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Roads Not Taken: The Legacy of Boston's Unbuilt Freeway

Abstract:

The Inner Belt, or I-695, was a proposed addition to Boston's highway system that would have cut through dense areas like Cambridge and Somerville. The Inner Belt was never built due to community resistance, and its ultimate defeat illuminates an unusual story in the history of urban renewal: one where community-first development beat intrusive infrastructure. The proposed Inner Belt freeway illuminates the pitfalls of intrusive top-down infrastructure, and the decision to discontinue the project stands out as a choice to value people over cars.