

Are You A Vanguard? Application Deadline Extended

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Want To Remove a Highway? Here's the Key to a Successful Teardown

CityBeautiful looks at what differentiates cities that successfully removed freeways.

AYSHA KHAN APRIL 23, 2024

How to Remove a Highway



This is your **second of three** free stories this month. Become a free or sustaining member to read unlimited articles, webinars and ebooks.

BECOME A MEMBER

Back in 2008, the Congress for New Urbanism released its first report in its ongoing series, [Freeways Without Futures](#). The report looked at 10 highways that were reaching the end of their designed lifespan and were being targeted by local activists for teardowns. Of those, three have successfully been removed 16 years later: Seattle’s Alaskan Way Viaduct, the Sheridan Expressway in the Bronx, and Route 34 in New Haven, Connecticut.

What separates those effective highway removal campaigns from those in other cities? “There are some common threads and lessons that local leaders and activists can learn from to turn their endangered highways into extinct highways,” says Dave Amos, Cal Poly city planning professor and [Next City Vanguard](#) alum, on the latest video on his YouTube channel, [City Beautiful](#).

Most are in cities where urban population growth has stagnated, meaning these highways have fallen far short of transportation departments’ notoriously inflated traffic predictions (especially given how suburbanization hollowed out many of these East Coast cities). And political support is obviously crucial, too, especially if political leaders can be convinced that the property can be utilized in a more productive way that boosts local economic development.

Dig into Next City’s archives to read more about proposed highway removals from [Oakland](#) to [Baltimore](#). Follow CityBeautiful [on YouTube](#) and subscribe on Patreon to support the [channel](#).

And if you’d like to be a part of Next City’s Vanguard program, joining Amos and hundreds of other urban leaders across the country, apply to [join us in Lexington, Kentucky](#) this fall!

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Imagine a world where every voice is heard and where every community thrives. This world isn’t just a dream; it’s a possibility, a reality that you, as an integral part of Next City’s network of city-builders, help to create.

But, let’s face it—the journey isn’t easy. You know too well the adversaries we face together: entrenched bureaucracies, outdated systems, and societal structures designed to divide and diminish. These challenges are real, and they can sometimes make you feel isolated in your pursuit of a better world. Yet, you persist, fueled by the belief that change is not just possible but is happening right now.

That’s where Next City steps in. We are your ally. Our stories aren’t just stories—they are affirmations that change is underway. Our articles, webinars, podcast episodes and ebooks provide you with inspiration, but also with the insights and information necessary to fuel change that brings about more equitable and inclusive communities.

And now, more than ever, we need your support. The status quo ought no longer be acceptable. Next City has continuously published for 20 years, and for even longer, our leaders have said we must be impatient

for change. Today, in everything from our politics to our climate, I believe we are at a pivotal moment when action in cities cannot be desired but required.

As a Next City reader, you are already taking responsibility. You recognize that the systems you are part of matter, and you are committed to making a difference. There are 45,000 of you subscribed to Next City's newsletters, 175,000 following us on social media, and over 1 million people visit nextcity.org each year. Each has a different capacity to give, but every donation, no matter the size, makes a significant impact.

By donating to Next City, you are not only supporting our mission but also breaking down barriers and challenging norms. Your contribution is a powerful tool that enables our journalists to continue unearthing and sharing the stories that catalyze change and remind us all of what's possible when we come together.

So, we invite you to take this step with us. **Use the button below to make a contribution to Next City today, and be part of a collective effort to build a just, inclusive and sustainable future for all.** Your donation today is more than just a gift—it's a commitment to a future we all believe in.

With gratitude,
Lucas Grindley
Executive Director, Next City

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Aysha Khan is the managing editor at Next City.

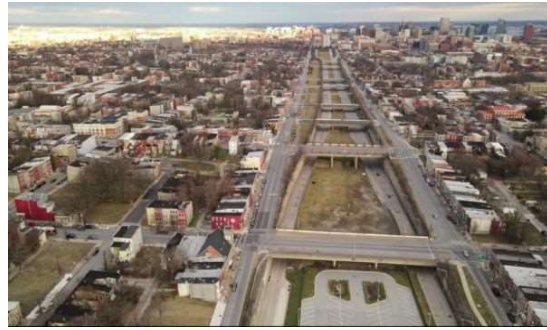
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