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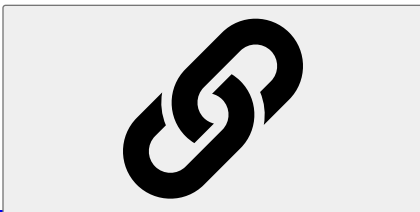
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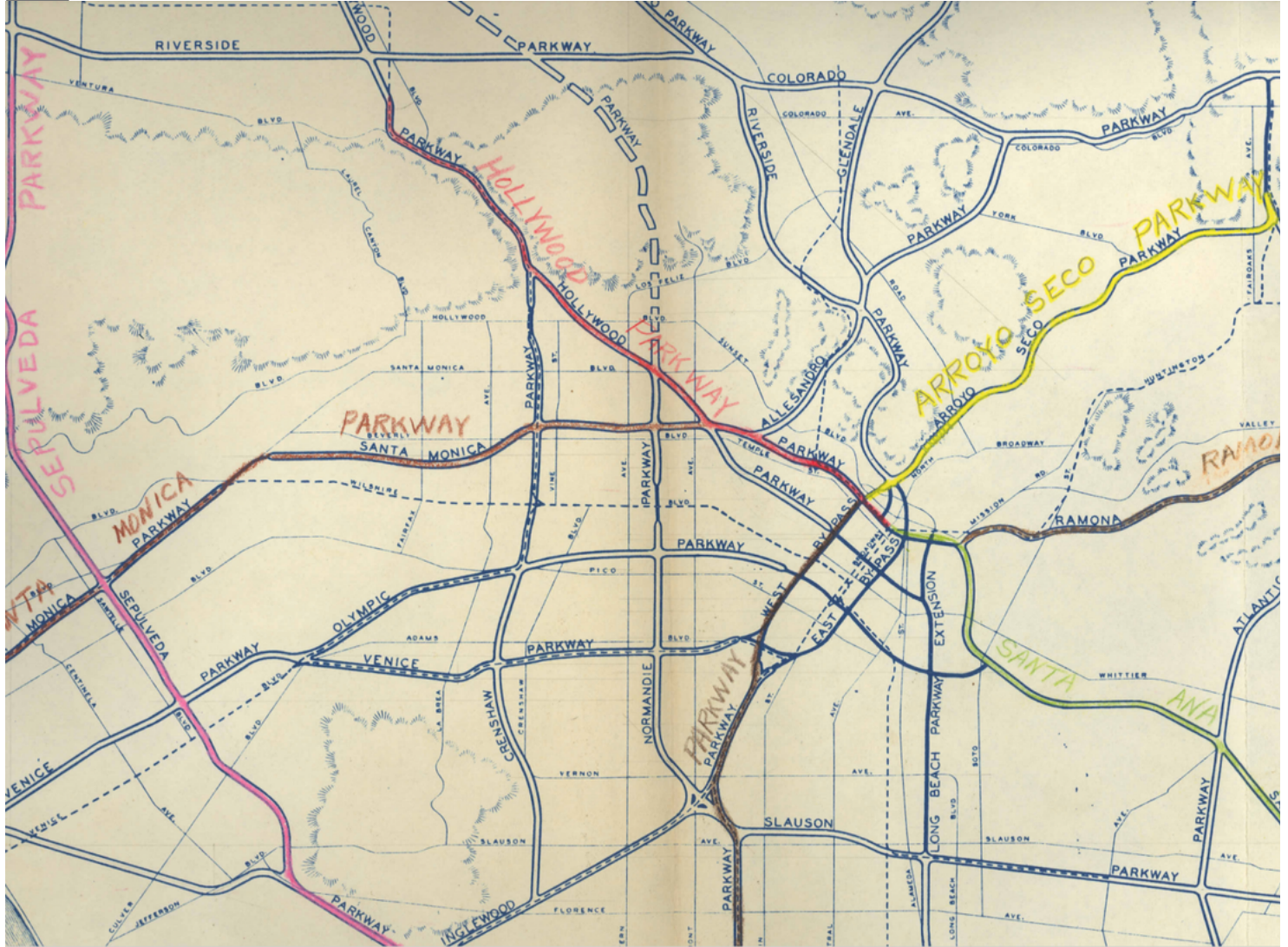


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4 freeways that did not get built in LA (and why)

Written by [Colin Cab Washington](#) Dec. 22, 2017 [Los Angeles](#)

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Listen: why LA’s Freeways were built

KCRW listener Hunter Owens asked “How did the freeways get laid downtown? How did we as a city go about deciding where to place them?” KCRW reporter Jenny Hamel gets the answers, and looks at the history of the 110 and LA’s downtown freeways.



The story of some of LA’s infamous unbuilt freeways

Los Angeles’ vast freeway system is an integral part of the city’s identity. The web of concrete roadways spans across the entire region, making all of the 88 sub-cities and neighborhoods within the county accessible by car.

Early engineers envisioned roads that existed solely for automobiles. Freeways promised to speed cars through the city for the decades to come (a deviation from previous models that accommodated pedestrians, horses and bicycles).

The earliest proposed highways date back to 1937 and were called “motorways.” These included buildings that you could drive through that looked like this:



But today, they look more like this:



[Prayitno](#). (The original image is no longer available, please contact [KCRW](#) if you need access to the original image.)

Freeways may be key to getting around Los Angeles (albeit slowly), but many proposed routes were shut down by community opposition.

Here are four freeways that were proposed by engineers, but were never completed because of community opposition.

Beverly Hills Freeway



Map of proposed Beverly Hills Freeway alternatives, 1964 from [Metro Library and Archive](#).

In 1964, engineers from San Francisco submitted a final [report](#) to the mayor of Beverly Hills to construct a Beverly Hills Freeway proposed to connect the 101 and the 405 along Santa Monica Boulevard and Melrose Avenue. The projected cost and the public's apprehension around potential displacement of residents along the route kept it from getting off the ground.

Slate has a good [overview here](#).

Laurel Canyon Freeway

A freeway to connect the Los Angeles International Airport to Hollywood Bowl and continue up to Laurel Canyon Boulevard was proposed by developers and engineers in 1949. It was going to be a North-South freeway connecting the Ventura Freeway (HWY 101) to the San Diego Freeway (HWY 405). Eventually, a couple miles of freeway were built where La Cienega Ave intersects Slauson Ave. in Ladera Heights. This roadway with two interchanges lasts for about two miles and ends where Rodeo Rd. intersects.

Long Beach Freeway



Formerly known as the Los Angeles River Freeway, the I-710 Long Beach Freeway was one of the earliest freeways in the region. The extension of the 710 has been controversial since 1954. According to the [Master Plan of Freeways](#), it was planned to run all the way to Pasadena, but instead, it cuts off in Alhambra for 4.5 miles, and then oddly continues again in Pasadena. The gap was never filled during its original construction because residents living in those neighborhoods protested it, and have continued to do so for decades. Community members from El Sereno and South Pasadena have argued against the expansion because of landmarks, statues and historic Craftsman homes that would be razed by the construction. The abrupt discontinuation leads to bottleneck traffic requiring drivers to proceed through local streets in order to get to South Pasadena and cities within the San Gabriel Valley.

If you take a look at Google Maps you can see the noticeable cut-off that starts between Valley and Westmont Dr., and where the 710 starts again miles north at the intersection of California Blvd. and South Pasadena Ave. Preservation advocates and city representatives have tried to reach an agreement on building a tunnel to make up for the inconvenient disconnect. But action on the matter remains on hold.

There's great reporting on this and other freeways at [KCET](#).

Slauson Freeway

There are also a number of smaller freeway projects that were started but never completed, including the SR 90. Once referred to as the the Slauson Freeway in the 1950s, the 90 was supposed to run from Marina Del Rey to Orange County and end at the Riverside Freeway in eastern Anaheim. The freeway was renamed the Richard Nixon Freeway and then, after Watergate, the Marina Freeway. But, like Nixon's administration, it ran short of expectations, extending only about two miles instead of the planned 40.

What do you want to know about LA? Ask us!

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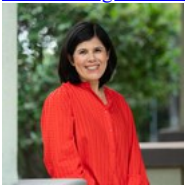


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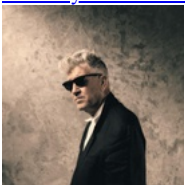
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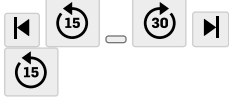
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