

Growth of the use of the Verrazano span has been so phenomenal that a six-lane lower level is being planned 10 years ahead of the original schedule. This will mean even more vehicular movement through Bayway and thence north or south on Route 1.

Fierce opposition in Union County to alternate courses for the extension of I-278 appears to have been successful in blocking the project. Ignored completely is the prospect of nightmarish traffic problems for the hub of an industrial area including the county's largest city and its fourth biggest municipality.

Objections to tolls on the Union-Middlesex section of the Garden State Parkway also have been a factor in the shift away from the Union County east-west freeway. Gov. Hughes wanted tolls to help with the financing of the Central Jersey Expressway system. This becomes unnecessary as congressional legislation diverts the Route 278 project money to the Asbury Park-Trenton highway.

Meanwhile, the Greater Elizabeth Movement has seized the opportunity to advocate its Elizabeth River Parkway and Westfield Ave. extension proposals, along with construction of Route 81, as alternative means of relieving the burden on Route 1.

GEM's highway network, while it could not replace Route 278 satisfactorily in meeting the county's need for an east-west freeway, would facilitate traffic movement in Eastern Union County. The proposals would be of distinct advantage to Elizabeth as major steps in the Joint Civic Committee's plan for a \$39 million rejuvenation of the city's central business district.

It is GEM's thought that funds earmarked for Route 278 could be applied to the Elizabeth work. Right now that seems to be wishful thinking.

Central Jersey in all likelihood will get its expressway. For Elizabeth and Linden, there will be just more traffic headaches.

DIVERSION IMPEDES PROGRESS

The wheels are in motion again to divert federal highway funds, earmarked for the seven-mile East-West Extension of Route 278 between Linden and Route 78 in Springfield, for construction of an Expressway between Trenton and Asbury Park.

While this move would delight opponents of the Route 278 Extension it does not resolve the problem of what is to be done with westbound traffic dumped into the Linden area.

The reason the Route 278 Extension from Linden was proposed in the first place was because of awesome traffic projections for Union County by 1990. Delay in building the extension will only compound the problem.

The two proposed alignments for Route 278 between Linden and Springfield dissect what are now considered heavily populated sections. When Route 278 extension finally is constructed—and ultimately it must be—the cost of construction will be significantly increased. The disruption and inconvenience to the communities along the alignment will be far greater than if the extension were constructed in the near future.

Although Gov. Hughes is highly optimistic after a meeting with Federal Highway Administrator Bridwell, the battle is far from over. Bridwell endorsed the proposal to build the 37-mile New Jersey Central Expressway with funds diverted from the Route 278 project but he did not give endorsement to a bill by Rep. Howard that would raise the mileage limit on interstate system construction throughout the country by one per cent.

Increasing the interstate limit is a worthy objective for many states, including New Jersey, but in Union County it must be viewed only as a tool to impede progress.

By City Council as a Whole: Whereas, there is pending before the United States Senate a bill which would authorize an increase in the weight and size limits for trucks on interstate highways; and

Whereas, Federal acceptance of more liberalized standards would undoubtedly as a matter of course require State Legislatures to consider similar liberalization of limits of trucks on highways and streets; and

Whereas, said bill does not contemplate any increased Federal Aid to municipalities for road construction and maintenance which roads would be over-