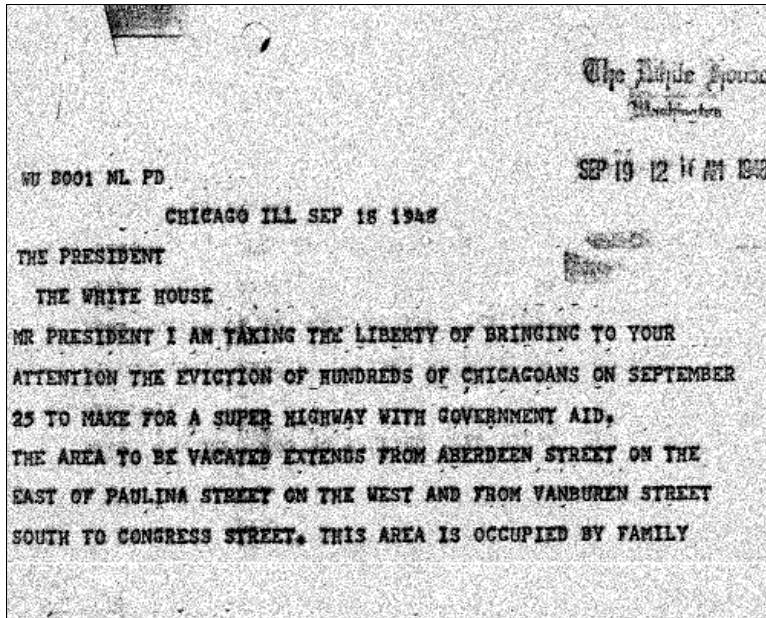
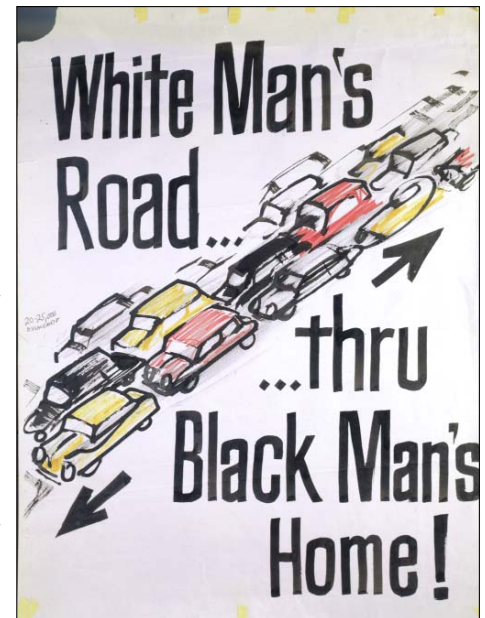


## Taking a Deeper Look

In the 1950s and 1960s, the nation's suburbs grew 10 times faster than the cities they surrounded. The Federal Housing Administration provided loans for returning soldiers to buy new homes and also offered loans to builders to create the new suburban housing. Cities were seen as risky financial investments.



Telegram (partial) courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration



Courtesy of DC Public Library, Washingtoniana Division, D.C. Community Archives, ECTC Collection, drawn by Sammie Abbott

After World War II, more than 6,000 families in Chicago lost their homes to “highway takes” in which houses were eliminated to make room for highways. Many new highways went through poor and minority neighborhoods where buildings were old and where residents may have had little political power. Protests against these new highways occurred in cities across the nation, including Washington, D.C., New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. Additionally, in 1956 the Federal-Aid Highway Act authorized the building of over 40,000 miles of high-quality highways to further tie the nation together. The federal government favored spending more money on roads than on other forms of transportation. As a result, public transportation received little funding.

**Choose one statement below and write a letter, dated from the 1950s or 1960s, to an elected official expressing your feelings on demolition and construction during that time period.**

- The federal government should have given an equal number of loans to urban dwellers to encourage them to rebuild the cities. Improved public transportation could help cities remain strong.
- It's less expensive to bulldoze old buildings than to renovate them. Older housing stock should be knocked down.
- Detached houses on lots of land promote a healthier lifestyle. Good fences make good neighbors.
- Building good housing in the cities could slow down the rate of people leaving for the suburbs and decrease the development of communities outside of cities that rely on cars and result in large consumption of fuel.