent a new home. Homeowners receive up to $15,000 to purchase a new home, in addition to the payment for acquiring the old home. Absentee owners do not receive a replacement housing payment, of course, but do receive the purchase price of the house. The RHP is designed to eliminate the adverse financial impact of moving into a more expensive home by providing the difference between the old rent and new for four years or the difference between the value of the old house and the purchase price of the new. Finally, everyone receives a $200 “dislocation allowance” regardless of the characteristics of the dwelling unit. Total payments have averaged around $2,500 to tenants and $15,000 to homeowners. Prior to 1970 benefits were less generous, with many families ineligible [author’s emphasis] (undated, 2-3).

To begin, it is interesting to note that the financial compensation scheme listed above applied to only those being displaced from 1970 onwards. The vast majority of those displaced by the “Highway to Nowhere” were forced to relocate between 1966 and 1968 and thus would apparently have received far less compensation. As discussed earlier in this thesis, one of the Relocation Action Movement’s (RAM) goals was to insure just compensation for those being displaced in the form of a “replacement value” payment equal to the cost of a new home. RAM complained of “victimization” due to the “ridiculously low prices” being offered by the city for condemned homes. The group argued that the low prices offered by the city “cannot indicate the loss that a man undergoes after purchasing a house in 1948 for $6,500 and skimping and slaving for 20
years to make the mortgage only to have the state offer a pitiful $4,000 for it in 1968”

(“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 4). RAM declared

What do these figures mean in children deprived of education, in “dreams deferred,” in the quickening erosion of the belief that America is a land of opportunity? By stealing our homes you also steal our faith in America… In addition to the owner-occupants, those of us who are tenants also suffer. We do not receive an adequate amount of money to move and the cost of searching for new and decent homes is a lost expense to us (“Position Statement, RAM…” 1968, 4).

Eventually, RAM was able to have the “replacement value” system adopted along with a $5,000 subsidy to provide for relocation costs. This hard-won system is not mentioned in Rubenstein and Ferguson’s report. It is unclear exactly how this early system of compensation worked or if, in fact, many were able to participate in it. None of those interviewed for this thesis believed that their parents or grandparents received sufficient compensation for their homes. According to Mr. West, the financial pressures of relocation, although not devastating, were “most distressing” for his grandparents. It is clear, however, that some financial assistance was available to those in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor as Mr. West mentioned that the city of Baltimore paid for the moving van to relocate their possessions to their new home in the city’s north-western section.

Within the Franklin-Mulberry corridor sixty-two businesses were demolished by highway construction (Dilts 1971). The employees of these businesses, many of whom were probably local corridor residents, were not only forced to move, but also to find new opportunities for work. That employment displacement occurred is an undisputed fact. Within the very small pool of interviewees for this thesis, however, none of their family
members faced unemployment as a result of road building. Mr. West’s grandfather, however, had to adopt new methods to reach his work place.

My grandfather worked another couple of years [after being displaced]. He had to basically seek, my grandfather didn’t drive, so he then had to seek transportation with a coworker, who lived not too far from us… It was probably an eight, nine mile drive. We were probably eight to ten miles from his workplace at that point in time… [prior to relocating] my grandfather was the sort of guy who’d wake up 3:30, 4:00 in the morning, fix coffee, his breakfast, and he’d leave and walk about two and a half miles to work…

While not a major hardship, this type of change represented a disruption to a routine which had been carried out for years prior to relocating.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that former Franklin-Mulberry corridor homeowners and tenants will be able to share their stories. Forty-one years have elapsed since the construction of “the road” and many former adult residents are now quite elderly. Even some who were children in the area, such as Anthony Speight, an originator of the “Old Neighborhood Gang Reunion” have passed away. As a result, it is difficult to describe the feelings of the area’s long-term residents and to document how relocation affected their lives. The interviewees for this thesis were exclusively adolescents and young adults during the time of displacement. Consequently, this thesis more accurately represents their thoughts and feelings as opposed to their parents and grandparents. While less concerned over financial matters, issues of employment and homeownership, the experiences of these young adults can still provide a glimpse into the impact of the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.”

The most dramatic effect of relocation for these young adults was the loss of both friends and community. Unlike their parents who could measure loss in financial terms,
the losses that young adults experienced were more intangible. A significant source of pain was the changes that former residents saw in the character of the area in which their neighborhood had been situated.

For Alton West, a nineteen year old Morgan State University sophomore at the time of relocation, becoming accustomed to a new neighborhood was troublesome and difficult. He stated:

I’m not going to say that it was serious stress, but it was just kind of a rough time, you know. Something you’d been looking at practically all your life, a neighborhood, a house, friends and… you know, just adapting to a new neighborhood that was the biggest challenge to me.

Similarly, when asked about his parents’ reaction to relocation, Tolson stated:

I can say, they were as upset as I was, because we had to move from the neighborhood… Like I said, they were some of the last people, neighbors, to move because the first offer from the city to buy the house they didn’t think was sufficient. So they waited, waited and waited and until they got a price that was, uh, better for them as far as… the offer was better than the offers they [the city] previously gave. I’ll just say, how should I put it, it wasn’t fun for them. Because, like I said, they’d lived there for a long time and it disrupted the whole neighborhood. And they were used to there, like they had been there for twenty-something years, 25 years, and they just had to up and move and find a new location, a new house and so forth and so on. They were more disturbed than I was, even though I was disturbed because the neighborhood was gone, and the neighborhood friends we had for twenty-something years, you know, were disrupted.

Despite the relocation, West and his friends, many of whom would help to create the “Old Neighborhood Gang Reunion” and the social club that evolved from it, kept in touch throughout the years. In the early days, they returned to the area where their neighborhood had been to visit friends who lived outside the condemned blocks. West remembered:
There were still a few people who were there after we moved and sure, I would come down and play a little basketball for a while, you know, and maybe just hangout on somebody’s porch for a little bit, and, you know, and then I was gone. You know, it just dawns on you that you can’t go up the street and into the backyard and into the kitchen now… yeah, it was different, you know, visiting… but after everybody had moved, we’d even come down and play a little softball on the field we used to play at and basketball… that sort of thing… we did that even into adulthood. I think I was about 21 the last time we got together. We called around, ‘look, let’s meet down at so and soes on Saturday, we’ll be there at nine or we’ll be there at ten.’ We used to do a football game every Thanksgiving. We called it the Dustbowl and we even did that for a couple of years… You know, a little… just a little football game to work up the appetite right before you go in and watch football and eat your dinner. So yeah, we hung on for as long as we could. So after a while it was, like I said, just… It was a ghost-town after that.

He also recalled the days after his block was finally demolished:

Well, the last time, yeah, you could see that the houses were pretty much gone. So, you know, that was it… I think we were just clinging on or hanging on to those memories, but when you see it’s gone… and that’s exactly what hit us… “it’s not there any more.” We were to the Saratoga Street side, they had a little basketball court there and when you looked across the street you just didn’t see anything.

Some of the strongest memories recalled were those of playing sports and being outdoors. A unique feature of Harlem Park, indeed a feature established by the urban renewal programs of the 1950s, was the availability of some twenty-nine pocket parks throughout the neighborhood. These parks were erected in the center of the blocks, out of view of the main streets, and offered residents numerous, clean and relatively private refuges. As both Franklin and Mulberry Streets were multi-lane, high-traffic, high-speed streets, these “mini-parks,” which were universally known as the “park-out-the-back” or the “out-back,” offered safe places for children and community members to congregate. West recalled time spent in the parks:
The blocks were kept clean, people had gardens, we had what we called a park in the rear, we were bounded by a park. We played football, baseball… otherwise some evenings we’d just go into the yard, back porch or something and just kick it around a little bit.

According to West, community members established gardens in these spaces and erected benches to sit on. In some places playgrounds were established with basketball hoops, climbing gyms and other apparatus. One 1964 article recounted that “when gamblers invaded an inner-block park meant for children, ten Harlem Parkers organized to represent 300 angry families” (Anson 1964). The gamblers were promptly expelled.

Figure 26: Unidentified Baltimore inner-block park, circa 1969. From the Commission on Governmental Efficiency and Economy, Inc report “City Park Maintenance,” October 1969.
However they were known, as “mini-parks,” “parks-out-the-back” or as “inner-block parks,” these green spaces became from their inception an integral component of life in Harlem Park. The lack of other recreational facilities, the absence of youth programs and the presence of the high-traffic streets of Franklin and Mulberry made these spaces even more important for the young people growing up in the neighborhood. In 1968, highway construction leveled the 400 numbered blocks between Pulaski and Green Street, a distance of approximately 1.36 miles. Along with the removal of homes and businesses in the corridor, the introduction of the road also swept away the area’s pocket parks. Overall, the availability of green space in Harlem Park was reduced. Many of those displaced from the corridor would move to other area’s of the city without access to parks. While the majority of the displaced found new residences in West Baltimore, the surrounding neighborhoods of Sandtown-Winchester, Franklin Square and Poppleton lacked the same inner-block parks that made Harlem Park unique. The loss of the park spaces in the 400 numbered blocks was a consequence of highway construction that, according to planners, was supposed to be remedied by the installation of new community facilities, parks and playgrounds in other parts of Harlem Park. This expansion, typically referred to as “joint development,” did not extend past the planning stages for the highway. When the I-170 project stalled and was eventually discontinued the promised green spaces never materialized. When asked about joint development, West stated:

Well, I’ll tell you what, I didn’t hear too much about the new parks and playgrounds, but I will tell you this for sure: No! These things were never ever [built]… nothing ever came to fruition in that respect. You may have taken what was there [and improved it]… and, well, I’m looking at
Harlem Park and that would be down around Calhoun Street and the only thing that they did with that Harlem Park school was to put a basketball court and a softball field. And that is as much… That’s as much improvement as I’ve seen. And that was about seven, eight blocks away from where I lived.

In the end, Harlem Park lost green space which was never replenished by the city. The displaced, in turn, lost access to the level of green space that they had enjoyed in Harlem Park. As the years passed and the neighborhood continued to decline, these pocket parks became weedy, overgrown and filled with trash. They metamorphosized from clean community spaces into spaces of neglect occupied by the unfortunate homeless and by criminals.

That Harlem Park was in a state of gradual decline beginning in the 1940s and extending through the 1970s has been amply demonstrated. For the young adults growing up in the area, however, Harlem Park was a close knit, caring community in which residents looked out for one another, respected one another and emphasized education and values. Crime existed in the area, of course, but was not the bane of later years.

There wasn’t the type of things that are going on in urban areas today. Drugs were there… but we didn’t have that sort of thing going on. I think the worst thing someone did… some of the older guys, well, [they’d drink, but] they wouldn’t sit out publicly and drink. They respected somebody’s kids, or nephews or little brother to that degree. So that’s sorta the way it was.

Despite the accusations of decay and blight that were leveled at the area by city officials, planners and members of the Greater Baltimore Committee, who were eager to see the development of the highway system, the area was nowhere near as devastated as today. According to one interviewee, the area was:
Well kept, well maintained. We were taught to, uh… we had marble steps for the most part. Those marble steps were washed at least three times a week. You know, our backs were swept. You know, you didn’t see people laying bottles down and leaving it… Somebody mighta came through there and did that… and if one of the kids who was there woulda done it they would have caught heck from one of the parents. And that’s just the way that everybody was. You would see people sweeping the walkways to the backyards and, like I said, they had gardens, they had… you know, they tended to their fronts and their yards.

West mentioned the traditional Baltimore practice of washing the marble steps of his Monroe Street home. “I used Bab-O, Comet and bleach,” he said, “I scrubbed them many times” (Willis 2003, 1A). In interviewing him in 2009, West offered this description of his neighborhood:

Well, like I’ll say again, that was a very solid community. It really was. And, I’ll give it to you again, it was a community of working class… and if you want to equate it to today’s standards, it was middle-class. Kids were steered to a little higher education than their parents could be afforded or that their grandparents could be afforded. They were pushed into it. I don’t want to use the word coerce, but you were pretty strongly guided into a standard of a little higher education. I guess it had values. Values are a pretty, uh, I don’t know, intangible or oblique, but values were instilled. A lot of people can take them and a lot of people can reject them, even back then, but you were pretty much bound to go to church on Sunday if no more than Sunday school, you were bound to go to school five days a week, you were bound to do chores. But it basically was a place where you didn’t have a lot of confusion, conflict, you know, so we pretty much were able to police one another. You know, be another person’s conscience. I would just say that it was an ideal neighborhood to live in. It just really was.

Interviewer: So it was a safe place?

West: Yes, yes it was. It was a haven of sorts.

The rapid decline of the area during the late 1960s and 1970s due to deindustrialization, absentee landlordism, which allowed properties to deteriorate, and the construction of the highway as well as the 1968 riots was a palpable source of pain for
West. A city housing inspector for thirty years, West was in charge of the “Western District,” the area including Harlem Park, during the last five years of his career. As the housing superintendent, he would often accompany those working under him if it was believed a situation might be unsafe or difficult. He stated:

I’ve often told my friends I would come out to neighborhood meetings, or I would go out on a pretty rough inspection where a guy, maybe had something that befuddled him and I might go out with him to see if I could lend an air of perspicacious or something and I would get in that area [Harlem Park], man, and I would honestly, before going back to the office, I would just take a walk… and I’m not telling you I did it, but it’s enough to bring tears to your eyes if you’ve been personally involved in the area like that for so long. To see how things have been run down. To see the amount of criminal activity, just to see the amount of carelessness. You know, unemployment is a problem nationwide, but these guys are hanging on the corner, selling drugs and sitting out front drinking alcoholic beverages… and the bottles and broken glass and all that and that sorta thing. It just, you know, more and more it just didn’t look like home anymore.

Another resident, remembering life on nearby Lauretta Avenue, stated “It’s a war zone now. I rode down there a couple weeks ago, and I just sat in my car and cried. What you seen now isn’t what we had” (Marbella 2007, B1).

This deterioration, though a result of factors larger than the 1968 riots and the construction of the highway, is still closely associated with the I-170 project by former residents. That the road was the cause of the decline in Harlem Park is a simplification, but nonetheless forms the popularly imagined reality for some residents. As a result, recent development schemes and plans for West Baltimore empowerment zones all tout words and phrases such as “community,” “public participation,” “citizen in-put,” and so forth. In recent years, the city has been developing plans for a mass transit project known as the Red Line which would run through Harlem Park. According to one of the planners,
“the emphasis is not only on transit, but on the community” (Reddy 2007, 1A).

According to the *Baltimore Sun*, one transportation plan entitled “West Baltimore Transit Centered Community Development” had its name specially tweaked to include the word “community” (Reddy 2007, 1A). As a result of the failed I-170 project, Don Halligan, the assistant director of planning for the Maryland Department of Transportation has stated “we need to be extra sensitive” (Reddy 2007, 1A). I posed the following question to Alton West:

Interviewer: Do you think that construction [of the highway] was largely responsible for the area going down hill?

Mr. West: Oh, without a doubt! Without a doubt. There’s not one centilla [*sic*] of a doubt as far as what caused all this to happen… I gotta say that that [the highway] probably impacted on the integrity and character of the neighborhood. It really did.

According to Mr. West, the effects of the highway were not localized to just Harlem Park. The disruption that the highway wrought on the fabric of community in Harlem Park spread to other parts of West Baltimore over the next decade.

And, like I said, the effects of that little underpass [the highway] didn’t just go into the 300 or 500 block. It just spread its wings either way. I guess just call it the domino effect or whatever you want… it just fell and kept going, you know, it just kept going. And I guess if the 400 block was affected, now the 3 and the 5 are… and after a while the 600 or the 100 or, you know, the 200… and it just, over time, I would say by the mid seventies to the late seventies it was like the spread of cancer, I guess. It was just inoperable. And then the methods which you try to bring out rehabilitation and that sort of thing, we weren’t… and I say “we” as a city government, we just probably didn’t have a clue.

Today, the 1.36 mile long, unfinished section of I-170 still confuses former residents who never understood the city’s purposes in building it in the first place. Robert Tolson stated:
Well, nobody wanted to move because, uh, we’d had been there for about twenty-some years, so nobody really wanted to move… And so we didn’t see the value of building the expressway, but that was, on the other hand, a city agency decision so, like I said, they had to displace all the families in the Mulberry… from Mulberry and Franklin Street from like Wiele [?] Avenue all the way down to downtown. So there was a whole lot of people displaced for an expressway that we didn’t think was necessary from the beginning.

Likewise, West expressed confusion as to why the road was constructed. He expressed the belief that the construction of the road was some sort of “political ploy” by the city to disenfranchise voters in the area and spread them out across the city. In the early days, West recalled the hype surrounding the construction of the road and how it was argued it would be of great benefit to the city:

You kinda felt that this was something that was going to serve the city well and, I guess, after a few years when you see what has come to fruition you feel betrayed. And then you think back to what you gave up and in some ways, as time went on, I got a little angry about it and… that’s probably about as clean as I can put it. When you feel like something is done and it was for progress and there’s probably very little to debate about this and you see what it came down to and you see what your parents were put through basically feel betrayed and you feel angry about it. You know, it’s just something that should never have happened.

In the end, residents never fully understood the reason for their displacement. The road today seems unnecessary. According to West, when the city first condemned the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in 1966, many residents were of the belief that “it’s gonna work out…” and you kinda cling to that ideal. That ‘yeah, ok, this, you know, this is not going to happen, this isn’t going to happen, this is just a nightmare but it’s going to go away.” In reality, however, the bad dream of displacement and construction was one from which residents could not awaken.
Conclusion

In summary, the period of the middle to late 1960s was marked by two major events, the start of construction on the I-170 project and the Baltimore riots. These two events stand as a sharp contrast between two periods of neighborhood history. For Baltimore residents, these events mark the most visible explanations for the rapid decline that West Baltimore suffered during the 1970s, 1980s, and much of the 1990s. In reality, however, these events were symptoms of a decline which had been on-going since the 1940s. This early decline, which had largely made itself evident in falling levels of homeownership, rising absentee landlordism, dramatic overcrowding and deteriorating property, stands in contrast to the sharp decline of the post-1968 years in which drug abuse, poverty and gang violence increased dramatically. In these years clean, marble-stepped row houses and carefully tended inner-block parks were substituted for boarded up buildings and vacant lots. Community cohesion was disrupted by the destruction of 971 homes and the eviction of some 1400 families from the area. These displaced residents were able to find new homes, typically not far from where they had previously lived. In general, displacement had limited effects on their livelihoods, although few believed they were adequately compensated for their losses. Today this is still a bitter complaint. For younger residents, losses were never measured financially or in property. Rather, young adults measured their losses in missing friends and a lack of places to play sports and hang out. A greater sense of loss, however, developed as former residents watched the neighborhoods of their childhoods spiral into decline. For these young people, the road has come to represent the cause of Harlem Park’s recent woes. To this
day, former residents still do not understand why the city needed to build the “Highway to Nowhere.” Though many have moved from Baltimore, some former residents, dedicated “West Siders,” still remain. For them, the road is not an abstraction or something that can be put out of mind. It is too big and too visible. The vexing thing for these residents is not just that their homes were taken, but that their neighborhood was sacrificed for a highway that serves no purpose and that goes nowhere.
CHAPTER NINE: THE WAITING ROAD: THE FUTURE OF THE “HIGHWAY TO NOWHERE.”

The “Highway to Nowhere” is waiting. On an average day, over 36,000 vehicles traverse this 1.36 mile long segment of road. Separated from the neighborhood by thousands of tons of concrete and thirty foot high walls, few passersby are able to see the 52 acres of open greenspace that surround the roadway. Indeed, it is hard for commuters to imagine the closed off-ramps, boarded up rowhouses and trash-filled alleys as much of anything as they whiz past at forty-five miles an hour. Even the fading mural painted on a foundation wall where an overpass was to be constructed makes only a passing impression. For years, the “Highway to Nowhere” was considered a waste - a catastrophic mistake and a scar on West Baltimore that few city administrations wanted to remedy. Beginning in the middle 1990s, however, the city began to take an active interest in redeveloping this area and integrating it with the city’s highly successful urban redevelopment projects further to the east. In the past decade a cast of mayors, city officials, planners and dreamers have sought to author a new vision of the “Highway to Nowhere.” This chapter explores some of these visions and examines the plans that may be the future of this road and Harlem Park, the neighborhood it shattered.

In 1997, Mayor Kurt Schmoke proposed to tear down the “Highway to Nowhere.” The mayor’s plan was unclear and controversial. The plan entailed tearing down or filling in the thirty-foot deep trench of the roadway, reestablishing a grid of surface streets and offering the land up for commercial and residential redevelopment (“Schmoke’s fuzzy concept…” 1997, 18A). The city contracted Raymond Gindroz, an architect from
Pittsburgh, to develop a plan for the road. Gindroz’s plan, which amounted to little more than sketches, was a new urbanist image of narrow twisting streets, mixed commercial and residential land use and small parks. The new development, according to the *Baltimore Sun*, was to be targeted at middle-class downtown workers and employees at the University of Maryland’s Medical Center (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A).

For former residents the plan was controversial. Many, who had seen their homes destroyed by earlier administrations, were skeptical about the city’s ability to rebuild. One resident, remembering the community that the road displaced, stated “You can’t go back to the past. The new generation isn’t used to living in small communities in the city” (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A). Ninety-year-old Pearl Parran, who still lives near the roadway and who can see rows of abandoned homes from her window, wondered “why don’t they fix up the homes they already got?” (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A).

City officials had even more misgivings about Schmoke’s plan. West Baltimore councilwoman Sheila Dixon stated “it makes no sense. The little piece of highway does help to avoid some of the [traffic] lights you have to deal with. At this point, it’s [the highway] there” (Daemmrich and Matthews 1997, 1A). Dixon’s concern about traffic congestion should the roadway be removed was echoed by others. In a strange twist, the city’s housing commissioner, who stood shoulder to shoulder with the mayor in supporting the plan for redevelopment, admitted that removing the roadway could be a problem, but argued “that a new six-lane highway could be built on the roadbeds of Franklin and Mulberry Streets.” Aghast at the prospect of yet another highway, the
Baltimore Sun commented that this “destroys much of the argument for reuniting a number of neighborhoods” (“Schmoke’s fuzzy concept…” 1997, 18A). Indeed, the memory that the “Highway to Nowhere” had been built to relieve the congestion created by the myriad traffic lights of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor was not forgotten.

At the time, Schmoke’s project appeared half-baked. The Baltimore Sun urged that “before the Schmoke administration embarks on this very expensive and ill-conceived proposal, it ought to take a closer look at the city’s priorities and the best ways to maximize Baltimore’s limited resources.” In the end, Henson defended the inchoate project, stating “this is a concept. Concepts are fuzzy at first” (“Schmoke’s fuzzy concept…” 1997, 18A). Fuzzy the project was and fuzzy the project remained. Little more was made of the idea to tear down the road by the Schmoke administration and the road continued to wait.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Maryland established a regional rail system that linked the Washington D.C. and Baltimore metropolitan areas. Today, the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train system carries over 30,000 riders per day across six Baltimore counties (“MARC train: general information…” 2009). The MARC is composed of three lines (Fig. 27). The first line, known as the Brunswick line, stretches from Washington D.C., westward to Martinsburg, West Virginia. The Camden Line runs between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, while the third line, known as the Penn Line, runs from Washington, D.C. through Baltimore to Perryville, Maryland. The Penn Line is the fastest and busiest of the three, carrying trains that run at over 120 miles per hour. Travelers coming from Washington D.C. make seven stops before arriving in
Baltimore. The first Baltimore stop is the West Baltimore MARC station on the western end of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. In recent years, the proximity of the east-west route of the “Highway to Nowhere” has prompted interest in dramatically expanding Baltimore’s mass-transit systems.
Figure 27: MARC train system map and station list. 2009.
From the Maryland Transit Administration
Currently, Baltimore has a well developed network of bus lines, a small light rail system and metro subway system that serves twelve stations between Johns Hopkins Hospital and Owings Mills. Baltimore’s light rail network was championed by William Donald Schaefer who was mayor between 1971 and 1987 and governor of Maryland between 1987 and 1995 and who pressed to have the “Highway to Nowhere” completed. The light rail system opened in 1992 and was fully completed by 1997. Baltimore’s metro subway opened in 1983 and was originally designed to provide service between Charles Center, the centerpiece of the Inner Harbor development and the Reistertown Road Plaza shopping center north of the city (Fig. 28)
Despite the construction of these systems, the twin networks are not fully integrated. For example, no single station allows transferring between the metro subway, the light rail network and the bus lines. In addition, the light rail system does not offer easy access to some of Baltimore’s most heavily frequented tourist attractions such as Fells Point and the Inner Harbor. Furthermore, due to budgetary constraints long stretches of the light rail system were constructed with only a single track. This meant that only one train could traverse the area at any given time. The result of this was a lengthy
minute wait between trains (“History of ABB/AAI light…” 2002). In 2004, these areas were double tracked and the time between trains was reduced to between 5 and 10 minutes. As a result of these problems, an independent commission was established in September 2001 to evaluate and recommend changes to Baltimore’s current transportation system. This commission, known by its lengthy title as the Baltimore Region Rail System Plan Advisory Committee (BRRSPAC), completed its report in August 2002.

The report featured seven color coded lines (Fig. 29). Some of these lines were simply extensions of the pre-existing light rail and metro subway systems. For example, the Green Line was basically an extension of the metro subway eastward from the Johns Hopkins Hospital Center to a final terminal at Martin State Airport with fourteen stops in between. The most important feature of the report, however, was its prioritization of Baltimore’s transportation needs. According to the commission, the best way to “jump start” the construction of this 66-mile network of rails with its sixty-eight new stations was to concentrate on extending the already established lines of the light rail and metro subway systems. As a result three primary lines, the red, green and purple, were recommended. The line which concerns us is the Red Line, which was conceived as a system of 21 miles of light rail track with 27 stations running between an I-70 station on Baltimore’s western border through the Franklin-Mulberry corridor and the city center to twin final terminals at Canton in southeast Baltimore and the Turners Station neighborhood on Baltimore’s east side (“Baltimore regional rail system…” 2002).
Between 2002 and 2009 the city of Baltimore committed itself to the construction of the Red Line project. Engineers have sketched out eleven potential alignments, public hearings were held in 2008 and since 2004 a bi-yearly newsletter has been published detailing developments in the planning process. While originally envisioned as a system of light rail, today three modes of transportation are being considered. These include Enhanced Bus Service (EBS), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and, as originally proposed, light rail (LRT). The Red Line website features animations showing the BRT and LRT systems. Under both systems, a median is utilized by either a special “advanced
technology” bus or a light train, while the surface street remains open for regular vehicles (“Red Line Corridor Transit…” 2009).

In the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor, the establishment of the Red Line would not mean the elimination of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Rather, current plans integrate the Red Line into or alongside the existing roadway. The most recent plans suggest three possibilities for the Red Line in Harlem Park. The first alignment places a transit corridor inside the trench of the “Highway to Nowhere.” If the BRT option were to be utilized special bus lanes would be created and the median would be landscaped (Fig. 30). If the LRT option were utilized the median would be converted to carrying the train system (Fig. 31). This is ironic as when the “Highway to Nowhere” was originally proposed as I-170 in 1960, Thomas Ward advocated the establishment of a wide median to host such a mass transit project.

Figure 30: Bus Rapid Transit option in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. From the “Red Line Corridor Study alternatives analysis and draft environmental impact statement (AA/DEIS) Geographic Area 5: West Baltimore MARC Station to Franklin/Mulberry/US 40 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard,” 184.
Figure 31: Light Rail Transit option in the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. From the “Red Line Corridor Study alternatives analysis and draft environmental impact statement (AA/DEIS) Geographic Area 5: West Baltimore MARC Station to Franklin/Mulberry/US 40 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard,” 184.

If this “lower level” option were not to be used, the BRT and LRT transportation modes would be established to either the north or south of the “Highway to Nowhere” on Franklin or Mulberry streets. The following images depict the LRT option on Franklin Street (Fig. 32 and Fig. 33). If Mulberry Street was utilized instead the images would remain basically the same.
Figure 32: Light Rail Transit option on Franklin Street.
From the “Red Line Corridor Study alternatives analysis and draft environmental impact statement (AA/DEIS) Geographic Area 5: West Baltimore MARC Station to Franklin/Mulberry/US 40 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard,” 185.

Figure 33: Cross section of the Light Rail Transit system on Franklin Street.
From the “Red Line Corridor Study alternatives analysis and draft environmental impact statement (AA/DEIS) Geographic Area 5: West Baltimore MARC Station to Franklin/Mulberry/US 40 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard,” 185.

Currently, the Red Line system is in a high state of development. Public hearings have been held and the 90-day period for citizen comments closed on January 5, 2009. At
the moment, the Maryland Transit Administration is examining data gathered from the public hearings and comment period to select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Once this LPA is selected, it will be forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval. Upon approval from the FTA the project will move into the Preliminary Engineering/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PE/FEIS) phase. During this phase engineers, scientists and citizens will coordinate to identify and protect historic structures and district and environmental resources. A preliminary, but seemingly exhaustive report is available on the Maryland Transit Administration’s website. At the soonest, construction of the Red Line system will begin in 2012-2013. This, however, is contingent on the project meeting success at all levels, both state and federal, and also a smooth acquisition process for the properties along the Red Lines proposed right of way. Like every transportation advancement in Baltimore’s history, this last step may prove the most challenging.

Despite the uncertainty about what modes of transportation will be utilized by the Red Line and the lengthy, often tedious, planning process many West Baltimoreans are excited about the possibilities this new system might bring. Zelda Robinson, chair of the West Baltimore Coalition, has stated “we want to take control of our community and present people with opportunities so that they don’t have to go 20 miles out of their way to get to a decent grocery store. [The Red Line] could be a real gem for the city.” The first step in attracting development to West Baltimore is updating the current MARC train station on the west end of the Franklin-Mulberry Corridor. Today, this station is simply a pair of platforms where east or west bound trains stop to disgorge or take on passengers. The station offers no amenities. As part of the Red Line project, the MARC
station would integrate the Penn Line that connects Baltimore with Washington, D.C. to
the west and Perryville, MD to the east with the Red Line’s system of stations spread
east-to-west across the central city. Since 1997, average daily boardings at the West
Baltimore MARC station have nearly doubled. Presently, over six hundred people board
the trains at the MARC station, most bound for Washington, D.C. While this represents
just a quarter of the boardings that occur daily at Baltimore’s Penn Station, the main
MARC station in the city, it still represents something new, and potentially beneficial for
the West Baltimore community. For the first time, West Baltimore has an amenity, a
quick and efficient linkage with Washington, D.C. that is attracting young, urban
professionals. One of these new West Baltimore residents stated of his newly purchased
3,000 square foot Harlem Park home, “it’s huge, it’s just too much house for me. The
joke is the taxes. [Harlem Park is] an empowerment zone, so its $73 a month in taxes. I
don’t know why more young people aren’t coming into the area.” Yet, clearly young
people are arriving. Speaking about his daily commute from Baltimore, Wallace Farmer
recalled “You can tell the people who moved from D.C. and other areas. They talk about
it [on the train]. We talk amongst each other” (Reddy 2007, 1A).

The increased interest in West Baltimore generated by the redevelopment of the
area around the MARC station was a major impetus in pushing city officials to champion
the creation of the Red Line. Mayor Dixon, who originally opposed Kurt Schmoke’s plan
for leveling the “Highway to Nowhere” stated “we want [people] to get off the train and
live here. This is a great area. But it hasn’t been maintained in a number of years. Take
Edmondson Avenue. It’s been like that since the riots, and the riots were in the ‘60s”
(Kiehl 2008, B1). Today, Dixon is the leading voice in calling for the development of the
Red Line system and expansion of the West Baltimore MARC station. Like many other officials, she expects that the Red Line system will bring even more development to West Baltimore. Douglas McCoach, Baltimore’s planning director, stated that the Red Line “sends the signal that we’re open for business. We want people to come back and live in safe, healthy neighborhoods” (Kiehl 2008, B1). Michael Johnson, the head of the Greater Harvest Community Corp, argued that while “these communities were totally wiped out [by disinvestment]” that “our homeownership rate would increase if it was attractive to live in this neighborhood” (Kiehl 2008, B1). Maryland Department of Transportation Director Don Halligan is also hopeful. “We’re trying to create a partnership to create a better neighborhood, to create a healthy environment around what we feel is a significant transit hub,” he stated. Halligan added “we want to build the capacity of the existing neighborhoods. We want to create a better place that increases the accessibility for residents to regional opportunities, whether they’re educational, jobs, or housing” (Reddy 2007, 1A).

While city officials and local groups like the West Baltimore Coalition see redevelopment of abandoned row houses, the establishment of new businesses and better access to opportunities across the Baltimore region, some residents remain skeptical. They recall the promises of development, green space, parks and playgrounds that were made when other officials, mayors and business leaders wanted to create a new, high-speed transportation corridor. That planning process “separated our churches, it separated our services, it separated our families,” one West Baltimore resident recalled of the “Highway to Nowhere. “The whole sense of community was shattered. It had a devastating effect.” Of the present plans, the same resident wonders “If it weren’t for the
MARC train station in the area, would they be in here trying to help us do anything? I believe the answer is they would not be here. We would still be an overlooked community, a community that has just been devastated by abandonment” (Reddy 2007, 1A). Yet while city officials spin visions of gentrification, better jobs and an end to decades of poverty and decline, one man has a plan to heal the wounds of the road and restore the soul of West Baltimore.

Ashley Milburn is often in the road. Not on the road as a traveler, but rather standing amidst the concrete walls and roaring traffic of the “Highway to Nowhere.” He has been called “the crazy man on the highway” (Marbella 2007, B1). Milburn, a recent immigrant to Baltimore, earned his masters degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art. His thesis, entitled “The cultural reclaiming of the Highway to Nowhere” is a visionary plan that seeks to remake the road and the land surrounding it. In his thesis, Milburn casts light on a neglected corner of the city whose residents have experienced heart break and frustration almost beyond endurance. He writes:

Today in West Baltimore, homeownership is rare, and absentee landlords neglect rental properties that continually add to the downward spiral of urban blight. The growing number of boarded-up properties is alarming. Southwest Baltimore is racially mixed, but predominately Afro-American. The community has a mixture of high unemployment, working poor, and islands of stable working-class neighborhoods. There are no attractive playgrounds and recreational centers on par with those in other Baltimore communities, and those in existence, if usable at all, fall into a category of dangerous places to play. Today, youth disenfranchisement goes largely unaddressed. The communities strive to maintain some semblance of their past through the efforts of a few driven individuals, neighborhood associations, and community guided service providers, but this effort cannot do it all… The Highway has become a metaphorical expression of the social, economic, and cultural injustice that has plagued most black urban communities across America. It frames the question for the West Baltimore communities and residents: “How do I regain control of my life and of those things that are affecting it without my permission?” (Milburn 2007, 15-17).
Yet in this landscape, Milburn sees a “crenel of redemption” (2007, 16). In the highway itself, a vast, drab and neglected place, Milburn sees hope. According to Milburn’s thesis, this 1.5 mile long stretch offers 52 acres of public green space and 3.5 miles of mural space along the thirty foot walls of the road. Milburn argues that:

*The Highway* contains hidden cultural and economic assets that could create opportunities, for community-wide enterprise zones, urban gardening on a massive scale, recreational and cultural venues, and employment opportunities in the arts that would directly benefit the residents and communities of West Baltimore… A mural project on the Highway would potentially create one of the nation’s largest urban paintings, thereby adding West Baltimore to the city’s tourist destination list… In addition to creating public art along *The Highway*, there are abundant opportunities to erect pavilion-like public meeting and celebratory spaces along Franklin Street. This [thesis] addresses how a community can reorganize around its cultural roots in planning for such a massive reclamation of its cultural resources, to revitalize the surrounding communities (Milburn 2007, 17-18).

The purpose of this sort of development, however, is not art for the sake of art nor is it to provide tourists with something to visit once their tour of the Inner Harbor has finished. Rather, Milburn believes that creating the art, cleaning up the vacant lots, creating the green space and planting the urban gardens will knit together a community divided not only physically by the road, but spiritually by decades of despair. The creation of this art would establish the basis “for urban renewal based on a community’s shared cultural reflections.” In the past two years, Milburn has attempted to turn his thesis into reality. Part art project, part oral history, Milburn has hosted workshops where residents of the area were able to share their stories and “envision their remembrances through art making.” Establishing a series of milestones for community development, Milburn argues that the first step must be the utilization of art to draw out what residents believe are the needs of their community. Once these needs have been established the
resources of the community can be evaluated and plans for the redevelopment of public green space can be initiated.

Milburn’s project, however, is not all “pie in the sky.” In November 2007, the Open Society Institute, a philanthropic society founded by George Soros, awarded Milburn a community fellowship in the amount of $48,000. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, “it gave him legitimacy” and also brought his project to the attention of Baltimore’s Office of Promotion and the Arts (Marbella 2007, B1). Through this contact, he was able to meet with the mayor. Despite his project’s focus on community development through art, Milburn is fully aware of the city’s plans for the expansion of the MARC station and the Red Line. Along with building a cultural space, Milburn’s project intends to integrate both these art and economic resources (Milburn 2007, 34). The success of Milburn’s plan, however, rests largely on the implementation of the Red Line project. While myriad special interests from west side neighborhood associations to the mayor’s office hope to see some sort of west side development scheme put into practice, there is little consensus and the result is a clash of byzantine agendas. For example, in April 2009, the *Baltimore Sun* published an article discussing recent efforts by community organizations in Canton to oppose the Red Line. One opponent has argued, in terms which would have been all too familiar to those of a previous generation, that the Red Line’s 4-C plan will “debase” his neighborhood (Dresser 2009). It appears that a new “road fight” is brewing in Baltimore.

Though it is likely that the Red Line project will be developed, not every vision of a renewed west side is likely to be realized. Today, the landscape of West Baltimore is, as in the past, the terrain over which conflicting visions clash. The residents, all of whom
have their own dreams for their neighborhoods, are once again finding themselves in the middle while the road continues to wait, as it has for the past forty-one years, for some sort of final result.
CONCLUSION

That the “expressway fight” was a formative event in Baltimore’s modern development is undeniable. Highways, so often lauded by the planners of the 1960s as solutions to a host of urban ills, would have plowed under the landscapes which present-day Baltimore relies on for its economic revitalization. An Inner Harbor buried beneath a cross harbor bridge or a Federal Hill slashed by an interchange would have ultimately been a grievous error. In 1992, Lucretia Fisher, the founder of the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point editorialized:

Try to imagine the present Inner Harbor ringed by wide, raised ramps of interstate highway with spaghetti-like interchanges. Imagine it spanned by a huge bridge cutting off the harbor from the rest of town. There would be no Harborplace, no famous and popular National Aquarium, no promenade or any of the waterfront pleasures enjoyed by Baltimoreans and tourists. It’s hard to imagine, but it might have happened (Fisher 1992, 11A).

For those, like Fisher, who live, invest, recreate and consume in the historic districts of Federal Hill and Fells Point, the idea that an east-west expressway almost plowed through these areas is like a bad dream. Turning away from the tourist glam of the Inner Harbor and traveling two miles north and west of the city’s center, however, reveals the bad dream of urban expressways laid manifest. The “Highway to Nowhere” and the blocks of vacant, boarded up sentinels that stand guard above it are a physical reminder of the failure of the east-west expressway and the I-170 project. Less tangible is the stubborn legacy of air and noise pollution and the dangers of run-off filled with automobile fluids. McDonald’s wrappers, 7-11 cups and other highway detritus are impossible to miss. For residents displaced from Harlem Park during the late 1960s, the decline of their former
neighborhood is a source not necessarily of anger, but of remorse over the futility of the project.

Aside from brief commemoratives hidden away off the front pages of Baltimore’s local press, the city’s turbulent “expressway fight” remains largely unrecognized outside of academic circles. In most cases, scholars have engaged the “expressway fight” as part of the broader nation-wide set of “freeway revolts” that exploded across the country during the turbulent Civil Rights era. Until recently the phenomena of these battles against urban highways had received little attention. In addressing the “freeway revolts” fewer than a dozen authors have explored the case of Baltimore and fewer still have examined the activities of groups such as RAM, MAD and SCAR. Even the development of the east-west expressway has received only cursory attention. The events, processes and actors which shaped the uneven geography of Baltimore’s urban highways remain a treasure trove of unexplored avenues.

This thesis has sought to craft a history of the development of the “Highway to Nowhere” by examining the highway planning process, Baltimore’s local “expressway fight,” and the impact of the construction of “the road” on Harlem Park. Conceptualizing the “Highway to Nowhere” as a colossal disamenity, this thesis, answering calls from within the literature of environmental justice, explored the processes that led to its development. The primary focus has rested on the city’s anti-highway opposition and the tools, tactics and methods that these groups used to “stop the road.” Like Baltimore’s highway network itself, the results achieved by these organizations have been highly uneven. Exploring how the development of the road combined with the tactics used by
community organizations to defeat it and the long-term impact of the project, especially in Harlem Park, have been the primary drivers of this thesis.

Driven by three primary research questions, this thesis first asked:

1. How and why were the neighborhoods of Harlem Park, Federal Hill and Fells Point selected as routes for the east-west expressway?

In terms of Harlem Park, the answer to this question has much to do with both the area’s geographic location as well as its history. The Franklin-Mulberry corridor had long been a primary thoroughfare for the city dating back to the 19th century. During the early 20th century the city undertook a wide variety of improvement schemes. These improvements ranged from replacing cobblestone with asphalt, widening road-beds, establishing a cross-town boulevard or viaduct and eventually converting Franklin and Mulberry Streets to one-way streets. During the 1930s and into the 1940s a constant complaint from citizens, businesses, city officials and, of course, trucking companies was of a “hardening of traffic arteries” in the city. Faced with increasing amounts of traffic, city planners began to look seriously at developing an east-west expressway to allow traffic to move across the city.

When Robert Moses, the eminent highway builder, put forth his own highway plan in 1944, he advocated the use of highways to facilitate slum clearance. The Harlem Park neighborhood fit neatly into this scheme for a variety of reasons. First, it had been an area of secondary settlement for African-Americans who had migrated from the city core during the 1920s and as such was viewed by the city as less desirable. Second, Baltimore’s long legacy of race ordinances, restrictive covenants and a Jim Crow realty system prevented the expansion of African-American settlements and largely restricted
African-Americans to certain small strips of territory on the west and east sides of the city. This combined with a dramatic influx of African-American workers during the war years led to the subdivision of many single-family rowhouses into multi-family rentals and a stressing of the area’s infrastructure. Property deterioration was not far behind and before long city planners viewed this area, which had pockets of stable working-class African-American homeowners (the neighborhood of Rosemont being the finest example), as being ripe for “slum clearance.”

Between 1942 and 1961 a variety of highway plans were proposed that incorporated this area into long-term Baltimore highway planning. This result was that the area continued to be a location targeted for highway construction. By the middle 1960s, Harlem Park’s experience as a site of urban renewal, oftentimes contentious, but on the whole well received provided a glimmer that “joint development” tied to highway construction could offer improvements in community facilities and greenspace. The advent of condemnation ordinances in 1966 brought about protest from the Relocation Action Movement (RAM) which sought to aid residents who were being displaced. Allying with the Baltimore chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) RAM was able to reach a settlement with the city whereby a “fair replacement value” would be paid to residents for their homes and a $5,000 fee would subsidize their relocation. By the end of 1968 and the beginning of 1969, the right of way for the I-170 project, the future “Highway to Nowhere,” was being dug.

The inclusion of Federal Hill and Fells Point in the plans for the east-west expressway was largely due to negotiations between planners and city residents between 1942 and 1961. Early plans for the east-west expressway were ridiculed for creating a
“chinese wall” or alternatively a “big ditch” in the central or northern areas of the city. The result in 1960 was a shifting of the east-west expressway to run along the northern edge of the Inner Harbor. In 1961, the Expressway Consultants, hired to evaluate the city Planning Department’s 1960 plan, offered up their own alignments which suggested that an Inner Harbor bridge running east to west could carry traffic from both the east-west expressway and I-83 as it moved from the western side of the city towards I-95 and I-695 on Baltimore’s eastern boundary.

Previously all three neighborhoods had been included in separate highway plans. Federal Hill was at one time suggested as a route for a proposed southwest expressway. Fells Point was suggested as a route that would allow the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) to connect to I-95 and I-695. Harlem Park was institutionalized in a dozen highway plans as a route for the western leg of the east-west expressway. The 1961 Expressway Consultants’ plan brought all three neighborhoods into the same plan. This plan, known as 10-D, was considered incredibly invasive and the initial actions of Baltimore’s “road fight” were aimed at stopping it. Eventually, the Urban Design Concept Team (UDCT) was brought in to create a more “sensitive” series of alignments that would be less disruptive to the fabric of Baltimore’s neighborhoods. Despite significant squabbling within the UDCT and a feud within the City Council over which route to select, Mayor D’Alesandro opted for the 3A route in 1968. The selection of this route officially removed Federal Hill from the plans for the east-west expressway. The establishment of the area as an official historic district in 1970, primarily due to the efforts of The Society, basically guaranteed that a highway would never run through the neighborhood.
Fells Point, despite the dropping of the 10-D plan for the “less invasive” 3A plan, was still a primary route for the east-west expressway. Legal challenges by MAD and The Society as well as the declaration of Fells Point as a historic district in 1969 made the area increasingly untenable as a route for the road. Throughout the 1970s various efforts were made to craft alignments that would not compromise the historic district. These plans included tunnels and a highway built out into waterfront. These suggestions were never fully developed and by the late 1970s fewer and fewer dollars were available to begin such a project. As early as 1973, city officials were admitting that highway alignments through Fells Point were “not being actively pursued” (Dougherty 1973). In 1980 plans to extend I-83 through the area were scrapped, bringing an end to Baltimore’s forty year highway planning odyssey.

Although the selection of these neighborhoods as routes for urban highways was largely a result of the exigencies of the planning process, negotiation and conflict between planners and community organizations played an important role in the development and implementation (or non-implementation) of plans for expressways. Progressing from this point, the second primary research question of this thesis asked:

2. What influence did anti-highway community organizations have on creating the current highway geography of Baltimore and how did these organizations exert that influence?

As we have already read, the four primary anti-highway organizations used a variety of tactics to oppose highway construction. All employed some sort of advertising emphasizing such negative aspects of urban highways as cost, pollution, loss of park space, destruction of neighborhoods and historic sites. All were represented at highway hearings and all did their best to communicate their stances to city officials and planners.
RAM, MAD and SCAR actively protested the highway by demonstrating. MAD and The Society (along with VOLPE) challenged the legality of highway proposals in court. All disseminated information on highways to their constituency, but the main organizer of the highway opposition, MAD, established a wide-ranging coalition of neighborhood associations and other groups across the city. While MAD was the face of the “road fight” its broad focus of attacking the highway in all areas of the city weakened its influence. Having to challenge multiple road segments and influence city council members from widely varying districts proved a significant obstacle to effectively fighting the road. MAD was never truly able to break free from the system established by city officials and planners to cope with popular dissent. On the other hand, RAM was successful in establishing a system of compensation for displaced residents, but prior to this was unable to prevent the development of the I-170 project through Harlem Park. In 1966, RAM attempted to fight the east-west expressway on its own with no city-wide support. The result was a forced capitulation of the group’s militant anti-highway stance for one of negotiation with the city in favor of joint development and compensation for the displaced.

The tactics of The Society and SCAR stand as the best examples of combating urban highways in Baltimore’s “road fight.” Both of these organizations were able to effectively “jump scales” and defend their own “small pieces of urban turf.” There is an important distinction to make here. These two organizations, as opposed to MAD, generally fell back on a strategy of opposing highways by creating defensive barriers to their construction through other means. For example, The Society, which did use legal action to attack the legality of highway building, was far more effective when they set
about establishing the Federal Hill and Fells Point historic districts. While not an unassailable defense, the declaration of these neighborhoods as important historic sites meant that planners had to, according to the National Historic Preservation Act, “use a higher standard of care” when developing highway alignments. In Fells Point, this meant hiring outside firms to catalogue and analyze the district’s historic structures. Such procedures slowed the planning process to a glacial pace and allowed the anti-highway opposition to attack the highways in court, seek audiences with higher federal authorities, whip up public outrage and challenge the established political system of the city.

This last method was most effectively wielded by SCAR. Initially supportive of a highway through Fells Point, residents of the area quickly reshaped their views in light of condemnation ordinances which led to vacant, deteriorating property and increasingly levels of vandalism. Additionally, many working class residents were disenfranchised by their city council representatives who often failed to provide the services that people wanted. Prior to the 1970s, southeast Baltimore’s councilmatic system had connected electoral success with political plums for supportive constituencies. The increasing failure of this system was exacerbated by the “road fight” in which council members and their constituencies clashed. Taking advantage of this working-class population who felt abandoned by their political leadership, SCAR was able to use the “road fight” to weld southeast Baltimore into a new political coalition. This coalition, the Southeast Community Organization (SECO), was able to rally the neighborhoods of Canton, Highlandtown and Fells Point and elect anti-highway representatives. Senator Barbara Mikulski, one of the founders of SCAR, and Senator Paul Sarbanes are the most famous beneficiaries of this challenge to the councilmatic system. Both were elevated to higher
political office in Baltimore by running on anti-highway platforms. As city council members, these individuals were far more open to the entreaties of groups like MAD and challenged efforts to develop highways in the city. As a result of this new southeast Baltimore political coalition, holding pro-highway views became increasingly untenable for council members who wanted to seek reelection.

In the end, the effectiveness of the “freeway fighters” depended largely on their focus and their ability to “jump scales.” In the case of RAM, the group fought the road in isolation, never seeking to branch out into the broader area of the city. MAD, on the other hand, was able to do this effectively and crafted a twenty-five member anti-highway coalition. The diffusion of the group’s focus across the entire course of the east-west expressway, however, meant that the blows that the group could deliver were correspondingly feeble. The failure of their court challenge to the 3A system effectively ended the group’s chances at achieving their ultimate goal of stopping the road. With the failure of the court case, MAD’s ability to affect change was once again limited to appealing within the system of highway hearings established by the city. The court case had been their one attempt to “jump scales” and when that opportunity was missed the group found itself floundering. Yet MAD was effective in promoting the anti-highway cause, infiltrating such traditionally closed door groups as the mayor’s Policy Advisory Board and helping to achieve the establishment of the Rosemont by-pass. MAD coalition members such as The Society and SCAR proved to be the most effective freeway fighting forces. These groups had narrow interests, specific constituencies and used methods outside the controlled environments of highway hearings to further their ambitions. The Society, largely composed of urban preservationists, suburbanites and realtors, was able
to portray both Federal Hill and Fells Point as historically significant areas beyond just their architectural value. This attracted widespread investment as “gentrifiers” swept in despite the threat of the highway. The political savvy and deep pockets of this group allowed the establishment of the twin historic districts which offered a layer of protection for the neighborhoods. SCAR and SECO appealed to a working class constituency which felt betrayed by their elected representatives. Harnessing this disenfranchisement to the anti-highway cause crafted a new southeast Baltimore political coalition that invaded city hall.

Despite the best efforts of these organizations and their increasing levels of tactical sophistication, the “Highway to Nowhere” was constructed in Harlem Park. The only real challenge to the establishment of this road had been MAD’s 1973-1974 legal battle against the 3A system. Even a favorable decision on the part of the court would have done little to change what was occurring in Harlem Park. By the time MAD had filed suit the homes in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor had long since been demolished and the trench of the highway was being constructed. A total of 971 homes, 62 businesses and one school were demolished and over 1,500 families had been relocated from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor and Rosemont areas. The early condemnation of these homes in 1966, the negotiation of the city with RAM to provide compensation for those being displaced, promises of green space and a general lack of broad anti-highway sentiment in 1967 and early 1968 meant that there was little popular resistance to construction efforts. In later years, however, challenges to various portions of the road spurred the city to increase its highway construction tempo. Mayor Schaefer, who had witnessed the controversy over the 1969 Rosemont by-pass as a city councilman and was in 1973 facing
legal challenges from VOLPE, MAD and The Society, pushed ahead with plans to build the I-170 section of the road. By 1979 when the “Highway to Nowhere” actually opened to traffic for the first time, the majority of Franklin-Mulberry corridor residents had been relocated for over a decade.

The third and final primary research question of this thesis asked:

3. What was the impact of the failed construction of I-170 on residents who were displaced from the Harlem Park neighborhood?

The majority of those displaced from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor were low-income and working class African-Americans. With limited options available for resettlement the majority relocated to new homes within a few miles of where their old homes had stood. Compensation from the city for the “fair replacement value” of homes was uneven especially in the early years of construction. Interviews and documentary evidence reveal that the majority of individuals were not happy with the amount of money they received from the city. The city did provide some relocation assistance such as moving vans to those being displaced. A significant number of those displaced from the Franklin-Mulberry corridor were renters and this undoubtedly complicates any attempt to estimate the true number of individuals impacted by displacement. Renters, at least after 1970, received compensation from the city government.

The period of relocation represented a time of significant stress and worry, especially for homeowners. While displacement was not financially ruinous it depleted scarce savings. For both the young and the old, relocation meant the loss of the familiar and a long-term struggle to adapt to a new neighborhood. For young people, who had significant access to green space in Harlem Park, the movement to a new neighborhood often meant that no similar space was available. The majority had to attend new schools
and make new friends. Over time, of course, both children and adults adapted to their new environments. The loss of their old neighborhood due to construction and the rapid decline in the post-construction years represents a source of anger, remorse and bitterness. Even forty years later, many do not understand why their homes were destroyed. For residents, the decline of their old neighborhood is directly attributed to the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Unfulfilled promises for joint development have not been forgotten and recent proposals for redevelopment in the area, such as the Baltimore “Red Line,” have been met with substantial suspicion. Despite some very recent investment in the neighborhood, such as that near the West Baltimore MARC station on the west end of Harlem Park, the area remains in the grip of poverty, crime and drug abuse.

In final reflection, what can the reader or the student take away from this thesis? Some might argue that it is too broad to generalize or that such generalizations might miss certain points while highlighting others. “Let the reader draw his own conclusions,” it might be suggested. Yet, I would argue that certain important generalizations can be made.

First, we should always remember that policies and decisions have legacies. These legacies are, in some cases, highly visible on the landscape, while in other cases they are extremely subtle. Examining the legacy of a particular decision or process allows us to rethink both the past and the present. The legacy of the “Highway to Nowhere” is, of course, manifested in the physical scar of the road, but the impact of decisions made forty years ago is also evident in boarded up buildings and crushing poverty. Examining this legacy it is hard to imagine what planners were thinking. Yet, we know that they believed that urban expressways could solve urban problems. The construction of the road, with its
unintended consequences of pollution and neighborhood decline, was meant to revitalize the city. Can we detect arrogance in this position? Can we detect naiveté? Certainly. The terrible consequences of the road notwithstanding, we should also acknowledge the mindset of those who wished to build it. For many, even some of those who were being displaced, the road represented a shining example of high technology. The road meant “progress.” That the road did not bring revitalization, we must remember, was a surprise for planners who blamed the failure of their plan on meddling community organizations who did not know better. The point here is that decisions leave legacies - some good, some bad - and these legacies tell us much about the people whose decisions sets the wheel of change in motion. In addition, legacies created as a result of decisions made in the past do not simply cast ephemeral shadows. The city administration of Baltimore is keenly, even painfully, aware of the impact that the road fight had in West Baltimore. As a result they have developed a plan to convince residents of the benefits that the “Red Line” project will bring.

While we go about our business of investigating these legacies, either on the ground interviewing residents or ransacking dusty boxes in an archive, we must never lose track of the context within which our study is situated. The story of the “road fight” cannot be told without talking about the Civil Rights Movement, the Baltimore riots or the Vietnam War. On a more local scale, it would be hard to understand the decision of southeast Baltimoreans to oppose the road without first understanding their increasing frustration towards the ossified councilmatic system. Context matters and, as researchers, we should, as the saying goes, “not leave home without it.”
Likewise, we should be careful about the assumptions we make. In terms of the “road fight,” it would be an error to simply assume out of hand that RAM was “defeated” because they were poor and African-American, while The Society was successful because they were affluent and white. Numerous factors, played a role in determining whether or not a particular group could be labeled a success or failure. Digging deep is especially important if we are to come to understand the complexity of individual groups and the dynamics which bind them together. In the case of the “road fight,” it is not entirely accurate to say that the anti-highway organizations worked together. In many ways they did, but there was also tension, both class tension and racial tension, that sprang up between them. The lawsuits filed by The Society and VOLPE actually pushed the Schaefer administration to increase its construction tempo on the I-170 alignment. This directly impacted and perhaps helped to thwart MAD’s later legal efforts to stop construction in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. While working within the same neighborhoods, often only blocks apart, The Society and SCAR remained wary of each other. Trust, even among allies, was hard to establish.

It is also important to consider the financial resources of individual groups. In the case of Baltimore, fighting the road was a time consuming battle being waged by a group of individuals who, for the most part, already had full-time jobs. In the case of RAM, MAD and SCAR, group members devoted hundreds of hours over the course of years to stopping the road. Along with their other inherent advantages, city planners could put work aside and go home for the night. This was not the case for the majority of the anti-highway organizations most of which were too poor to hire outside consultation. As we have already seen, MAD was frequently short of money. The Society on the other hand
was able to use its relatively vast financial resources to hire consultants to catalogue and classify historic structures, challenge the highway in court, host balls and banquets and even hire an Executive Director with a yearly salary. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Alan Lupo, a Boston reporter, wrote about the “freeway revolt” in that city. He writes that “a primary reason for the impact of citizens’ groups on politicians…was that the groups’ political tactics and supporting technical arguments were made competently by dedicated professionals” (quoted in Haeuber 1974, 64). These professionals were full-time opponents to construction hired to lobby and debunk the arguments made by their counterparts who had been hired by the city to build the road. In Baltimore, only The Society was lucky enough to have this level of resources. Getting at the financial records of these groups is not difficult. Information on their financial statuses, bills for the services of lawyers and consultants and other clues can be found in meeting minutes and buried in archives. The first step is to explore historical record.

Another important reason for utilizing a historical approach, particularly in the case of environmental justice research, is the need to identify processes that lead to the development of disamenities. Numerous EJ scholars have argued for the need to examine process (Szasz and Meuser 1997; Marwah et al. 1997; Weinberg 1998; Pellow 2000). Many have produced excellent historical studies (Hurley 1997; Bolin et al. 2002; Boone 2002, 2005; Colten 2005; Bolin, Grineski and Collins 2005; Saha and Mohai 2005; Wolch et al. 2005; Ueland and Warf 2006; Wells, Buckley and Boone 2008.). Eschewing casual examinations of patterns and distributions, these studies use historical data to reach more comprehensive and useful conclusions. In 1999, Boone and Modarres wrote that “to understand the compound and sometimes subtle patterns of decision making in siting
hazardous activities, *historical and place-specific analysis* is essential [author’s emphasis] (165). Local histories, such as the one told here, therefore contribute to a broader picture by providing detailed reports on how certain processes function. This study has shown that highway hearings were an arena largely controlled by planners and politicians. Such hearings provided groups like MAD with a voice, but simultaneously limited their influence. As Szasz and Meuser write “understanding the historical dynamics – how environmental inequalities are generated over decades – is not merely an academic exercise. It can help determine movement goals, policy demands, and legal strategies” (2000, 603). Understanding the process of highway hearings and the historical context in which these groups existed then allows us to understand why groups took the specific actions that they did.

Related to this, it is imperative that we examine how actors utilize “politics of scale.” In the case of the “road fight,” each group attempted to utilize politics of scale to escape the limitations imposed on them by their opponents. To a large degree, the success or failure of each group to effectively “jump scales” determined the overall efficacy of the group’s efforts. Manipulating the scale at which engagement would take place, for example, challenging planners in court or by utilizing the National Historic Preservation Act, allowed the “road fighters” to contest decision-makers and erect concrete obstacles to construction. For environmental justice research, which is almost always concerned with conflict over the use or appropriation of space, the conceptualization of politics of scale is extremely important. Not only does it provide an important means of re-envisioning how groups protest, but it can also offer insights into how actors think, their goals and their resources. For example, the fact that The Society chose to highlight the
historical importance of Federal Hill and Fells Point casts light on the nature of the group itself. That they were able to achieve historic district status for these neighborhoods in a timely and efficient manner is indicative of their relative affluence and access to the “political stream.” On the other side of the equation, MAD’s stubborn insistence on protesting via highway hearings dramatically limited their ability to effect change. In any case, the importance of investigating politics of scale is hard to overstate.

In summary, the development and uneven implementation of Baltimore’s highway network was the result of myriad factors and processes. Broadly, both local history and local geography played an important role in the selection of routes for highway alignments. For example, the history of the Franklin-Mulberry corridor as a major thoroughfare made it a popular choice for road builders, while the exigencies of terrain, cost and a desire to combat deindustrialization motivated planners to select Federal Hill and Fells Point. During the extremely active phase of highway planning between 1960 and 1968, squabbles within city hall, disagreements between the city’s Planning Department and the Expressway Consultants and schisms within the UDCT all played a significant role in the shift from the 1960 Plan to the 10D plan to the 3C plan and finally to the 3A plan and its sub-variants.

Overlapping and continuing beyond these years, popular resistance to urban highways in the form of a “freeway revolt” played the most important role in shaping the city’s highway geography. In general, the key to successful resistance was to side-step the established procedures of public participation in highway planning and develop alternative means to prevent construction. While MAD protested through official channels and floundered through officially sanctioned highway hearings, groups like
SCAR and The Society were able to erect defenses for their communities that were outside the control of planners. Additionally, the tight focuses of these groups allowed them to appeal to broad, but specific constituencies. In the case of RAM, the group showed a divided focus and the result was negotiation with the city for green space and just compensation for the displaced. At the time, in the absence of broader popular dissent, RAM’s achievements were admirable. On the other hand, MAD’s broad coalition which attacked the highway across the entire city meant a diffusion of effort and an inability to make a concrete impact anywhere.

Despite their varying tactics, the timely development of anti-highway organizations during the late 1960s was crucial in preventing highway construction in Federal Hill and Fells Point. Unfortunately, the broad movement of the “freeway revolt” came only in the aftermath of RAM’s negotiations with the city and the demolition of homes in Harlem Park. It is unlikely that a true accounting of the total number of the displaced will ever be known. Disinvestment by homeowners and the area’s high proportion of renters make these figures especially difficult to determine.

What is clear is that a low-income, working class African-American neighborhood was torn apart for a project that was ultimately unsuccessful. While the Harlem Park neighborhood had been in decline since the 1940s, highway construction hastened this decline and contributed to the neighborhood’s descent into an era of crime and poverty. The displaced never truly received adequate compensation for their homes and this is especially true for those who relocated prior to 1970. For both children and adults the transition was uncomfortable, but not socially or financially destructive. One interviewee was hesitant to move, but did not want to stand in the way of “progress.” As the years
passed and the I-170 project developed into the 1.39 mile long concrete trench of the
“Highway to Nowhere,” bitterness towards an unnecessary project and remorse for the
neighborhood that was lost crept in. Today, the stark contrast between the neighborhoods
of Federal Hill, Fells Point and Harlem Park remind us not only of the consequences of
deiindustrialization, urban renewal and redevelopment, but of the impacts of urban
highway construction. Deeply suspicious of the city that inflicted the wound of the
“Highway to Nowhere,” and still plagued by crime and violence, residents of Harlem
Park live in a world dramatically disconnected from the prosperity and reinvestment
being experienced by their east side counterparts.

The freeway revolt was a victory for ordinary citizens of all races in Baltimore. Despite this, not all citizens benefited. In Harlem Park, the hearth of Baltimore’s freeway
revolt, the victory was especially costly. While the neighborhoods of Federal Hill and
Fells Point may stand as success stories of civic activism, Harlem Park and the “Highway
to Nowhere” stand as monuments to neglect and shortsightedness.
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Conclusion


APPENDIX A: CHARACTERISTICS OF BALTIMORE'S ANTI-HIGHWAY ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date established</th>
<th>Area of interest</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Movement Against Destruction (MAD)</td>
<td>August 1968</td>
<td>City-wide focus, 25 neighborhood group coalition.</td>
<td>Middle - working class whites, African Americans from West Baltimore, preservationists, civil rights activists</td>
<td>&quot;Stop the road.&quot; Prevent construction of urban expressways through Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Southeast Council Against the Road (SCAR)</td>
<td>March 1969</td>
<td>Fells Point, Canton, Highlandtown</td>
<td>Working class whites</td>
<td>Prevent construction of urban expressways through southeast Baltimore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The information presented in this table is highly generalized. Each organization had a variety of goals and aspirations. Each organization was made up of a wide variety of individuals who may or may not fall easily into the category of "constituency."

**Although The Society was interested in Federal Hill and Fells Point, few members of this organization, at least in the group's early days, lived exclusively in these neighborhoods. In general, Society members were considered "outsiders" by groups like SCAR because they were not southeast Baltimore "locals."
Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: “Understanding the impact of the construction of the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere” on residents of Harlem Park.”

Researchers: Andrew Giguere

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study
This study seeks to better understand the impact that the construction of the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere” had on residents of the Harlem Park neighborhood. In particular, this research seeks to understand where residents relocated and how that move affected their lives. In order to fulfill this research, I hope to conduct an interview with you lasting no more than one hour. This interview will contain questions about the Harlem Park neighborhood before and after construction, about the effects of relocation and about the changes that you have seen in the neighborhood since the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Lastly, I hope to gather information on what you think should be done with the highway now that the city is considering implementing a mass transit project through the area.

Risks and Discomforts
No risks or discomfort are anticipated.

Benefits
Some research has been conducted on the “Highway to Nowhere.” The majority of this research, however, has dealt with the development, siting and construction of the highway. No research has sought to understand the impact of the road on the lives of the people who were displaced by it. By examining information gathered from this interview, scholars will have a more complete picture of the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.” Not only will we understand how the road was developed and built, but we will also know some of the consequences that urban highway building has on residential populations and the neighborhoods through which urban highways run.
Confidentiality and Records
The interview for this research will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. This recording will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and only available to the lead investigator. By signing this form you are consenting to the use of your name. Information gathered from this interview will be used in completing this research project and you may be quoted.
☐ Check this box if you do not want your name to be used.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;
* [Insert sponsors of the research, if any, who will have access to identifiable data]

Compensation
There is no monetary compensation attached to your participation in this research.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:
Andrew Giguere at (443) 602-9766 or Gigueand@gmail.com.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol you are 18 years of age or older your participation in this research is given voluntarily you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature __________________________ Date __________________

Printed Name__________________________
Dear Sir:

My name is Andrew Giguere and I am a graduate student at Ohio University. For the past year I have been working to complete my master’s thesis on the development of Baltimore’s highway network. In particular, my research focuses on the construction of the I-170 “Highway to Nowhere.” A major part of my research is understanding where people who were displaced by this project went and how their lives were affected by it. In addition, I am trying to understand how West Baltimore has changed since the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.”

I was first introduced to your name in an article published in the Baltimore Sun in 2003. In the article, “Road to Remembrance; reunion: former childhood pals whose neighborhoods were broken up by the I-170 project plan to recall old times in gathering today,” you spoke about life in West Baltimore before and after the construction of the “Highway to Nowhere.”

If you would be willing, I would like to interview you about your experiences with regards to the “Highway to Nowhere.” Due to time and money constraints, I would like to interview you via telephone. This interview should last less than one hour. In order to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed and to potentially establish a time for that interview, I will telephone you on Monday, February 23. I will try to contact you between 10 AM and 12 PM and, if I am unable to contact you at that time, I will try again between 5 PM and 7 PM. If you would like to contact me for any reason or to set-up an interview time you can contact me at the following number: (443) 602-9766.

You can also contact me via e-mail at the following address: Gigueand@gmail.com

If you are willing to be interviewed, I must ask that you sign a consent form. This form is included in this letter and explains the exact nature of my research and details how any information I might gather from an interview with you would be used. If you are willing to be interviewed, please sign the consent form, place it in the included envelope and deposit it in the mail. In order to use any information gathered from an interview this form must be signed and returned to me.
Please feel free to contact me any time if you have questions. As I mentioned earlier, I will try to contact you on Monday, February 23 to see if you are willing to be interviewed and to establish a good time for that interview.

It is my hope that with your help I can add to what scholars already know about urban highways and perhaps find new uses for the “Highway to Nowhere.”

Thank you,

Andrew M. Giguere
Graduate Student
Department of Geography
Ohio University