

SAVE THE BASIN RESERVE  
NO FLYOVER

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## Flyovers are flawed designs

The design of a flyover raises a city street to overhead levels, requiring height sufficient for vehicles to pass underneath while also creating unattractive, dead space at ground level. The top level increases noise, vibration, and particulate pollution for the neighbouring environment, while underneath the space is unattractive, isolated, invites graffiti and loitering, and can become a haven for public nuisance and criminal activity.

Flyovers, or overpasses in North America, are attributed to city planners in the 1940s and 1950s seeking quick solutions for rebuilding post-war cities.

With advances in street design and materials and a re-emphasis on public transport, flyovers have become viewed by many planners as inefficient, unwanted relics of the past.

### Cities around the world are tearing down flyovers

Cities around the world are removing, not building, flyovers; among them Toronto, Seoul, Boston, Milwaukee, Vancouver, Trenton New Jersey, Portland Oregon, Chattanooga Tennessee.

Robert Cervero, a University of California professor, wrote about this trend in Freeway Deconstruction and Urban Regeneration in the United States:

"Despite worsening traffic congestion, a number of American cities have or are in the midst of demolishing elevated structures in favor of at-grade boulevards and arterials with far less traffic carrying capacities."

He describes the benefits to communities around the world that are tearing down freeways because they create barriers between communities and decrease land values. When San Francisco's Embarcadero freeway, one long flyover at the harbour, was torn down in 1991 it was replaced by "an attractively landscaped more 'human scale' boulevard, improved transit, pedestrian and bikeway facilities and new public spaces."

A flyover in Massachusetts elicited this comment:

"How ugly is the McCarthy Overpass, the elevated highway dividing Union Square and East Somerville? Its steel is rusted and flaking, its concrete pockmarked and crumbling. The underside is a lunar landscape of concrete dust, litter, and pigeon droppings."

The headline in the London Evening Standard, 13 July, 2012 was short and to the point:

"Flyovers are so outdated we need tunnel vision

The truth is the flyovers are eyesores that are as outdated as their crumbling structures suggest. They're the legacy of a failed vision that London's planners dreamed up when a post-war vogue for redesigning the city inspired by the Swiss architect."

In 1991, following damage from an earthquake, San Francisco demolished its harbour-side Central Freeway - a series of overpasses hiding the historic Ferry Building – and replaced it with a street level boulevard.

In 2002 Melbourne demolished a flyover - which had been built in 1961 – and “removed an eyesore”. According to The Age, “Deputy Lord Mayor Susan Riley said the decision would remove a “psychological barrier” between the city and the river.”

## Auckland Council proposes tearing down the Hobson St flyover

Even Auckland has realised that flyovers destroy urban environments.

In its City Master Plan it acknowledges that:

“At present, the council-owned, 1900-space Downtown Car Park building and Lower Hobson flyover mar the area. They obscure views to the city from the waterfront, act as a barrier to pedestrian movement, and create an unattractive environment.”

Its 2012 Waterfront Plan reiterates the proposal to remove the Hobson Street flyover.

## Plans to build flyovers face public opposition

The Times of India reported in 2012:

“Two civic groups have approached the Bombay high court (HC) to stop the process of sanctioning three flyovers at the College of Engineering, Pune, (CoEP) junction and to direct the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to stop work related to the road infrastructure.

In 2010, city-based NGOs, Nagrik Chetna Manch (NCM) and Parisar, had filed a PIL objecting to the “arbitrary manner” in which the PMC is undertaking construction of flyovers without adhering to norms, guidelines and without any detailed study or research to establish the real need or necessity for flyovers in the respective areas proposed for construction.”

Comments in The New York Times on 26 September, 2012, referring to Louisville, Kentucky’s plans for an overpass, could describe the plans for the Basin Reserve flyover:

“The proposal, so clearly out of step, has been met with grass-roots opposition and is now in the courts, tied up over issues about financing, tolls and the environment.”

The Cebu Philippines Daily News, November 2012, begins its article: “There are cheaper and better ways to solve traffic congestion than building flyovers.”

Its words mirror criticism levelled at NZTA’s process in Wellington:

“The study narrowed down the alternatives to flyovers and one underpass only – two very expensive projects – and compared them simply against the existing conditions.”