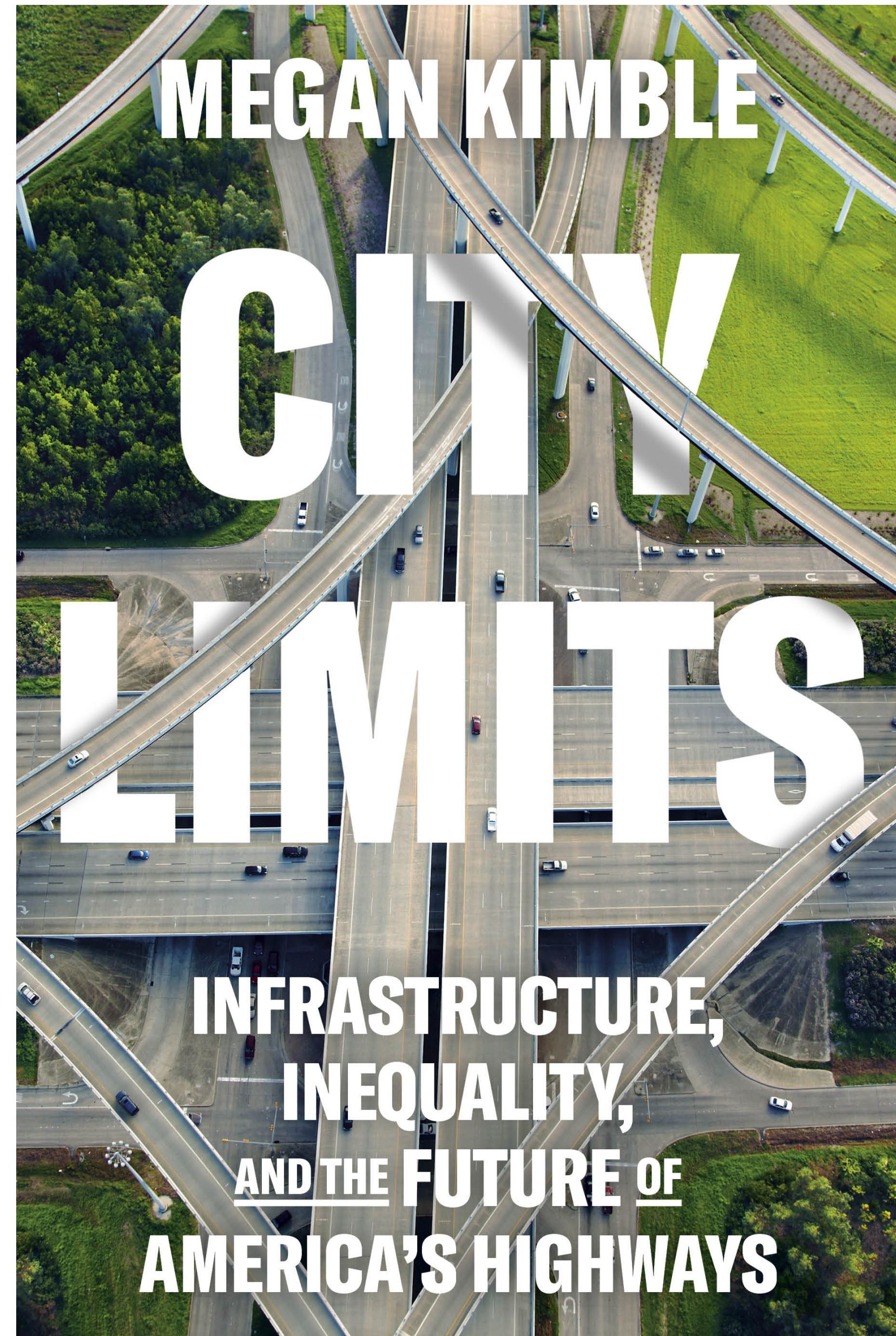


City Limits

Infrastructure, Inequality, and the
Future of America's Highways

Megan Kimble





The New York Times / How a Washington Park That Doesn't Exist Created Affordable Housing

A decade in the works, the 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C., has yet to be built. But it could be a model for how to create public space while lessening the effects of gentrification.

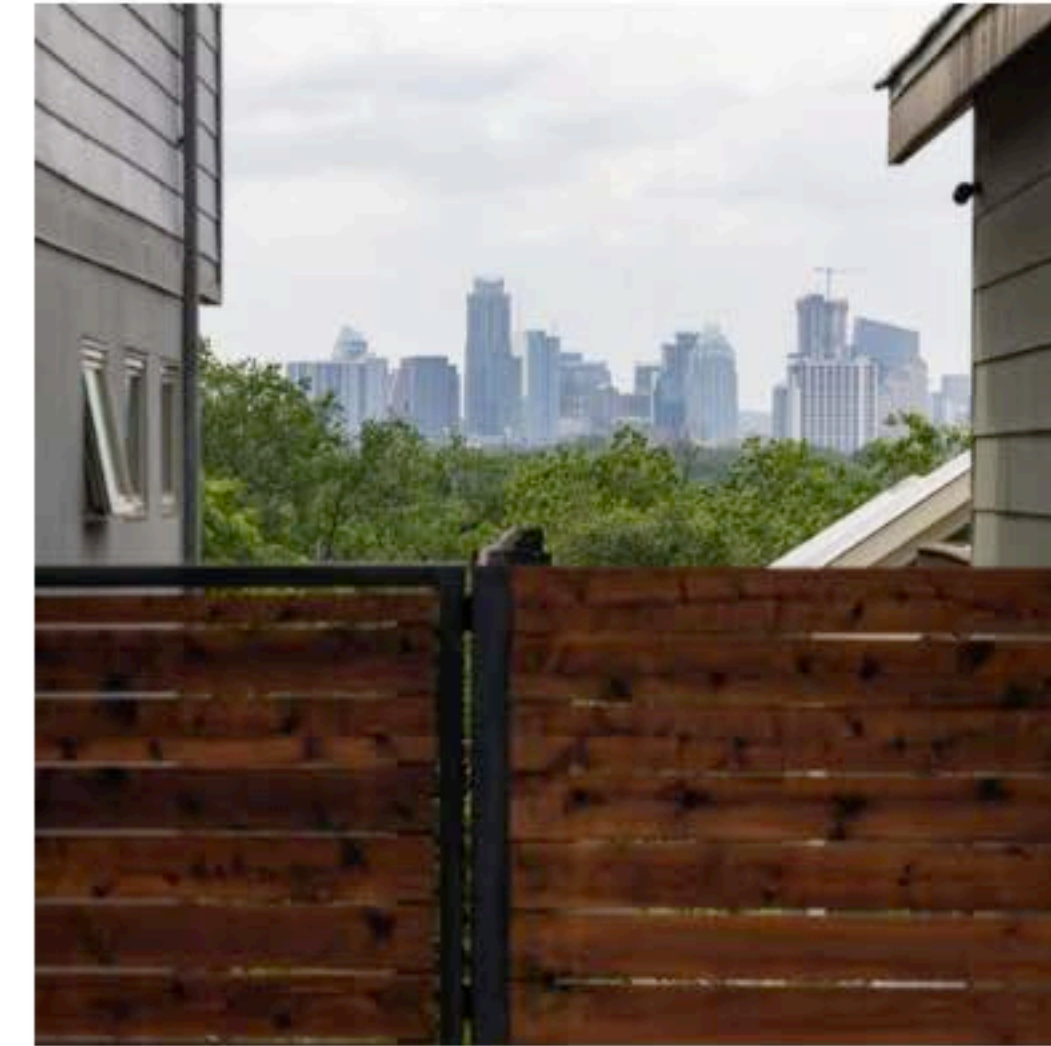
[Read](#)



Grist / Texas is skirting federal environmental law to push for highway expansion

The state department of transportation says many of its highway projects have “no significant impact.”

[Read](#)

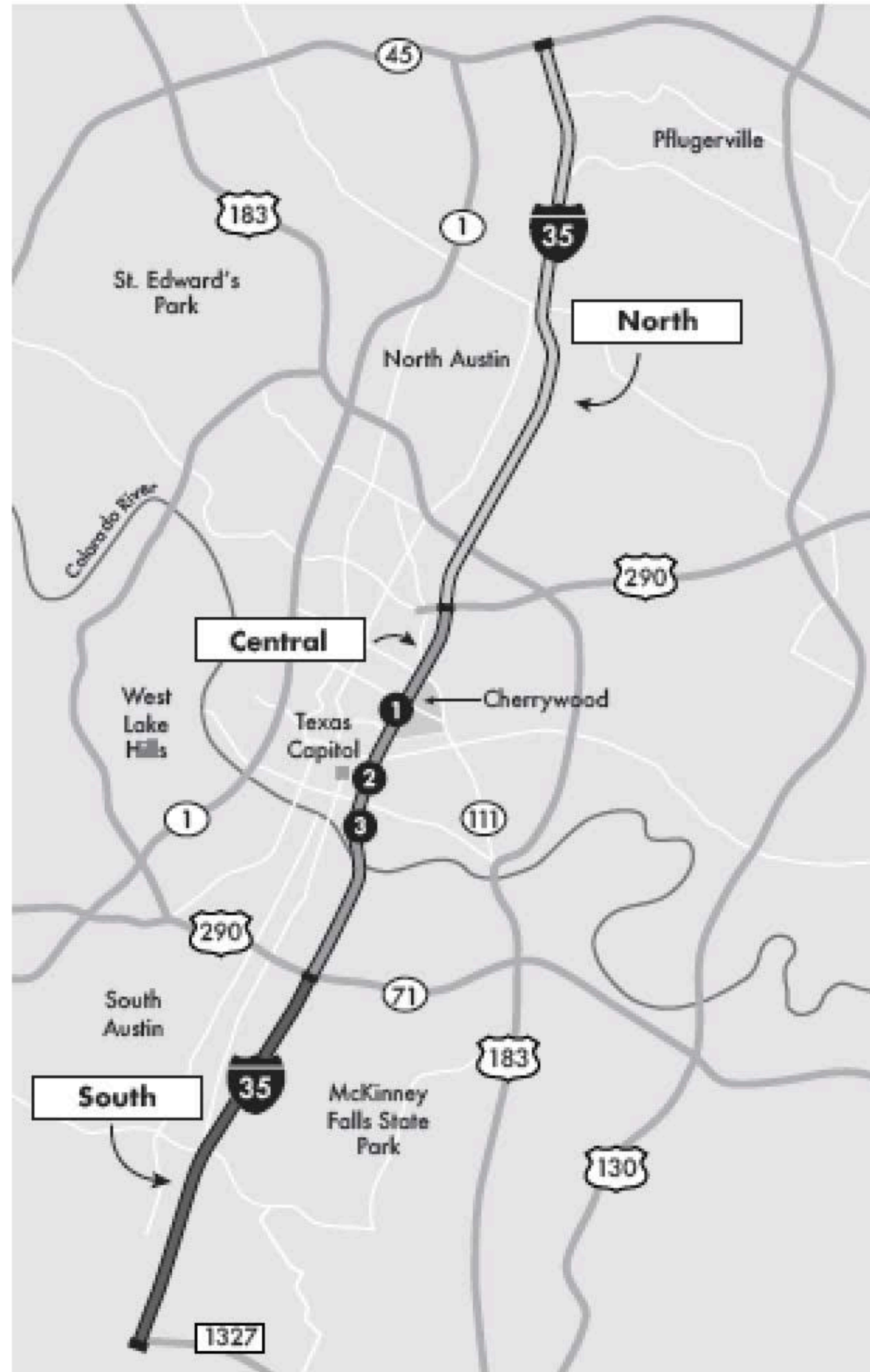


Bloomberg / Desperate for Housing, Austin Seeks Relief in Rezoning

The booming Texas capital's efforts to revise its land development code and build more affordable housing have been thwarted by protests from homeowners.

[Read](#)

I-35







I-45





The Law of Peak-Hour Expressway Congestion

ANTHONY DOWNS

Mr. Downs is Director of Retail Analysis for the Real Estate Research Corporation in Chicago, and a member of the Board of Directors of that Corporation. He holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University and has been a faculty member of the University of Chicago in the Economics and Political Science departments. He has published articles and reviews in his field, is a staff writer for the Journal of Property Management and for The National Market Letter, and the author of An Economic Theory of Democracy.

RECENT experience on expressways in large U. S. cities suggests that traffic congestion is here forever. Apparently, no matter how many new superroads are built connecting outlying areas with the downtown business district, auto-driving commuters still move at a crawl during the morning and evening rush hours.

To many a frustrated commuter, this result indicates abysmally bad foresight by highway planners. However, the real cause of peak-hour congestion is not poor planning, but the operation of traffic equilibrium. In fact, its results are so automatic we can even put them in the form of Downs's Law of Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion, or Parkinson's Second Law adapted to traffic: *On urban commuter expressways, peak-hour traffic congestion rises to meet maximum capacity.*¹

Behind this law lies a complex set of forces which we can best analyze by constructing a model of commuter decision-making based on the following assumptions:

1. Every commuter seeks to minimize the total amount of time he spends en route to and from work, within four major constraints:

1. C. Northcote Parkinson, *The Law and the Profits*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1960. It should be noted that this article deals exclusively with expressways which do not require their users to pay any direct tolls in order to drive upon them. The possibility of limiting congestion on such roads by introducing high tolls has been extensively discussed in the literature of economics and highway planning. However, most of the commuter expressways currently being built do not levy any direct tolls on their users. Therefore the analysis presented in this paper is relevant to the majority of cities in which commuter expressways exist, are under construction, or are being planned. For a discussion of the toll problem, see James Buchanan, "Private Ownership and Common Usage: The Road Case Re-Examined," *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, January 1956, 305-316.

widening urban highways doesn't fix traffic.

why are we spending billions of dollars widening urban highways?



“highways create prosperity”

= lots of money to expand highways

Proposition 1: \$16.4 billion (to date) to State Highway Trust Fund

Proposition 7: \$18.8 billion (to date) to State Highway Trust Fund

“Pursuant to Section 49-g(c), Article III, Texas Constitution, the funds **may only be used** for constructing, maintaining, and acquiring rights-of-way for public roadways other than toll roads.”

Texas Clear Lanes congestion-relief projects: \$66.7 billion total investment for completed, under-construction, and planned non-tolled projects since 2015.

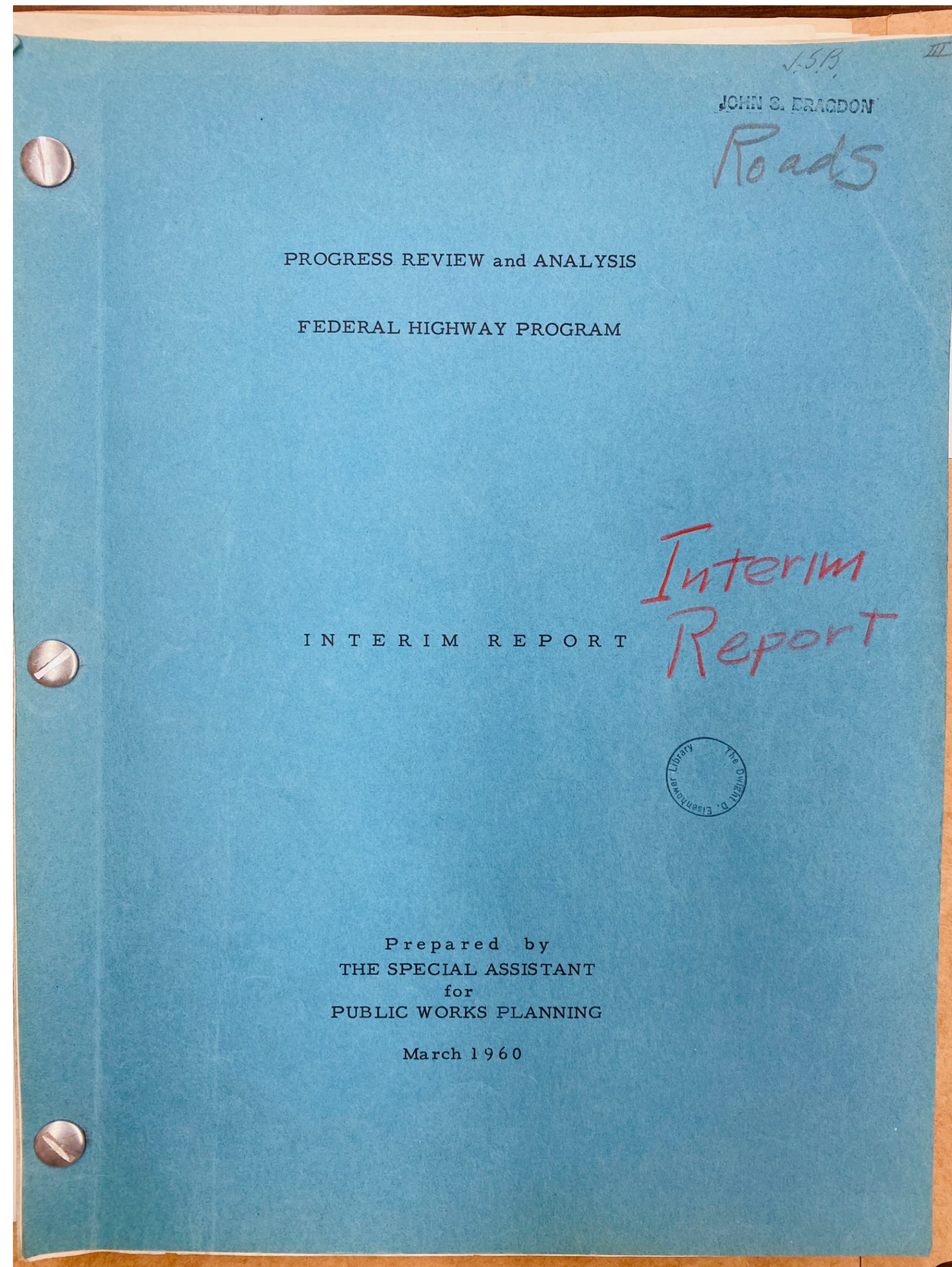
But wait! It wasn't supposed to be this way.



General John S. Bragdon

1959: Urban highways consuming 44 percent of federal money while accounting for only 10 percent of total mileage

Did Congress think federal money should be spent to solve local congestion?



“We do not believe that Interstate highways should be directed towards the center of congestion, as is now the case. Nor do we believe that inner loops, which are primarily for the purpose of solving intra-city problems, should be a part of the Interstate system ... More emphatically, we do not believe that the Interstate System is the vehicle for solving rush-hour traffic problems, or for local bottlenecks ... **Practically all the experts on the transportation problem of cities agree that rapid transit and mass transit systems are the solution.** Rapid transit and mass transit, by means of subways, commuter trains, special bus lines, are the answers for solving this problem.”

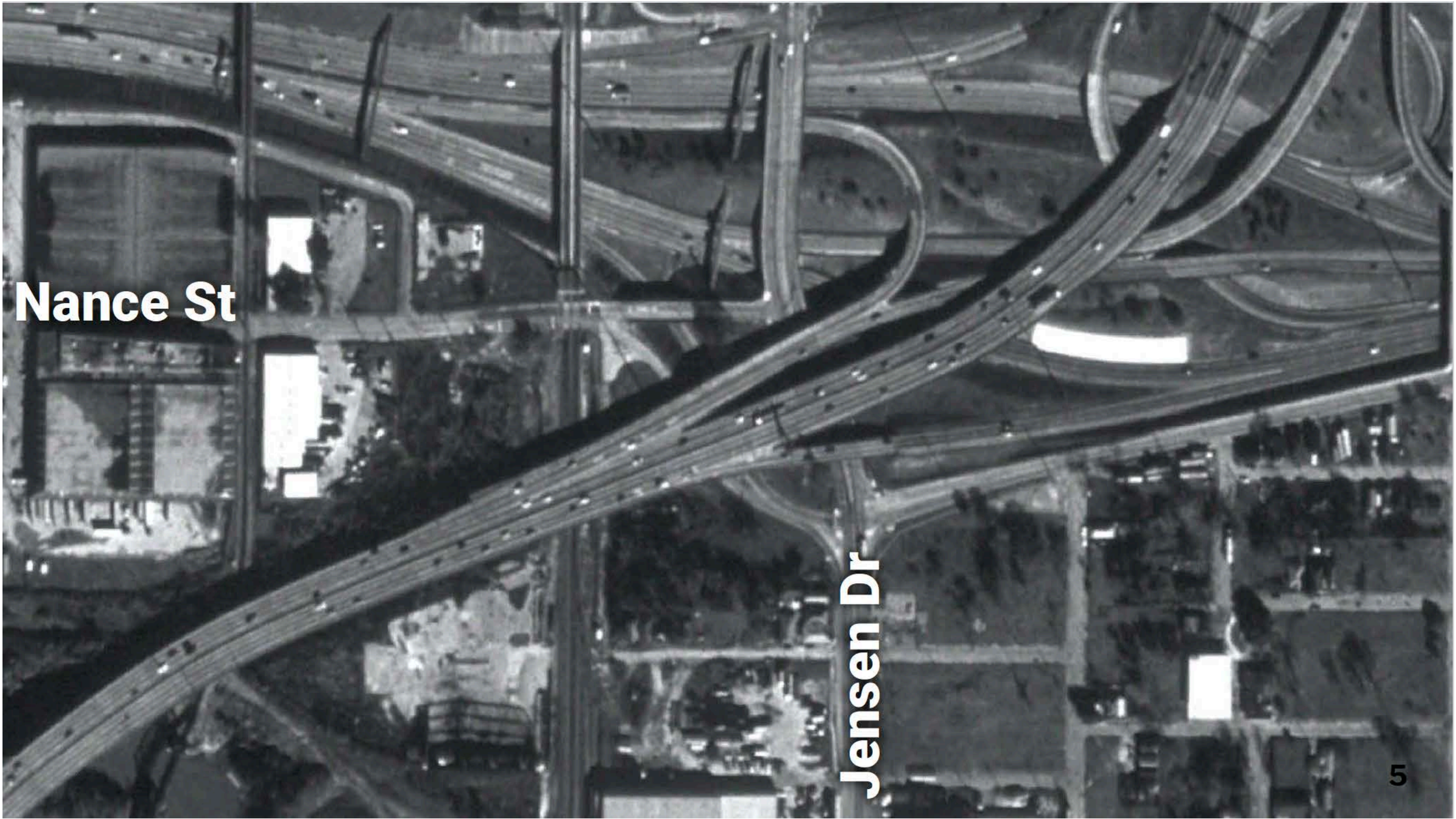
Eisenhower, 1960: “The matter of running Interstate routes through the congested parts of the cities was entirely against his original concept and wishes; that he never anticipated that the program would turn out this way... He was certainly not aware of any concept of using the program to build up an extensive intra-city route network as part of the program he sponsored.”

Before I-10 & I-69

Nance St

Jensen Dr

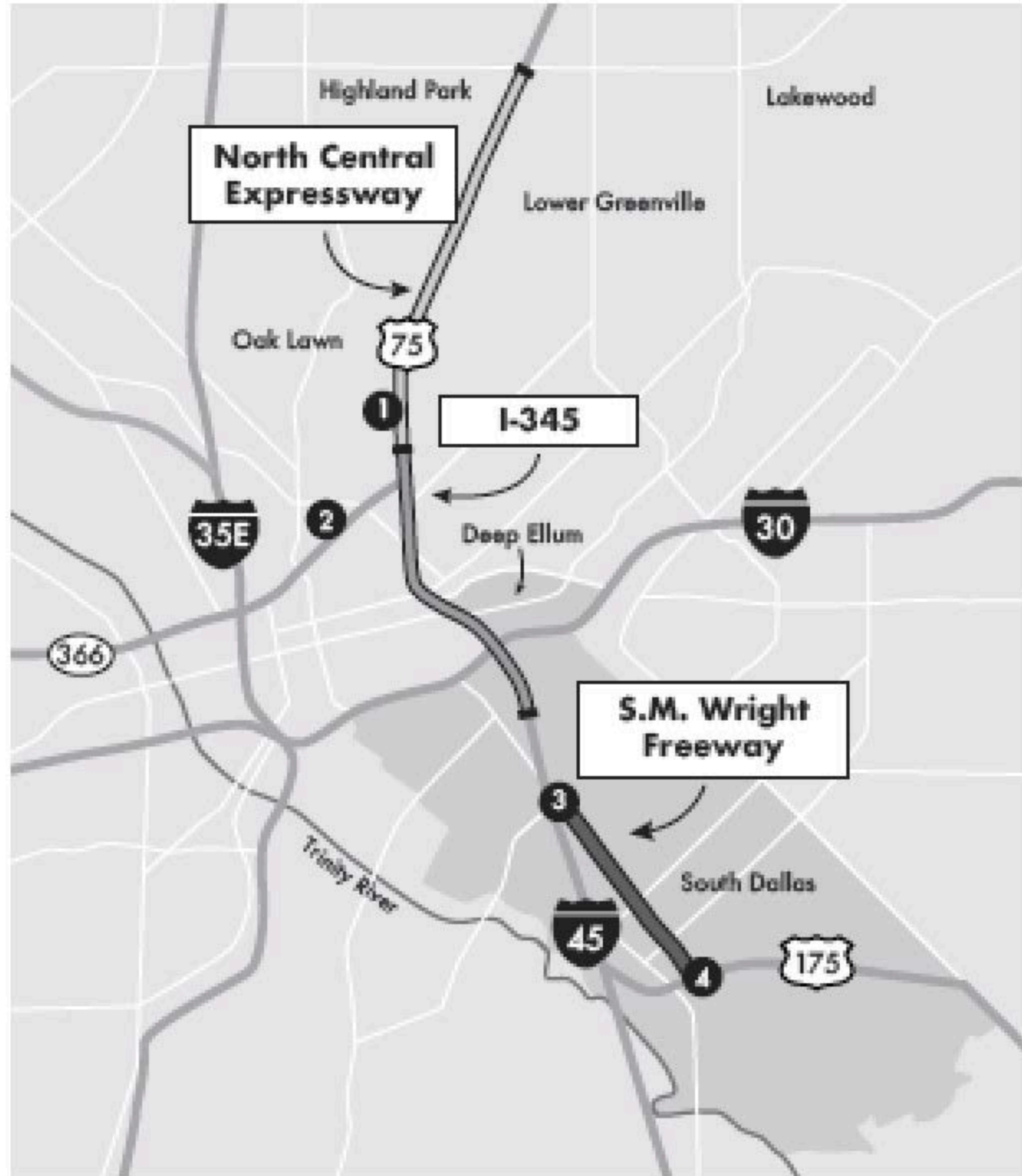




Nance St

Jensen Dr

I-345



377 acres of land

\$9 billion development potential

\$255 million property tax revenue

26,000 housing units

Figure 4: Comparison of 2014 Texas, U.S., and Worldwide CO₂ Emissions

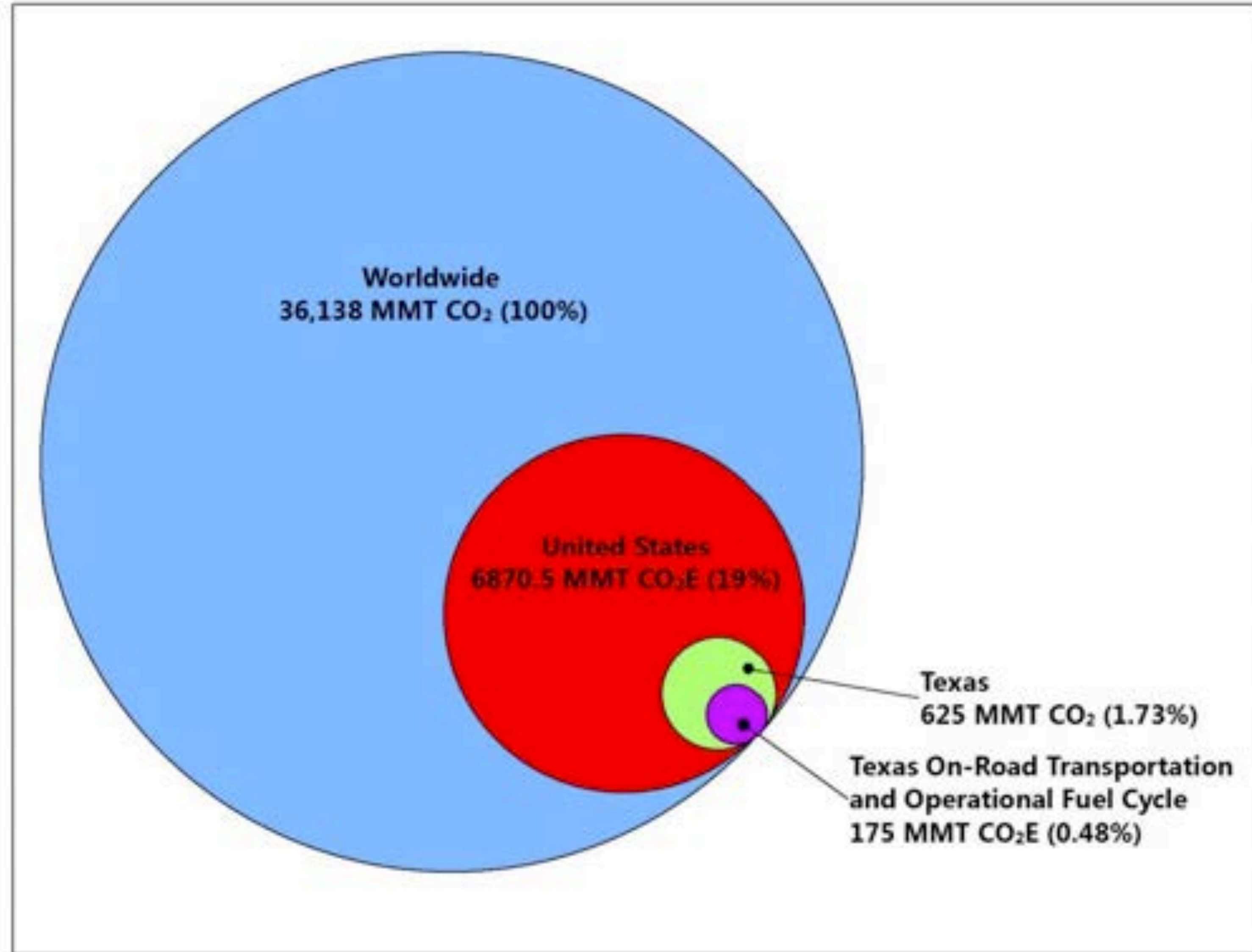
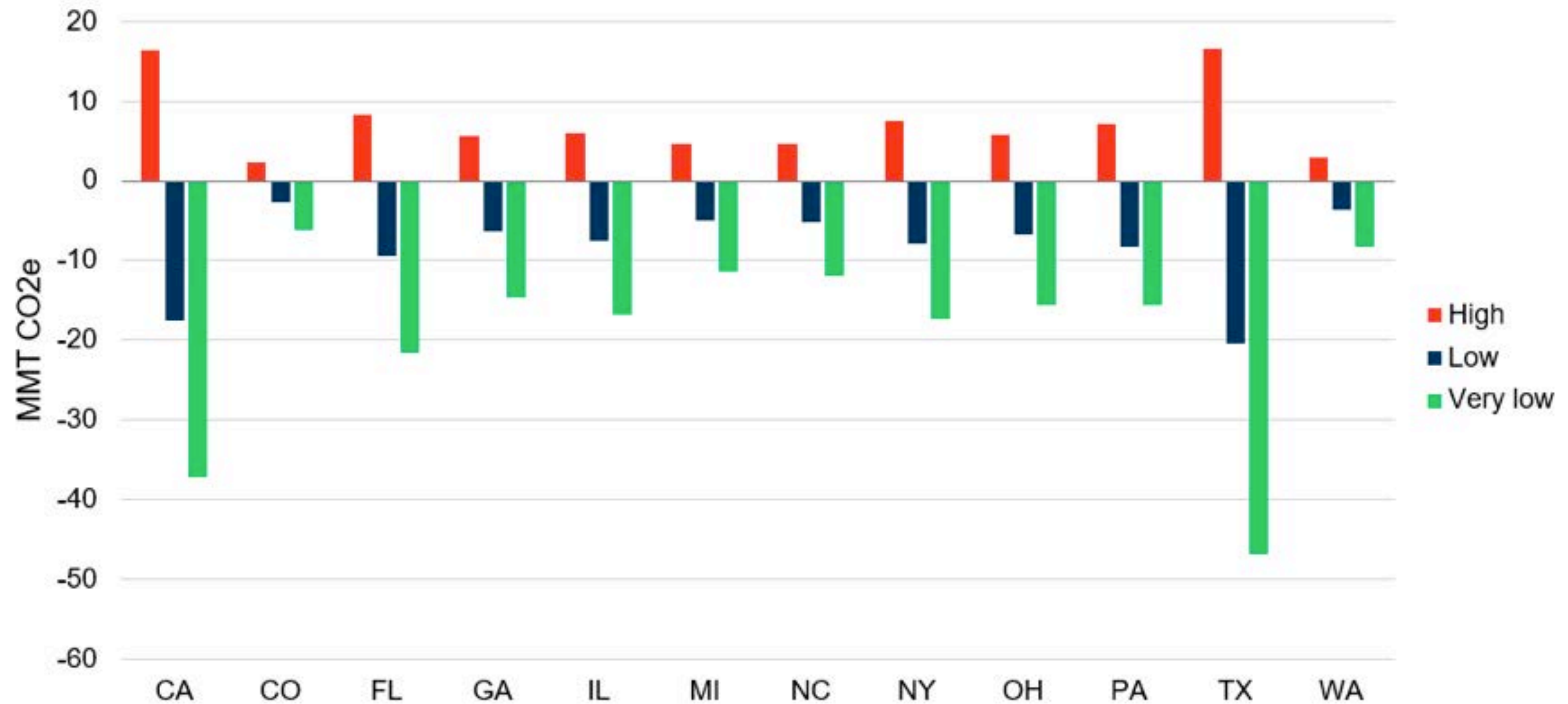


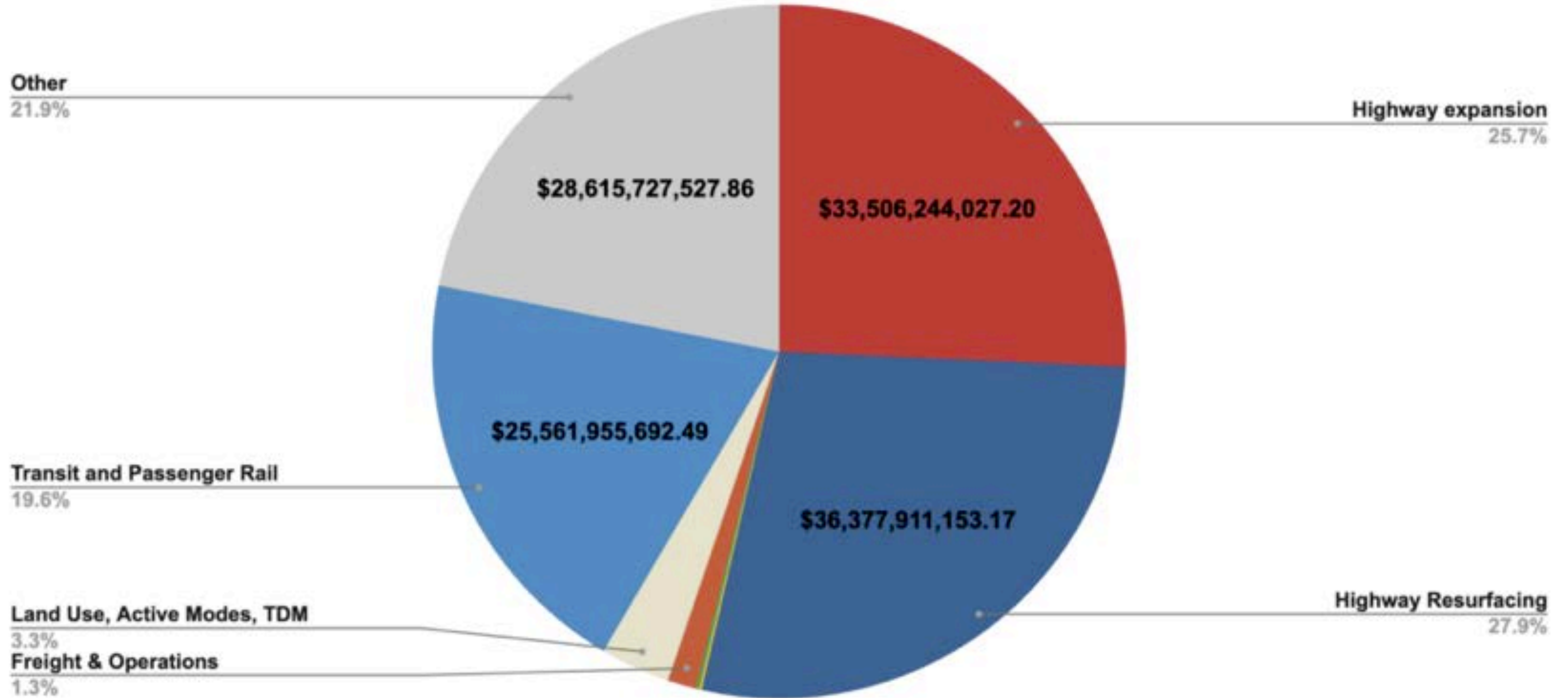
Figure 2: State investment decisions could shift road transportation GHGs up or down
Cumulative change in GHG emissions from on-road transportation by scenario and state, relative to Baseline (2022-2040).



"Across the 12 states, we found that minimizing further highway expansion was the most important lever to avoid putting upward pressure on transportation emissions."

Analysis of reported obligated IIJA funding \$ by investment categories

Data from AI-assisted analysis of 57,443 FTA, FRA, OST, and FHWA award obligations reported to USAspending.gov



The Fighters



A first-of-its-kind gathering of highway opponents from 25 groups across the US convened in Cincinnati in October 2023. Photo: Joe Simon

Citylab | Transportation

The New Generation of Freeway Fighters Is Assembling

Foes of US highway expansions, fueled by environmental and equity concerns, gathered at a summit to share strategy, compare notes and try to forge a national movement.



By Megan Kimble









This could have been an EMAIL

STOP TXDOT THIS EXPANSION THERE'S A BETTER WAY!

Our Road Our SAY

TXDONT

INVEST IN RESIDENTS

BROADWAY 70% WATER APPROX

47% of CHGR MISSISSIPPI TOVA TRANSPORT

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

PLANETARY HEALTH PLAN HIGHWAY

STOP TXDOT 145 HAS SAID

REGISTER TO GO

TRANSIT IS THE FUTURE

Invest in people PEOPLE HIGHWAYS

Planning Without Permission

2834 DAYS EXECUTIVE TXDOT

Dont Dest Recon

3:59:59 UNTIL NEXT TXDOT ROAD DEATH

STOP THE OBSESSION WITH CONGESTION

FREEWAY NO WAY!!!

BIKE COME & TAKE IT

ROAD DIETS WORK



