

Raleigh's Proposed North-South Freeway, 1972

03/30/14 401 W, 4 I - + 6 - 7

For your Sunday reading, here's a bit of hidden Raleigh history. In 1972, the [Society for the Preservation of Historic Oakwood](#) was created, to combat a proposed north-south freeway that would've connected Downtown Boulevard and Louisburg Road to the north, with Highway 70 and Old Stage Road to the south. The purpose of said expressway was to improve transit for state workers traveling to and from downtown. This was part of a larger transit plan, that included a proposed east-west freeway extending from Wade Avenue to Milburnie Road. The planners also envisioned a possible mass transit system, with routes both north-south and east-west through the city, possibly operating by the year 2000.

The transit plan was part of a larger proposal from 1965 to reorganize the state government buildings into park-like settings. [Notes this page on the society's web site](#), the designers "envisioned Modernist offices in a sylvan campus replacing the street grid between the old Capitol Building and Peace Street with small lakes, serpentine walkways, and underground parking accessed via a new North-South Freeway."

The roadway never happened, and the tipping point came but one month after the society's formation. In October 1972, nearly 130 residents gathered in a church with a goal of "no road." In November 1972, the City Council decided to move forward with its downtown planning, but without the freeway. (Within a few more years, they helped get the neighborhood established as Raleigh's first historic district.)

What happened to the state government project? Unsure, need to research. Guessing some but not nearly all of the proposed campus came to fruition.

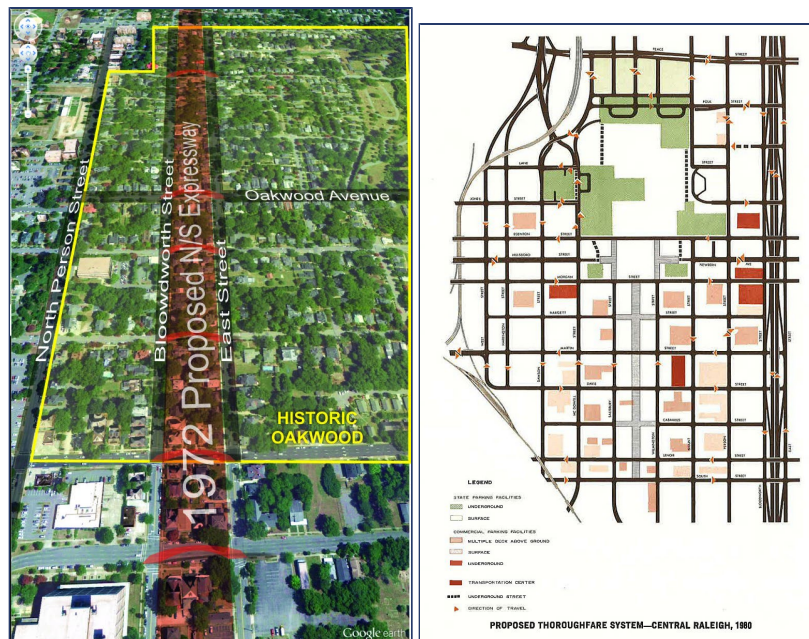
And everyone lived happily ever after... or did they? Wonder what the alternate version of Raleigh in 2014 looks like, if the freeway had been built and the entire campus was completed? Would we have seen a bounty of development that would've offset (as much such things can) the loss of the city's original historic neighborhood? Maybe. Might've even seen a new Fire Station 3, moved from its freeway-side site on East Street just south of New Bern.

[Read the full proposal for the state government campus \(10MB\) \(PDF\)](#)

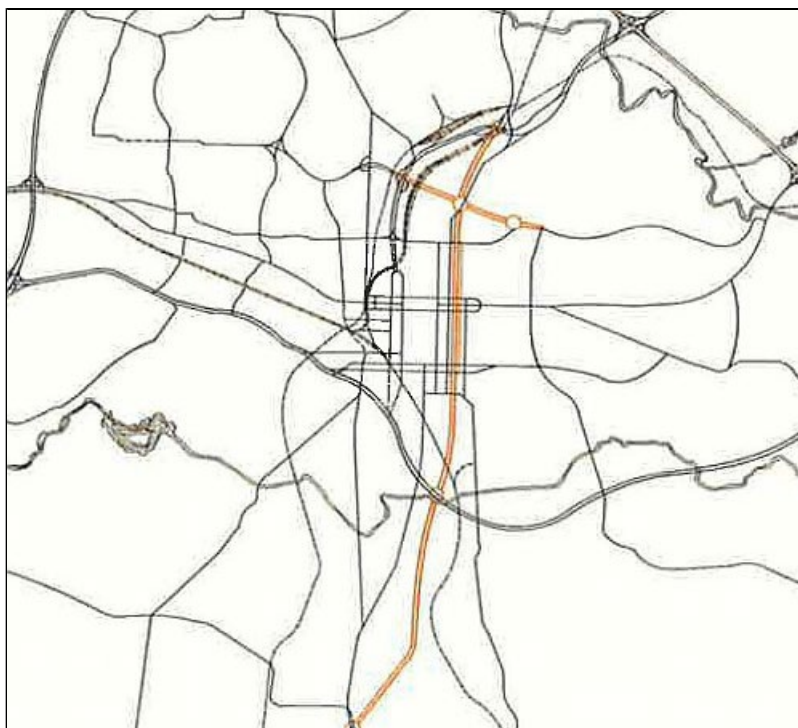
Read related stories:

- [News & Observer - September 27, 2012](#) - Raleigh remembers activists who stopped downtown freeway
- [Raleigh Public Record - September 27, 2012](#) - Oakwood Celebrates Defeating Highway 40 Years Ago

Click to enlarge:



Couple more images, see the PDF document above for larger versions:



Name: (real name preferred)
E-mail: (optional)
Web Site: (optional)

Remember personal info?

Yes

No