

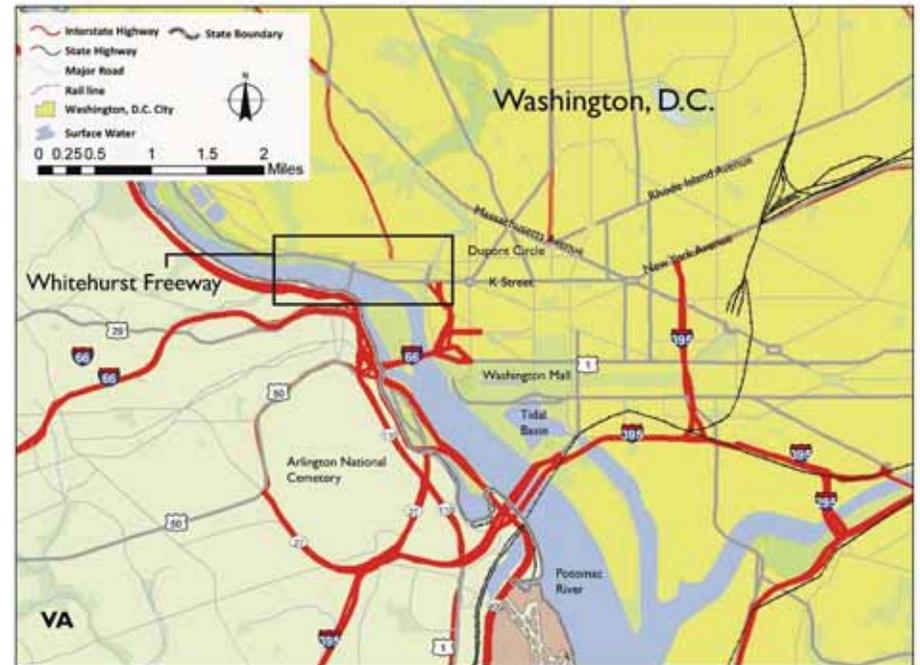
Whitehurst Freeway

	Whitehurst Freeway	I-81
Type	elevated highway	existing elevated highway - TBD
Interstate Highway?	no	yes
Through Traffic?	yes	yes
Vehicles /Day	42,000	100,000
Project Length	0.6 miles	1.4 mi.
Context	waterfront	downtown
City	Washington, DC	Syracuse, NY
Population	591,833	140,658
Project Stage	planning	planning
Estimated cost	unknown	unknown

Regional Context



Project Location



The Whitehurst Freeway is a short section of limited access highway that connects Georgetown to central Washington DC. It is used primarily by commuters and functions as a spur route serving the local area. It is elevated and has substantial noise impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

What was the decision-making process?

In the mid-1980s, the Capital District Department of Transportation initiated a study to look at the feasibility of deconstructing the freeway. The study, which was also to serve as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), focused on a broad range of issues, including traffic operations, transit and pedestrian services, and possibilities for improved access to a waterfront park along the Potomac River in Georgetown. Urban design and environmental features were considered important factors.

Part way through the study, it was halted by the mayor of Washington, D.C. due to opposition to removal from commuters and local residents who feared increased traffic on their local streets. At the present time, there is no official consideration of removal of this road, although there continues to be discussion in the community.

What can *The I-81 Challenge* learn from this effort?

The Whitehurst Freeway has much lower traffic volumes and fewer geometric design issues than I-81 in Syracuse. It serves primarily commuter traffic into Washington, D.C. The process that considered options of removing the freeway proved to be divisive within the community, with some strongly supporting removal and others fearful of the traffic impacts. In addition, commuters from Maryland and Virginia suburbs expressed strong opposition to removal, eventually leading to cancellation of the study. The process failed to develop a consensus solution, and some of the stakeholders were not involved early enough in the process.

For More Information:

<http://www.ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1249,q,625355.asp>

