



NEWS

The Little Known History Behind LA's Most Tolerable Freeway

By [Lori Galarreta](#)

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View of Ventura (134) and Glendale (2) freeway interchange, looking north. Eagle Rock Plaza shopping center is visible in the foreground. (Shades of L.A. Collection/LAPL Archive)



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Los Angeles freeways and expressways connect about 515 miles of L.A. county. For funsies, [KPCC's Take Two asked listeners](#) if they had ... a favorite one? The response was a resounding, "NO," but there was one that stood out as overwhelmingly tolerable: [the 2](#).

Take Two 
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Driving is a part of life here in Los Angeles, so you're bound to have a favorite freeway, right? 🙄 Which one is yours?

The 110 freeway	29.7%
The 2 freeway	39.6%
The 405 freeway	15.1%
I'll tweet you my answer!	15.6%

212 votes · Final results

12:18 PM · Feb 4, 2020



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The 2 Freeway runs [87 miles from Echo Park to the San Gabriel Mountains](#). It's [periodically been written about](#), and it's a favorite for its scenic views and relative emptiness. [It's even inspired love letters](#). Here's a piece of from Brenda Rees, published on [The Eastsider](#):

"...the 2 throws off its unassuming cloak of ordinary and transforms into an engineering marvel that promises - and DELIVERS - an exhilarating driving experience with matching natural scenery."

But once upon time, the 2 was supposed to cut through Silver Lake and intersect with the 101, then continue west through Hollywood and into Beverly Hills all the way to the 405. Consequently, it was once known as the Beverly Hills Freeway.

So what happened?

To understand that, you need to take a step back and understand that early L.A. city planners once had a grand vision for our freeways.

"In 1959, state highway engineers planned a 1,500-mile freeway network crisscrossing the L.A. region," Robert Petersen, [host of Hidden History L.A.](#), told us. "No neighborhood was to be more than four miles from a freeway."

Initially, [these plans](#) looked like they would become a reality. But by the late '60s and early 1970s, funding issues, rising construction costs, community opposition, protracted litigation, environmental concerns, appeals for mass transit, and options other than freeways, all contributed to an uncertain future for freeways in Los Angeles.

It was these types of obstacles that ended up stopping the 2 freeway extension and grounding it in Echo Park.

"There were disputes between the city, the county, and the state," said Petersen. "Oh, there was also funding problems. Freeways got more and more and more and more expensive. And then finally, community opposition ... And then once you had a lot of community opposition, just like we've seen with the 710 that trying to finish that, it's hard. You need a lot of political will and that just wasn't there."

Though it would have, in theory, capitalized on convenience, the failed extension of the 2 brought about something else.

"If you ever think about the corner in Silver Lake -- of Silver Lake Boulevard and Sunset -- where all those restaurants are, the freeway would have gone right through there," said Petersen. "So all those restaurants all those homes would have been demolished. And really the character of Silver Lake would have been radically transformed if the freeway had gone through there."

Correction: An earlier version of this post misspelled Brenda Rees' last name. LAist regrets the error.



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