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Downtown housing best transportation solution

Submitted by [Marc Lefkowitz](#) | Last edited December 27, 2006 - 5:35pm

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If planners want to reduce traffic congestion on the highways leading into downtown, the best solution (and the only long-term solution) is to remove commuters from rush hour by having more downtown workers live close to their jobs. In other words, the best transportation strategy for revitalizing the urban core might be a *housing* strategy.

In a conventional highway planning mindset, the problem is traffic congestion at the intersection of Interstate highways. The conventional solution is to widen the roads, reduce the number of ramps to eliminate conflicting traffic movements, and otherwise try to increase the throughput of traffic through the city by increasing the supply of transportation.

In this view, the city is an obstacle to overcome so cars can drive faster. But, there's another way to think about the problem.

What if you look at the demand side of the situation and quantify the problem-- we may find there are too many commuters trying to access downtown during rush hour. If that was the case, then the solution would be to encourage more people to live downtown where they could walk to work instead of clogging up the highways.

A downtown housing strategy would get at the root cause of traffic congestion at peak hours, and it would be the best way to use transportation funds to support the redevelopment of the city. It would also reduce energy consumption and air pollution.

To start thinking about the possibilities of linking transportation investments and downtown land use, Cleveland could take some lessons from innovative planning in [Atlanta](#) and [Portland](#).

Do you have ideas to share with local planners on tying Cleveland's downtown housing goals with the goals of the Innerbelt project?

[« Critical Mass Cleveland Support Access for All! Hundreds of Cyclists Demonstrate Their Support!](#) [up](#) [Innerbelt Environmental Impact Study »](#)

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