



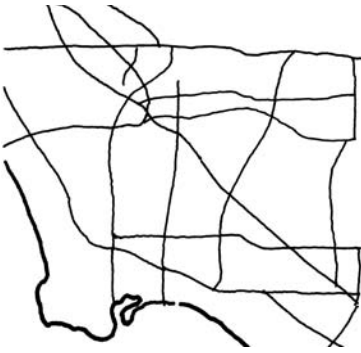
the metropolitan region are separate cities, towns, and even villages, interspersed with large areas of industry, commerce, and service. Some of these parts can be distinguished by building type, wealth, or ethnicity. People tend to live, shop, and seek entertainment in their own neighborhoods but to find work they will commonly travel long distances, even commuting daily for 1 or 1½ hours each way. The consequence is two different perceptions of Los Angeles based on separate rhythms and rituals.

TWO DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

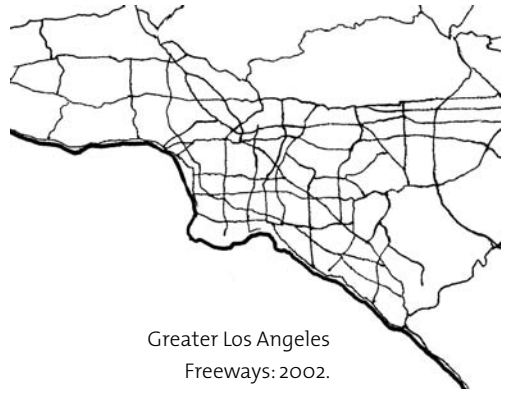
The growth of roads has produced simultaneous and conflicting views of Los Angeles. One perception comes from living in a neighborhood. The other comes from driving great distances on freeways. Both are essential for a complete understanding of life in the region.

On one level, generally corresponding with walking or driving on surface streets, Greater Los Angeles has become a collection of separate and identifiable places. Some are cities in their own right such as Santa Monica, Riverside, Pasadena, Glendale, Anaheim, and Long Beach. Others are much smaller, some taking on the character of villages.

When people drive on surface streets, in familiar places close to home, they do not measure distance by miles; instead, they count



Growth of Freeways
in Greater Los Angeles:
1950; 1960; 1970; and 1980.



Greater Los Angeles
Freeways: 2002.

the number of tasks completed. What matters is adjacency: the video store next to the dry cleaners, the school near the public library, the grocery across the street from the gas station. Along the way they see familiar patterns, individual buildings with recognizable colors, shapes, and sizes.

Sensations are multiplied by driving on surface streets within neighborhoods. People are continually stopping, leaving, and returning to their cars. They hear outside sounds and smell outside smells. They see and talk with other people as they go about their customary errands. Rituals are intimately connected with the overlapping rhythms of neighborhood life. And walking, even more than driving, gives us time to notice still smaller things: the texture of a sidewalk, the smell of fallen leaves, or a single flower over a neighbor's fence.

In comparison, the daily commute to and from work is usually point to point, from home to work and back without stops along the way. Distances on the freeway are measured in minutes or even in hours, not in miles. Drivers are mostly interested in how long it takes to get from door to door, from on-ramp to off-ramp, from one freeway through the interchange to another freeway.

People traveling by freeway on their daily commute are likely to perceive an expanding monotone with little distraction from outside the car. They shut themselves inside to avoid the onslaught of