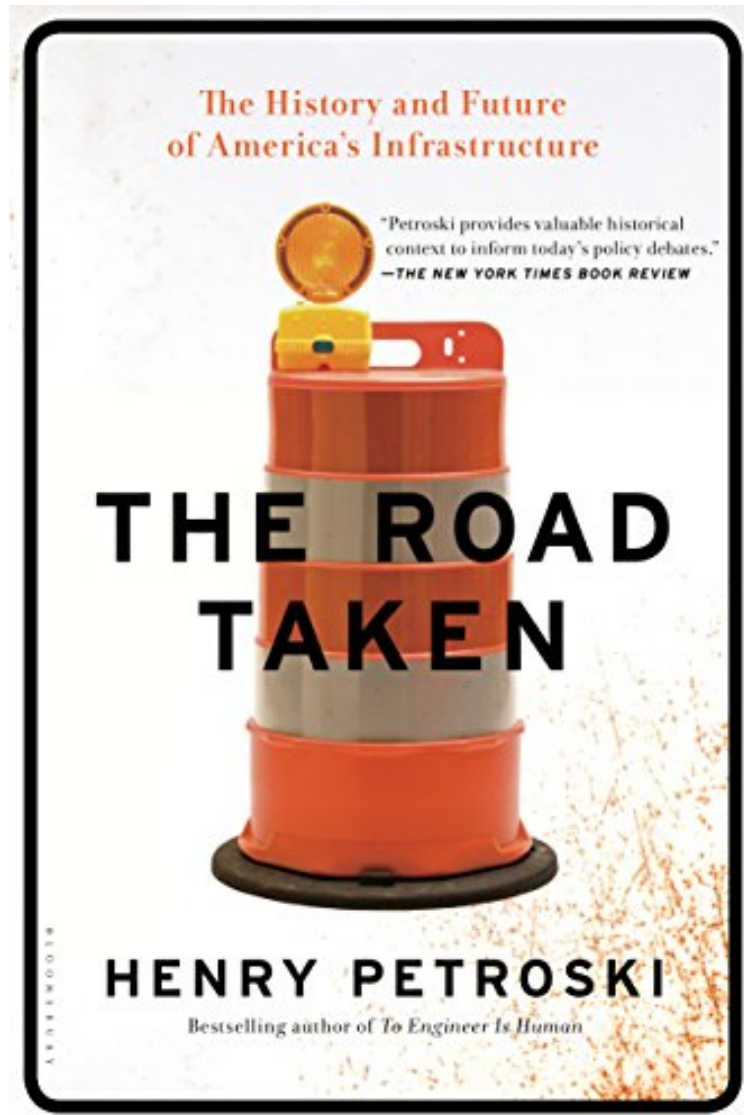


(Free download) The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure

The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure

Henry Petroski

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Henry Petroski : The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read if we are serious about future...By JohnI have just started the book but it is absolutely enthralling.Petroski has an incredible knowledge of the subject matter and somehow makes utilitarian objects such as roads and bridges seem fascinating. (My background in civil engineering

may help form this opinion.) I think anyone will benefit from reading this book. The one take away so far is that America had better take heed of his message and we need to get up to speed on this very critical subject. I, for one, will not pass a bridge without thinking about what holds it up. I am seeing this as front page news here in DC with the recent foundation troubles exposed on a major commuter arterial bridge across the Potomac. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Roads Should be so Long and Flat By P. Weiser Compared to Petroski's other engineering discourses (e.g. "To Engineer is Human") this seemed a bit long and labored. Still some interesting details on roads and bridges, not so much on railroads and canals. The humor is there, but slightly overwhelmed by less interesting detail. There are suggestions this was a bit "written to order" by highway or transportation interests. Not sure of that, but it would explain much. Not a bad read, really, but not up to Petroski's standards IMHO. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Worth reading. A great topic. By Narut Ujnat Interesting book. I have read through a number of this author's books and usually find them very interesting. This topic of infrastructure is a bit more complicated it seems because it is a huge topic and prone to political diatribes (though that doesn't happen here) and minutiae. Here the book delves through the topic with as much an ability to discuss the topic in general terms. Historical aspects, the need for trying to maintain what is happening and why the nation should be more concerned about what should be done going forward. The need is immense, but of course there is huge disagreement over how to fund these projects and what takes priority. I found the book a bit disappointing perhaps because this is such an interesting topic and so important to the macro economy and this is something that I wanted a much more major treatment perhaps that is because Petroski makes the topic vital and interesting. Is this his best book? Not necessarily. But it is well worth reading and absorbing and this topic will continue to become a major topic. In many ways the country is surviving on seed corn and investments from years ago.

Acclaimed engineer and historian Henry Petroski explores our core infrastructure from both historical and contemporary perspectives, explaining how essential their maintenance is to America's economic health. Petroski reveals the genesis of the many parts of America's highway system--our interstate numbering system, the centerline that divides roads, and such taken-for-granted objects as guardrails, stop signs, and traffic lights--all crucial to our national and local infrastructure. A compelling work of history, *The Road Taken* is also an urgent clarion call aimed at American citizens, politicians, and anyone with a vested interest in our economic well-being. Physical infrastructure in the United States is crumbling, and Petroski reveals the complex and challenging interplay between government and industry inherent in major infrastructure improvement. The road we take in the next decade toward rebuilding our aging infrastructure will in large part determine our future national prosperity.

"Petroski provides valuable historical context to inform today's policy debates." *New York Times Book* "A thorough account of how our highway system got to be what it is." *New York of Books* "A characteristically eye-opening look at America's infrastructure . . . Anyone with an interest in the way things work will want this book--and will doubtless emerge as a fan of the ever curious author." *starred review, Kirkus* "[Petroski] excels at revealing the origins of everyday, utilitarian things. His previous books include histories of the toothpick and the pencil, and his latest contribution bristles with fascinating details about the elements of road design we often overlook." *Los Angeles Times* "Mr. Petroski . . . cherishes roads and bridges, and his book is a loving look at everything--materials, expertise, politics, money, culture--that goes into their creation and maintenance. It is also a passionate appeal to Americans to accept responsibility for keeping their infrastructure safe and viable. . . . A labor of love [by] a lucid writer." *Wall Street Journal* "[Petroski] has a clear eye, a mellifluous prose style and a knack for spicing deep research with personal anecdotes." *Washington Post* "This is vital reading." *Booklist* "Public infrastructure is often deemed interesting only to policy wonks, but Petroski (*The Pencil: A History of Design and Circumstance*), a professor of history and civil engineering at Duke University, proves that he can make it accessible and fascinating for a wider readership. His goal is to create a more informed electorate that will weigh in with political leaders about long-standing safety issues posed by obsolete and decrepit infrastructure. But the book is more than a laundry list of trouble spots; Petroski offers historical context for today's challenges . . . His book may well move readers to lobby their elected officials." *Publishers Weekly* "Petroski's goal is to ask how, given the importance of the car to the US economy and mobility, federal and state governments have allowed the country's infrastructure to reach crisis point. But he goes beyond hand wringing. With an engineer's technical knowledge and a historian's eye, he offers a nuanced argument about the political, financial and engineering calculus that contributes to failures." *Nature* "One of the clearest (and most entertaining) cases yet for why we must improve the network of roads, bridges, and highways we take for granted." *Science* "A compelling work of history written by a guy with a feeling for the humanities and the grit of a practical engineer. (Where did people like him go?) . . . This book is your entry into revitalizing where you live by bringing politicians to task." *The Buffalo News* "In *The Road Taken: The History and Future of America's Infrastructure*, Henry Petroski, Duke professor of civil engineering and the reliably fascinating author of books about how stuff gets to be stuff, provides the backstory to the American system of roads, streets, interstates and highways. The book is never less than interesting and is often fascinating."

"Raleigh News Observer" Petroski brings welcome exposure to processes that, like infrastructure itself, too often hide in plain sight." "New Yorker" Timely and insightful . . . Petroski's book offers a rare engineer's perspective on a debate too often dominated by economists and politicians." - Foreign Affairs

About the Author Henry Petroski is the Aleksandar S. Vesic Professor of Civil Engineering and a professor of history at Duke University. The author of more than a dozen previous books. He lives in Durham, North Carolina, and Arrowsic, Maine.