

# Calif. car culture killed promise of 20-minute commute

By Meghan McCarty Carino, KPCC

As an innovator and early adopter of freeways, California became the symbolic capital of car culture. But the ease of movement conferred by the massive postwar freeway building boom was short-lived, turning the dream of car travel into a nightmare of congestion and long commutes.

The story of how Californians went from getting around to getting stuck behind the wheel is deeply entwined with the history of the urban freeway, an enterprise that advanced earlier and on a larger scale here than anywhere else in the country.

Half a century ago, there was reason for optimism about cars. Los Angeles native Michael Alexander remembers the days when the old saying about getting anywhere in Los Angeles in 20 minutes actually held true.

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