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APPENDICIES

The following pages have been reprinted from various documents and news publications to provide an overview of the perceptions and historic events related to the I-16 Exit Ramp and its Removal. Also included are various case studies of other highway removal projects. The pages included within Appendix IV, Urban Ecology, is from an independent study conducted for the MLK, Jr. Boulevard corridor by Gunn Meyerhoff Shay Architects, PC, October 2010.

I. Related News Articles & Case Studies

II. Economic Strategy

III. Cost Estimate

IV. Urban Ecology



Photos by John Carrington/Savannah Morning News

The historic Union Station railroad terminal and an assortment of other historic buildings between what used to be Berrien and Wayne streets were razed in the early 1960s to make way for the Interstate 16 overpass at what is now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

City's 'iron curtain' could be torn down

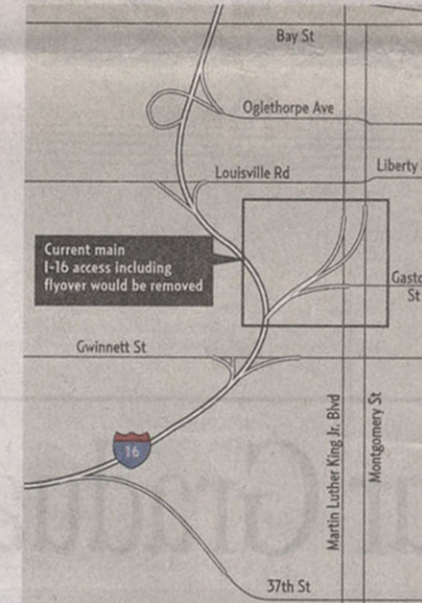
Preservationists, planners agree I-16 flyover is an impediment to progress

City's 'iron curtain' could be torn down

Preservationists, planners agree I-16 flyover is an impediment to progress

I-16 CHANGE PROPOSED

A new plan would demolish the Interstate 16 flyover that now sends travelers and tourists onto Montgomery Street. It is uncertain at this time how, or even if, that exit would be replaced.



Terrence Horan/Savannah Morning News



Herbert Blumenthal looks at photos of B&B Paint while reflecting on the changes the area surrounding his family's store has undergone since the early 1960s.

INSIDE

A timeline of the Interstate 16 flyover and historic pictures from the planning that went into remodeling West Broad Street. **BACK PAGE**

BY CHUCK MOBLEY • 912-652-0323 • charles.mobley@savannahnow.com

Herbert Blumenthal can smile about it now. It's been, after all, more than 40 years since he unsuccessfully tried to convince Savannah officials that the Interstate 16 flyover was a bad idea. "All I can say is 'I told you so,'" Blumenthal said.

In 1960, when word of the proposal to end the highway at West Broad (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard) and Montgomery streets was announced, Blumenthal was in the front lines of the effort to stop it.

I-16 should have stopped at West Gwinnett Street, he said. That would have saved many businesses and one of Savannah's most distinctive buildings — Union Station — an architectural marvel that was torn down in 1963 to make way for the project.

Blumenthal said few people agreed with him then, but, now, a growing chorus echoes his long-held conviction that building the flyover was a short-sighted decision.

There are even detailed plans — drawn up by the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority — to demolish the flyover and return that section of downtown to its historic street pattern.

That prospect cheers Blumenthal, but he's still saddened by what happened in the 1960s.

"All those wonderful people, all those mom-and-pop stores, and they all got uprooted," he said with a sigh. He especially lamented the loss of Union Station, calling it "more beautiful" than the old City Market.

The 87-year-old Blumenthal is not the only Savannahian with memories of those long-gone businesses on West Broad Street.

"I remember seeing 'Shane' at the Star Theater in 1955," said Charles Elmore, a humanities professor at Savannah State University and an authority on the city's African-American history.

Elmore doesn't mince words when it comes to the flyover.

"It never should have been built," he said.

Its effect was catastrophic on black businesses on West Broad, Elmore said.

He quickly ticked off the names of several places that had shut down or been forced to move — the

SEE FLYOVER, BACK PAGE

NEW URBAN NEWS

COVERING DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN-SCALE NEIGHBORHOODS

VOLUME 14 • NUMBER 6

SEPTEMBER 2009

Interest in streetcars survives economic downtown

“The explosion of interest in streetcars stalled only slightly in 2008,” according to Gloria Ohland of Reconnecting America. Interest in streetcars moderated because of the national economic contraction and because it became evident that streetcars would not obtain funding from the US Department of Transportation’s Small Starts program, says Ohland, vice president of communications for the transit-oriented development advocacy group based in Oakland, California.

In a report at the website www.reconnectingamerica.org, Ohland noted that new streetcar lines continue to be established. The latest is a one-mile “hybrid” streetcar line that began operating in December in Savannah, Georgia.

The Savannah streetcar — an old-fashioned-looking 1936 vehicle from Melbourne, Australia, that has been mechanically updated and made wheelchair-accessible — runs on track through the city’s historic River Street area. It is called a hybrid because it’s powered by biodiesel, some of it from recycled restaurant oil. Its consumption: 1.5 gallons of biodiesel per hour.

To make streetcar service a reality, Savannah paid \$600,000 for a little-used 2.3-mile railroad branch line, \$300,000 for concept development and engineering, and \$397,000 to build the propulsion system, restore the car, and make it accessible to the disabled. To keep costs down, an existing firehouse was converted into a car barn, for \$200,000. Thus the total cost was about \$1.5 million. The city’s goal was to give tourists better access to downtown and the entertainment district without widening streets or adding parking. Because of the choice of fuel, no overhead power lines needed to be installed.

Another recently established service is the Seattle Streetcar,



COURTESY OF RECONNECTING AMERICA

Savannah streetcar

which began running in December 2007 and has outperformed ridership projections by attracting 1,000 passengers a day, according to Reconnecting America. Property owners paid half the \$52 million cost of establishing the line, which follows a 1.5-mile route from the downtown retail core to a waterfront park on Lake Union. A chief beneficiary is the South Lake Union district, which has attracted the corporate headquarters of Amazon.com and other notable developments.

South Lake Union is projected eventually to get 25,000 jobs and 11,000 housing units. Ohland says Seattle could see “even more streetcar-oriented development than Portland’s Pearl District.” The Oregon city has experienced \$3.5 billion of development along its streetcar line, which has been an economic

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

SEPTEMBER 2009

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010

SAVANNAHNOW.COM



LIGHT OF THE COASTAL EMPIRE

The I-16 flyover: Its end draws near



Courtesy of Sottile & Sottile

John Settles, center, along with community members, discusses ideas for removal of the Interstate 16 flyover and uses for the land during a design team session at a design charrette Thursday at the Con-Ed Building.

BY ARLINDA SMITH BROADY • 912-652-0314 • arlinda.broady@savannahnow.com

TO ADEQUATELY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, you have to respect the past. That sentiment was a recurring theme as the community came together this past week in a three-day expo on the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard/Montgomery Street revitalization plan.



John Carrington/Savannah Morning News

Richard Shinhoster speaks at a public forum at the Con-Ed Building about the past and future of the I-16 flyover, which is named after his late brother, former NAACP leader Earl T. Shinhoster.

WHAT'S NEXT

The design charrettes were just one segment of a longer process. Although streetscape improvements to MLK have begun and more are expected to be under way this summer, deciding the next phase of the corridor's revitalization has just started.

Ideas from the workshops will be drawn out and put on display for public scrutiny. So even if you didn't attend any of the meetings, you still have a chance to make your voice heard.

The study is expected to wrap up by the end of the summer. Besides design, other important components include funding, land use and transportation needs.

In a week or so, look for drafts at www.sdra.org and www.thempc.org. Copies of the documents will be available for viewing at SDRA and MPC offices.

With the expo came a design charrette to explore ideas to remove the Interstate 16 flyover, formally called the Earl T. Shinhoster Interchange.

The first two days attracted more than 250 citizens to the sessions, with some 75 neighborhood residents, corridor business and property owners, civic leaders and community partners participating in the open hands-on charrette. They came up with several preliminary concepts for removal and redevelopment of the I-16 site and corridor.

"This kind of thing was long overdue," said Mayor Pro Tem Edna Jackson. "There are some sections of M.L. King Boulevard that have been neglected for too long, and it will be good to see especially the southern end — Waldburg, Bolton, Gwinnett and Alice streets — come back."

Jackson's sentiments were echoed by native Savannahians, historic preservationists, business owners and concerned citizens.

Bernetta Anderson, president of the Hudson Hill Community Association, was part of a team that suggested creating a transportation transfer station with park-and-ride, streetcar and bus access. Their plan also would add greenspace as well as pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly roadways.

"My grandmother lived here, and she had no say in tearing down the neighborhoods and putting up the flyover," Anderson said. "This process is a new and different way to plan that's more inclusive and makes sure the public has some input."

To truly understand how the flyover has affected the physical, social, economic and psychological

SEE FLYOVER, PAGE 5A

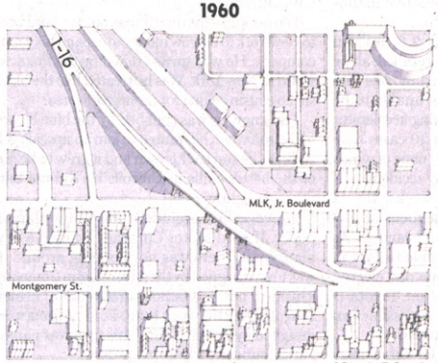
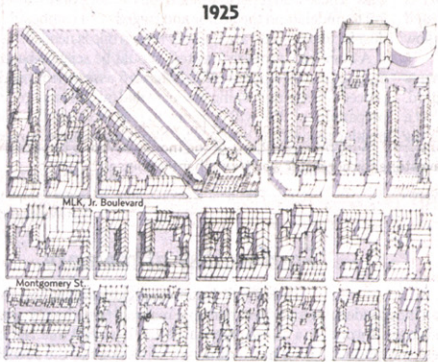
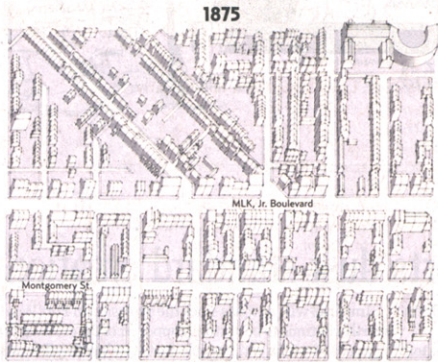
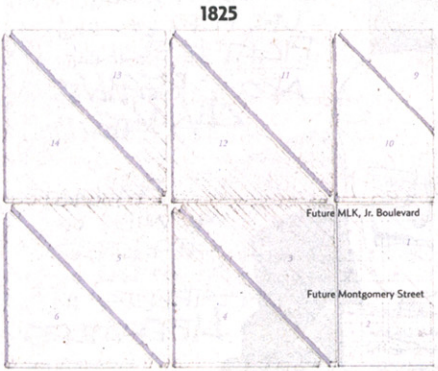
PROGRESSION IN DEVELOPMENT

The original plan formulated by Gen. James Oglethorpe nearly 300 years ago is still a good blueprint for Savannah to grow on, explained Christian Sottile, urban planner and member of the team looking at revitalization for the MLK/Montgomery Corridor and plans for land use if the Interstate 16 flyover is torn down.

These diagrams show the progression of development from the 1800s to present day.

The evolution follows a similar pattern up until the flyover was erected in the 1960s. Even the railroad construction was built upon the existing "bones" and had minimal disruption for such a huge undertaking. But the interstate displaced entire neighborhoods and tore a swath through the black community.

The design charrette aims to right some of the past missteps where community consideration and a holistic approach to urban planning wasn't prevalent.



Images courtesy of Sottile & Sottile

OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOPS

The project focuses on four main areas:

- Civic master plan identifying a series of streets and blocks currently occupied by the existing flyover and on-ramps; developing a plan to restore larger connections between the city center, the downtown expansion area to the west and surrounding neighborhoods; historic research and urban design.
- Economic analysis will include assessing the potential for redevelopment of properties that could be made available through the demolition of the current Interstate 16 flyover exit.
- Real estate appraisal will include determining the value of the I-16 flyover as a right-of-way and the potential value if the flyover were removed and redeveloped.
- Transportation analysis will include the development and evaluation of different scenarios for the extension of the existing grid pattern, analysis of traffic redistribution and road realignments in the study area and surrounding context area.

ON THE WEB

Who was Earl T. Shinhoster? Born in Savannah in 1950, Earl Theodore Shinhoster was a civil rights activist who long dreamed of being a lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Read more at savannahnow.com

COMING FEB. 28

From Savannah River Landing to the east, Hutchinson Island to the north and Gwinnett Street and Interstate 16 to the west, urban planner Christian Sottile is helping redefine how people will live, work and travel through Savannah.

Flyover

FROM PAGE 1A

decline of the area, one must go back in time.

West Broad Street's heyday

As early as the late 19th century and into the 1960s, Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation, curtailing where African-Americans could spend their money. As a result, an infrastructure developed along West Broad Street — now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

"West Broad Street was the place for business, commerce, entertainment — just about everything for African Americans," said Charles Elmore, a local historian and native Savannahian. "From the turn of the century to the late '60s and early '70s, it had a tremendous impact on the cultural fabric."

He recalled big names in music such as Count Basie, Bessie Smith, James Brown, Ma Rainey and Little Richard as regular acts at local jazz clubs.

"Many of the greats used to get their hair cut at Charlie Johnson's barber shop," he said. "They'd stay in rooms above West Broad Street businesses after playing Tybee."

During the late 1920s, West Broad's success as a business center grew as five furniture stores, 36 beauty and/or barber shops, 11 shoe repair/rebuilding shops, 22 restaurants, seven bars, 11 confectionaries, 16 laundry/dry cleaners, four bakeries, 11 pharmacies, ten fish markets, 17 grocers, two department stores, an inn and two tailors, along with several insurance and auto-related businesses, existed south of Gwinnett Street.

In a 1956 letter to the NAACP in New York, Savannah resident W.W. Law expressed concern over the "mammoth urban redevelopment program" slated for Savannah.

By the 1950s, four pharmacies existed along West Broad, including Savannah Pharmacy with two locations, Westside Pharmacy and Crosby Brothers Drug Co.

Then, as the civil rights movement found its way to the Hostess City, blacks demanded the right to frequent the same public places as whites.

"In April of 1965, I lived through all of this. ... My friends and I marched and were jailed," Elmore said. "We saw the demonstrations as a gateway to a better life."

But integration had unintended consequences.

"The black businesses slowly began to fade away," Elmore said. If whites had realized the buying power blacks had, segregation may have ended sooner, he added.

By the time urban planners came looking for ways to move more cars through the city, West Broad was already in decline.

"The death knell was the demolition of Union Station," Elmore said. "There may have been ways to revitalize the area sooner had it remained standing."

Foibles of the fathers

In 1955, the Urban Renewal Administration issued a news release stating they had "approved a workable program for Savannah." The area designated for renewal extended from Indian Street to 52nd Street, West Broad to Hopkins Street, Kollack Street, Magnolia and the S&O canal.

In a 1956 letter to the NAACP in New York, Savannah resident W.W. Law expressed concern over the "mammoth urban redevelopment program" slated for Savannah.

A field report filed by the

HISTORY OF THE INTERSTATE 16 FLYOVER

1955: Urban Renewal Administration selects "the West Broad Canal Urban Renewal Area to improve the many substandard houses in the area, as over 15 percent of the substandard housing in Savannah is in the area, and to assist in the improvement of traffic movement."

1956: W.W. Law, president of the local NAACP chapter, asks NAACP housing expert Madison S. Jones to visit Savannah and address a public meeting to help stimulate interest from the community in the proposed housing changes.

1956: Local field office of Urban Renewal Administration set up in Savannah, and detailed survey of properties begins.

1959: Interstate 16 is staked out and appraisals of land on and around West Broad Street begin in September 1959, despite objections from some 150 West Broad and Montgomery Street merchants who signed a petition against the highway entering Savannah at Union Station.

1998: MLK/Montgomery Revitalization Plan, River to Jones, introduces idea of removing flyover.

2000: SDRA board and Historic Savannah Foundation Board issue resolutions to City Council and County Commission requesting a study to determine feasibility of removal of flyover.

2002: MLK/Montgomery Urban Redevelopment Plan, Jones to 52nd Street, reiterates importance of pursuing feasibility study and outlines the detrimental effect of the Urban Renewal Administration's actions on the once vibrant West Broad Corridor.

2004: MLK/Montgomery Land-use and economic strategies support removal of flyover and start to detail opportunities for reclamation of the lost streets and land.

2005: County Commission includes funding to support planning to determine feasibility of removal of flyover in a special sales tax.

2007-08: GDOT statewide interstate study concludes "removal (of the flyover) would not create a negative traffic impact."

2009: Metropolitan Planning Commission moves forward with request to city/county to conduct feasibility study and issues Notice to Proceed in November to conduct flyover removal study.

Source: Savannah Development and Renewal Authority archives

NAACP in response to Law's letter noted the "area is residential and commercial and the structures, for the most part, are in a bad state of repair and obsolescence." The same report also noted the "area designated for renewal is almost entirely Negro."

The addition of the flyover created more than just a physical barrier, said Christian Sottile, a Savannah-based urban planner, who's part of the team in the flyover removal study.

"Physically, the flyover removed 600 linear feet and two city blocks," he told charrette attendees the first night of the event. "But socially it wiped out entire neighborhoods and, economically, it significantly lowered the present-day property value."

Perhaps the greatest loss was the displacement of Savannah's African-American rising middle class — educators, doctors, ministers, dentists and those in public and governmental service — who lived in the neighborhoods surrounding West Broad Street.

Cuyler-Brownsville's strong African-American history revolved around several prominent institutions — Charity Hospital, the Florence Street School and the Cuyler School. The closure of these institutions in the mid-'70s and early '80s and the loss of West Broad Street as a strong commercial center seriously wounded the once prosperous neighborhood.

What was old is new again

In setting out to reclaim the area devastated by the flyover, Sottile and his team went back to plans originated by Gen. James Oglethorpe.

By 1799, present-day MLK Boulevard extended from the

Savannah River to South Broad Street (Oglethorpe Avenue), and by 1801 it extended to Liberty Street. Before 1870, Gwinnett Street formed the southern city limits and the boundary between the five-acre garden lots and the larger farm lots.

West Broad Street was located on top of the western edge of the bluff on which Savannah was founded, and the land sloped away to the west. In the 19th century, much of the sloping land was filled to the level of the street.

West Broad Street was one of the first paved roads in the city because of its significance as a transportation corridor between the Central of Georgia Railroad and the river.

Before the railway came, two streets, Roberts and Selma (now Stewart) formed a 45-degree angle with MLK. Homes lined both sides of the streets, and triangle-shaped parcels made up garden lots.

"This was the structure that later became Frogtown and Currietown," Sottile said. "And by the time Union Station came to be, the bones were already in place."

Back then, the design eased into the surroundings, encouraging growth and development.

And that's the direction planners are taking today.

As charrette participants rose to ask questions or make statements, it was clear that old-fashioned ideas with newfangled names such as multimodalism (making room for all types of transportation) and greenspace development (including grass, parks and trees) were at the forefront.

Sure, there were concerns about moving cars in and out of the city, but they were put in the context of how they affect people.

City Talk

FROM PAGE 1B

Flyover removal process goes public

I'll be back again soon with more comments about last week's public sessions regarding the eventual removal of the Interstate 16 flyover on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

The kickoff meeting Wednesday was notable for the diverse crowd, the good ideas that were shared and the apparent resolve to undo a big mistake in urban planning.

Urban designer Christian Sottile's presentation included stark images of the dense commercial and residential development before the flyover, and of the relative desolation that followed it.

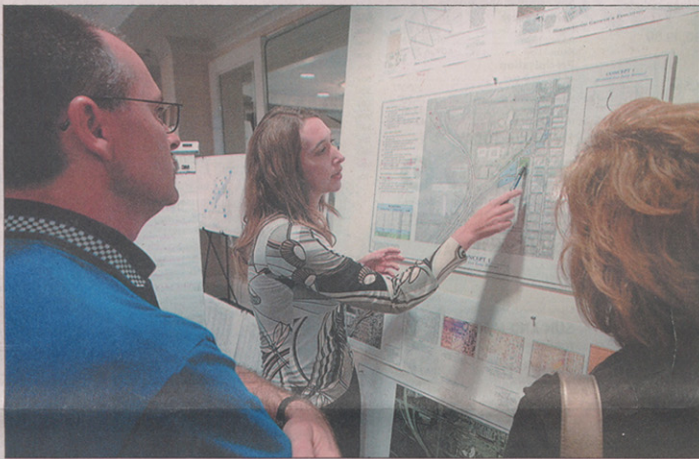
He also noted that a feasibility study by the Georgia Department of Transportation in 2008 showed that traffic into and out of the city could actually improve if the flyover were removed and alternate connections opened.

The word "community" came up several times during the meeting, especially from folks such as Mayor Pro Tem Edna Jackson, who once lived in areas that were demolished.

As she did three years ago at the dedication of a plaque to jazz legend King Oliver, Jackson pointedly and firmly used the term West Broad Street in place of MLK.

I've mentioned numerous times that a sense of local history was lost when the street name was changed. I think it would be good for the corridor to use the historical name, but, for obvious reasons, a change back to West Broad would need the early and firm backing of black politicians such as Jackson.

Flyover plans spark excitement, caution



Ellen Harris, of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, goes over one of the proposed concepts for the removal of the Interstate 16 flyover at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Open house gives public a glimpse of the future that looks a lot like the past

BY ARLINDA SMITH BROADY
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For an area that has seen a lot of changes, the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard corridor is poised for even more. A design open house Tuesday sponsored by the Metropolitan Planning Commission revealed plans for revitalizing that area if the Interstate 16 flyover, also known as the Earl T. Shinhoster Interchange, comes down. The event had no grand speeches or pleas for causes, just an opportunity for residents, business owners, stakeholders and interested parties to see the next phase of progress. Back in February, the MPC held a charrette geared toward the feasibility of removing the highway, which for many has been a symbol of division by race, economics and community influence. "The difference between the February charrette and now is that we know these concepts can work," said Ellen Harris, cultural resource and urban



The Metropolitan Planning Commission had an open house Tuesday to explain the options being proposed for the removal of the I-16 flyover at MLK Boulevard.

ON PAGE 3A

A detailed look at each of the concepts for the I-16 flyover

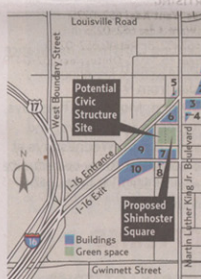
planning manager for the MPC. She's been in charge of the I-16 Flyover project from the beginning. "Once we heard ideas from the public, we had a full-blown traffic analysis done, real estate analysis and economic strategy researched," she said. Now, it's up to the public to determine

which idea best suits its needs. Local businesswoman Paula Kreissler, who's also chairwoman of the Healthy Savannah steering committee, said she likes the idea of more walkability downtown and easier access for cyclists. "I have to illegally ride on the sidewalk in that part of town because there's no bike lane and the traffic is too fast," she said. "We don't need excuses for people not to exercise." John Skiljan, owner of the Bicycle

SEE FLYOVER, PAGE 3A

CONCEPT 1

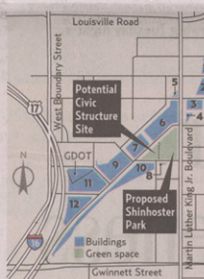
Minimum exit ramp removal



Source: Developed by Metropolitan Planning Commission from community input

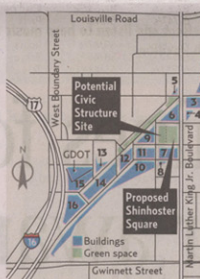
CONCEPT 2

Intermediate exit ramp removal



CONCEPT 3

Maximum exit ramp removal



Savannah Morning News

Flyover

FROM PAGE 1A

Link on MLK, has mixed feelings. "As a business owner, I'm trying to decide if the traffic flow will be good for business. I think it will be if the street gets back to its full use," he said. Right now, much of that section of MLK is little more than a thoroughfare. In general, the existing businesses south of the flyover don't see the kind of customer traffic as those to the north. Skiljan agreed renewing the historical significance of MLK is more than enough reason for the project.

"I was involved with Johnny Mercer week, and I learned so much about the history of this street, and it made me realize how the highway truly has been a barrier." That's why much of the design is so heavily influenced by the past, said urban planner/designer and architect Christian Sotille, who has worked extensively on the flyover project. "Restoring the street alignment will bring back the neighborhoods in a native way," he said. "Modern infrastructure can easily be supported by historic neighborhood patterns when you balance demand."

He added that there's no reason to reinvent the wheel when perhaps the best possible solution is in front of you. "Scale is so important, and

ON THE WEB
For bulleted lists of what each flyover concept entails, go to savannahnow.com.

we'll bring back Savannah-sized blocks." If the plans move in the direction of bringing back the sense of community, Brenda Solomon Steadman is all for it. Her family owns half a block of real estate that houses a hair salon, a restaurant and residential property. "When I see all these plans, I'm hopeful for the future," she said. "But I'm also concerned that the original residents might get edged out."

Steadman said she doesn't want to see gentrification turn the place where her family has

roots into a place they no longer can afford.

She's worked with the Savannah Development Renewal Authority to secure funding for building improvements. So far, the efforts haven't borne any fruit, but she said she won't give up.

"We have faith in God that everything will work in our favor," she said. "We've already had some good results." And that's what Harris wants attendees to take away from the open house.

"Hopefully, we'll get feedback that leans in one direction and we can work to refine that further," she said. "My best guessimate is that it will 10 to 15 years to get everything drawn up, but this is a great formula for future projects."

A Public Meeting of the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board

Located at:
The DOE Meeting Center
230 Village Green Blvd., Suite 220,
Aiken, SC

The Public is invited to two committee meetings held on
October 19, 2010.

Or attend online at:
http://www.srs.gov/general/outreach/srs-cab/meeting_schedules.html

The Committees:

Waste Management
Time: 3 p.m.-5 p.m.
Topics Discussed:
-Interim Salt Processing at ARP/MCU
-Saltstone Production Facility & Disposal Units
-Salt Waste Processing Facility Project
-Supplemental Salt Technologies
*Topics subject to change

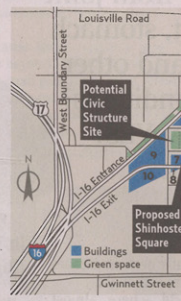
Nuclear Materials
Time: 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Topics Discussed:
-NW/MM Matrix
-NM FY11 Performance Based Incentives
-Update on Low Assay Plutonium (LAP) Program
*Topics subject to change

For more information:
Call us at: 1-800-249-8155 or email us at: srs.citizensadvisoryboard@srs.gov
Check out the CAB website: www.srs.gov/general/outreach/srs-cab/srs-cab.html

Ideas to raze I-16 flyover revealed

CONCEPT 1

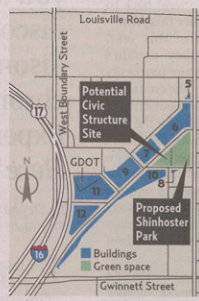
Minimum exit ramp removal



Source: Developed by Metropolitan Planning Commission from community input

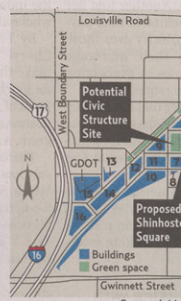
CONCEPT 2

Intermediate exit ramp removal



CONCEPT 3

Maximum exit ramp removal



Savannah Morning News

CURRENT VIEW



POSSIBLE FUTURE VIEW



Photo, rendering courtesy of Metropolitan Planning Commission

A meeting today will introduce the next phase of design concepts along the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard corridor. Discussions have been under way to determine the feasibility of tearing down the Interstate 16 flyover, also known as the Earl T. Shinhoster Interchange. This rendering gives an idea of how active the area could be if the highway structure were torn down.

Residents will get a chance today to see three concepts of how to redo the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. interchange

BY ARLINDA SMITH BROADY
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ON PAGE 8A: Detailed descriptions of each flyover concept

Three concepts of how the Interstate 16 flyover at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard might be removed will go up for public inspection today. "We've checked them all for fatal flaws and traffic flow, and any of them can work," said Ellen Harris, with the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission. The concepts grew out of three

days of meetings from Feb. 17-19 on the future of the MLK corridor. More than 250 people attended the meetings and 75 neighborhood residents, corridor business and property owners, civic leaders and community partners participated in what's called a charrette. A charrette is an intensive planning

SEE FLYOVER, PAGE 8A

IF YOU GO
Interstate 16 Flyover Removal Plan Open House
When: 2-7 p.m. today
Where: Con-Ed Building Ball Room, 714 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

View progress and provide input on:

- Civic Master Plan Concepts
- Economic Strategy
- Transportation Analysis
- MLK Boulevard Streetscape Plan
- Urban Ecology Study

For more information about the:

- I-16 Flyover, contact Ellen Harris at 912-651-1482 or harris@thempc.org
- MLK Boulevard Streetscape Plan, contact Lise Sundria at Savannah Development and Renewal Authority at 912-651-6973 or lsundria@sdra.net

Flyover

FROM PAGE 6A

session where citizens, designers and others collaborate on a vision for development. The results of that collaboration will be presented at an open house from 2-7 p.m. at the Con-Ed building on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Community excitement and involvement in the possible removal of the flyover, known formally as the Earl T. Shinhoster Interchange, didn't end with the February charrette. The design meetings organized to gauge community consensus and give stakeholders and interested parties a chance to voice their opinions were just the beginning.

And although the next phase of possible solutions has been viewed by just a few people, at

"Crossing MLK is dangerous right now, and imagine how much more dangerous it will be once the development picks up."

Ramsay Khalidi, owner of Southern Pine Co.

least one group already is coming forth with its own ideas to add to those plans.

Ramsay Khalidi, owner of Southern Pine Co. of Georgia, heads a group of urban designers, architects and builders who'd like to see a portion of the interstate remain intact.

"Crossing MLK is dangerous right now, and imagine how much more dangerous it will be once the development picks up," he said.

A Food Lion grocery store is currently under construction, and the state has approved plans to improve the corridor's streetscape. Officials anticipate those improvements will be

under way early next year. Khalidi has proposed turning one section into a pedestrian crosswalk with stairs and an elevator.

"What we're proposing really isn't another option. It's more like a modification that can work on any of the three concepts," said Khalidi. "It can be as simple as just a walkway or as elaborate as an outdoor cafe."

Even though the flyover — built on the site of the former Union Station train depot — is viewed as an eyesore, it is still a part of the city's past and a piece of a major engineering project.

"The U.S. interstate system is an awesome feat," said Quincy McMichael, head of sustainability and marketing at Southern Pine. "We could tear the whole thing down and end up like the people who tore down the train station... We'll wish that we'd thought further out and kept part of it in place."

The planning commission hasn't vetted the idea but welcomes that type of involvement.

"Ramsay is very enthusiastic about the idea, and it's very interesting," said Harris. "We haven't done any analysis yet, but it may be a very viable solution."

She said the commission isn't at that level of detail yet.

"Right now we're focused on which concept the community would like to go with," she said. "The pedestrian bridge could possibly work with any of the concepts."

CONCEPT 1

Minimum Exit Ramp Removal

Key Ideas

- Removes exit ramps initially two blocks west of MLK Boulevard
- New public square on MLK Boulevard across from Civil Rights Museum
- Potential civic reserve site within public square
- Expansion of historic Selma Street to an urban boulevard

Opportunities

- Restores four blocks between MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street
- Restores multiple active street frontages to MLK Boulevard
- Reconnects multiple streets across the MLK/Montgomery corridor
- Creates multiple new developable blocks along MLK Boulevard
- Keeps project focus clearly within the MLK/Montgomery Corridor
- Creates a new Civic Space along the corridor
- Entry and Exit to I-16 remains in relatively similar configuration
- Minimizes costs of improvements to study area

Potential Challenges

- Returns the least amount of developable land to the city
- Majority of I-16 traffic continues to enter and exit through neighborhood
- North/south connections within the neighborhood remain relatively non-existent

CONCEPT 2

Intermediate Exit Ramp Removal

Key Ideas

- Removes exit ramps all the way to Gwinnett Street
- New public park on MLK Boulevard across from Civil Rights Museum
- Potential civic reserve site within public park
- Restoration of historic Roberts Street as a primary neighborhood street
- Enhances Gwinnett Street as a primary entry into the city center

Opportunities

- Restores four blocks between MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street
- Restores multiple active street frontages to MLK Boulevard
- Reconnects multiple streets across the MLK/Montgomery corridor
- Creates multiple new developable blocks along MLK Boulevard
- Returns the largest amount of developable land back to the City
- Minimizes ratio of required street infrastructure to land area
- Creates a larger Public Park/Civic Space along the MLK corridor

Potential Challenges

- May require improvements to Gwinnett Street and Louisville Road
- Opens up the possibility of potentially undesirable large developments
- Increases volumes on Gwinnett Street and MLK Boulevard

CONCEPT 3

Maximum Exit Ramp Removal

Key Ideas

- Removes Exit Ramps all the way to Gwinnett Street
- New public square on MLK Boulevard across from Civil Rights Museum
- Potential civic reserve site within public square
- Expands Selma Street to an urban boulevard and restores part of Roberts Street
- Creates a neighborhood of small-scale blocks and interconnected street pattern
- Enhances Gwinnett Street as a primary entry into the city center

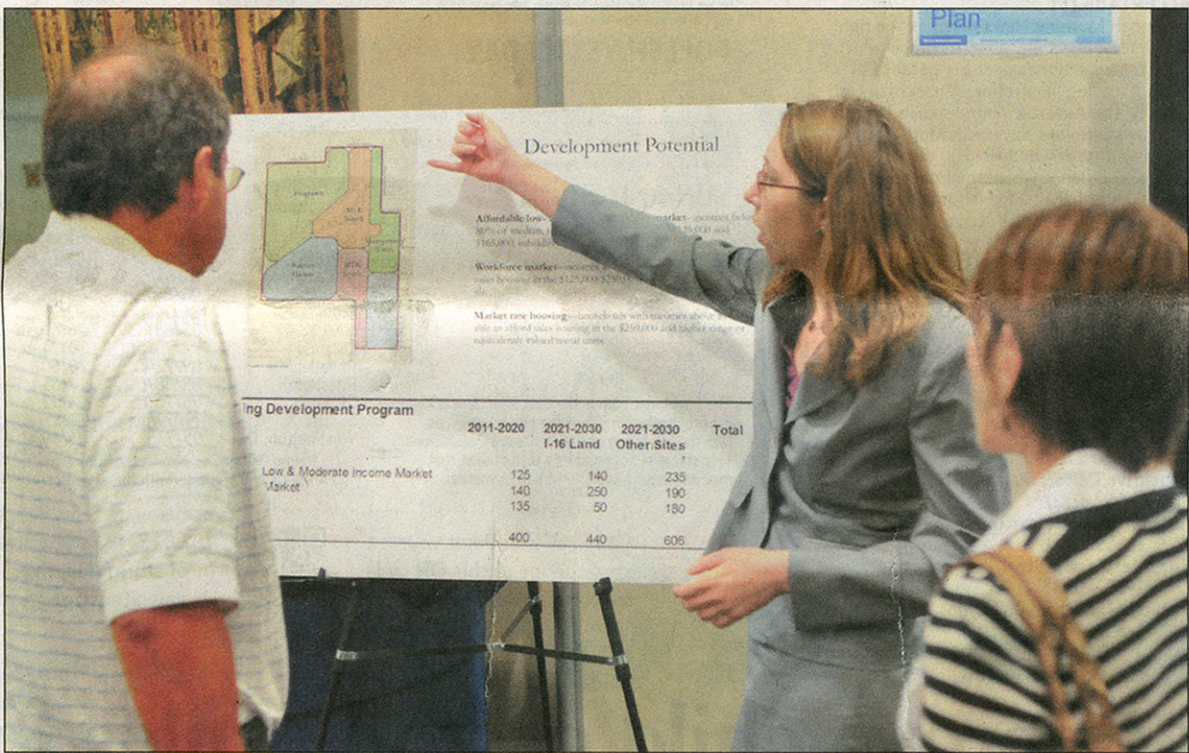
Opportunities

- Restores four blocks between MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street
- Restores multiple active street frontages to MLK Boulevard
- Reconnects multiple streets across the MLK/Montgomery corridor
- Creates the greatest number of new developable blocks
- Creates a new civic space along the corridor
- Provides the opportunity to make multiple north/south connections
- Could be a later expansion built on Concept 1

Potential Challenges

- Requires the greatest amount of street infrastructure with less developable land returned to the city
- Limits the size of larger footprint developments
- May require improvements to Gwinnett Street and Louisville Road
- Increases traffic loads on Gwinnett Street and MLK Boulevard

I-16 FLYOVER REMOVAL PLANS MOVE FORWARD



Richard Burkhart/Savannah Morning News

Ellen Harris of the Metropolitan Planning Commission talks about the development potential of the I-16 flyover removal during an open house Wednesday evening at the Con Ed Building on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

MPC presents design for MLK at open house

BY ADAM VAN BRIMMER
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One downtown Savannah monument's days are numbered.

The Earl T. Shinhoster Overpass, better known as the Interstate 16 flyover, moved closer to its final demise Wednesday with the unveiling of the conceptual plan to remove it and restore the historical street structure of the area.

The design was presented during an open house hosted by the

Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission at the Con-Ed Building on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, within site of the I-16 terminus that opened in 1967.

"Go home and mark this date down," Tom Thomson, the MPC's executive director, told the crowd of approximately 25 Savannahians in attendance. "Ten to 12 years from now, you'll be able to say you were there the night we moved this project forward."

Wednesday's meeting was held as the flyover's removal project, or the

Reclaiming Old West Broad Street initiative as it is officially known, moves from the "planning phase" to the "required documentation and approval phase," according to project manager Ellen Harris.

The open house also comes 13 days before a potential source of funding for the project, the Transportation Investment Act, better known as T-SPLOST, goes before local voters. T-SPLOST would include \$22 million for the \$37.2 million project.

SEE FLYOVER, PAGE 5A

Flyover

FROM PAGE 1A

The flyover could be removed and the street plan restored as early as 2019, although Harris acknowledged meeting such a deadline would mean approvals from the state and the Federal Highway Administration come quickly and "all the other stars align." The state and federal government agencies, not the city of Savannah, own the land the flyover sits upon.

The "aggressive time frame," as Harris classified it, matches what is an ambitious project. The plan calls for the demolition of the highway from where U.S. 17 forks off from I-16 near Gwinnett Street.

The removal would allow for the reclamation of 8.2 acres of developable land, 650 feet of street frontage along MLK Boulevard and 350 feet of street frontage along Montgomery St. The flyover would make way for as many as 340 residences and 60,000-square-feet of retail space, and revitalization of the surrounding area could result in an additional 1,100 homes and 340,000-square-feet of commercial opportunities.

"We're going to create a new gateway, create an opportunity to return neighborhoods that were lost, and create land use and redevelopment opportunities," said Savannah-based

urban planner Christian Sottile, who led the redesign efforts for the flyover area.

Demolishing the flyover and reconnecting the Frogtown and Currietown neighborhoods to downtown will remove what Sottile labeled a "physical, social, economic and psychological" barrier for the area. The plan expands Selma Street and restores what was once known as Roberts Street.

A new public square would be created along MLK Boulevard across from the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

"This area would become central to our downtown again," Alderman Van John-

son said.

And the plan would improve traffic flow, according to a traffic analysis study. There are currently six access points between I-16 and the downtown area, four which would remain once the flyover is removed. Those interchanges — 37th Street, Gwinnett Street, Louisville Road and Oglethorpe Avenue — are currently underutilized because of the of the flyover.

Spreading the on and off traffic amongst those interchanges would turn the "fire hose" effect of traffic flow created by the flyover into more a "sprinkler" situation, Sottile said.

As for funding, the MPC

has \$1.6 million available that should fund the project up until the time comes to begin demolition and redevelopment. And the project's future is not tied directly to the success of T-SPLOST.

The MPC is "simultaneously pursuing multiple funding options" that could include federal grants, Special Service Districts, Tax Allocation Districts and SPLOST in addition to T-SPLOST.

"We have the greatest planned city in America; the first planned city," said Adam Ragsdale, MPC board president. "This plan would make us better."

Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct

The Alaskan Way Viaduct of Seattle is a road under siege. Built in 1953, as State Route 99, the Alaskan Way is a north-south route alongside Seattle's Elliot Bay and carries approximately 105,000 vehicles per day. After portions of the structurally similar Cyprus Street Viaduct of Oakland, CA crumbled during the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the integrity of the Alaskan Way became highly suspect. In 2001, damage by the Nisqually Earthquake confirmed these suspicions, necessitating emergency repairs and calling into question its long-term viability. The City of Seattle and the State of Washington have been wrestling with what to do with the aging, precarious structure ever since.

Removal Proposals

In 2007, after a study by the University of Washington found that damage from continued post-earthquake settling will further damage the structure, they recommended the viaduct be destroyed within 4 years. Initial proposals released by the Washington State Department of Transportation for replacement arterials included only an expanded elevated highway or a tunnel during the downtown segment--each with price tags of \$4 billion or more--met with fierce opposition. On a March 13, 2007, Seattleites voted both of these options down in a local referendum--welcoming in a surface and transit option.

The Boulevard Option

With the two expensive options off the table, Cary Moon and the [People's Waterfront Coalition](#) have capitalized on momentum for a surface boulevard alternative. The organization envisions an open, landscaped boulevard with built in options for transit. This human-scale structure would re-open the waterfront to the community and restore the shoreline, thus supporting a vibrant urban atmosphere. Further development along the newly opened 335 acres of public land on Seattle's waterfront could give way to new parks, beaches, and development--and save the city years of construction delays and billions of dollars. "If you try to build your way out of congestion," says Moon, "you'll ruin your city or go broke trying."

Future Plans

In January, 2008 Governor Christine Gregoire decreed that "no-action" was not an option, and that by 2012 the Viaduct would come down, though has not decided on a specific replacement. The current mayor Greg Nickels and other local officials still support the tunnel option, despite the prohibitive cost and voter disapproval. After the March, 2007 voter rejection of the rebuilding and tunneling options, the city went back to work, putting together other proposals. Today, there are 8 alternatives, three of which involve replacing the elevated structure with surface roads.

Resources

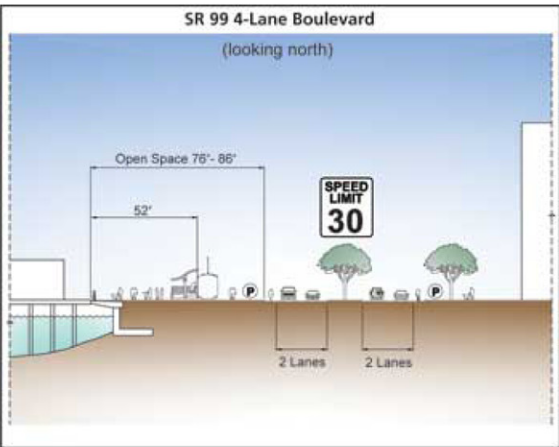
Smart Mobility Sept. 2006: [Alaskan Way Viaduct: Analysis of No-replacement Option](#)



The Alaskan Way Viaduct, as seen from Elliot Bay. Source: Wikipedia



Source: Flickr.com Slightlynorth



One of three proposed surface level alternatives Source: Washington State DOT

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

The Buffalo Skyway

Buffalo is a waterfront city with a deep history along the shores of Lake Erie. With more than half of the city's waterfront left vacant, the potential for revitalization is immense. Whole neighborhoods and commercial districts could be built with strong connections to downtown and the city's existing neighborhoods.

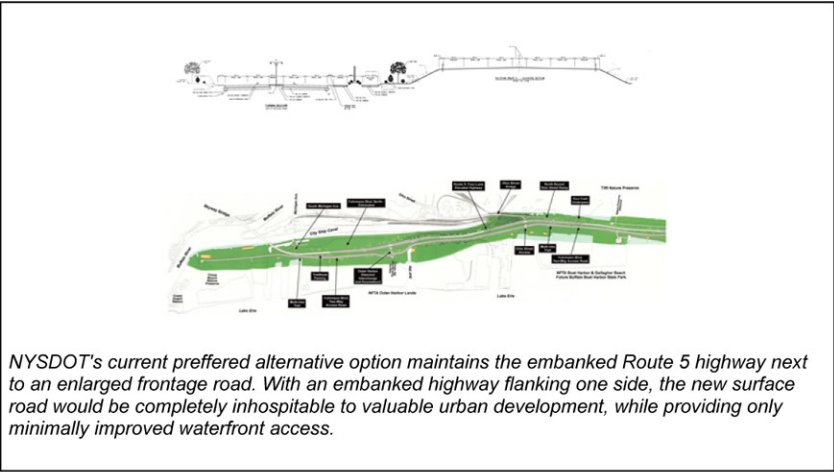
To achieve this vision, Buffalo needs to lay down the proper foundation. Good development is tied to good infrastructure. The form of the streets can seal the fate of vast amounts of land.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) evaluated three infrastructure alternatives for the outer harbor. It selected the plan that will, in all likelihood, keep the waterfront vacant for another 50 to 100 years. This plan maintains the elevated skyway and the embanked Route 5 and expands a major frontage road, while consuming unnecessary amounts of land that could otherwise build the city's tax base.

But by simply choosing the boulevard alternative already developed by the department of transportation, Buffalo could build a single urban thoroughfare that would accommodate traffic demands and become a valuable destination in its own right. The new boulevard would significantly improve waterfront access and support the revitalization that Buffalonians have been fighting for.

Buffalo has two very different choices on the table. By choosing the boulevard alternative, the city will open the door to world-class development.

Read CNU's summary report, [Revitalizing Buffalo's Waterfront \(PDF 1.9MB\)](#).



NYSDOT's current preferred alternative option maintains the embanked Route 5 highway next to an enlarged frontage road. With an embanked highway flanking one side, the new surface road would be completely inhospitable to valuable urban development, while providing only minimally improved waterfront access.

Transportation Reports

Smart Mobility, Dec. 2007: [Development Opportunities Gained by a Multi-way Boulevard for Route 5](#)

Smart Mobility, Aug. 2007: [Summary of Current NYSDOT Plans for Buffalo's Waterfront](#)

Smart Mobility, Dec. 2006: [Assessment of Transportation Needs for Buffalo's Waterfront Redevelopment](#)

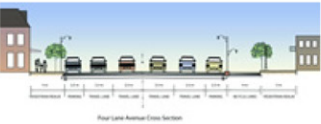
CNU News Releases

9/6/2007: [Buffalo's Potential for World-Class Waterfront Threatened by State Plans to Expand Freeway Infrastructure Along Outer Harbor](#)

7/2/2007: [Buffalo Council Members Tour Milwaukee's Riverfront Redevelopment](#)

12/14/2006: [Transportation Report: Remove the Buffalo Skyway](#)

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism



The Boulevard option would allow for greater connections to downtown and could be lined with development, creating a more desirable place while still provide adequate traffic capacity.



A multi-way boulevard could also be considered. It allows through traffic to keep moving in the center lanes and local traffic -- the kind necessary for commercial development -- to continue at its own pace.



A network of blocks and streets would expand access and connectivity to the outer harbor.



A well-connected boulevard could restore value and life to the waterfront. Rendering by Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists.

San Francisco's Embarcadero

San Francisco's Embarcadero Freeway was originally designed to connect the Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge but was never completed. The Embarcadero only succeeded in cutting off the city from the waterfront and running long ramps deep into the neighborhood fabric. In the most used sections, traffic on the Embarcadero reached well past 100,000 vehicles per day.

Freeway Removal

The battle to demolish the Embarcadero had been struggling until the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. After the earthquake damaged it beyond repair, the city experienced initial traffic congestion but it did not lead to permanent traffic disruptions. The network of streets was able to absorb a large amount of traffic given their previous underused capacity. In addition, annual BART ridership experienced a 15% increase. The scales of public opinion shifted towards removal when residents saw the redevelopment potential and the cost comparisons. Evolving cost projections, which climbed from \$15 million for strengthening to \$69.5 million for freeway reconstruction, changed the debate in favor of a boulevard--with a final cost less than \$50 million.

The Boulevard

Built in 2002, the Boulevard itself was deemed an impressive success from many different angles. Designed by ROMA Design Group as a dynamic multi-use boulevard, it contains two banks of thoroughfare traffic, 3 lanes going in each direction and a streetcar line running down the center. This allows for the accommodation of significant auto traffic, but also gives residents options other than private vehicles.

Economic Development

The area has sprung to life since the freeway demolition. More than 100 acres of land along the waterfront that had once been dominated by the elevated freeway gave way to a new public plaza and waterfront promenade. Dense commercial development has lined the street, housing in the area increased by 51% and jobs have increased by 23%. High profile redevelopments like the old Ferry Building and Pier 1 have continued to transform the waterfront. Similarly, the old industrial South Market area was redeveloped as a dense, mixed-use neighborhood. As of 2006, the large number of recent assessments in the redesigned area pushed the average sale base year to 2000 compared to the citywide average of 1996.



Embarcadero Freeway and Ferry Building, circa 1960. Source: Telstar Logistics.



The Embarcadero from street level, circa 1980. Source: Telstar Logistics.



After street redesign, circa 2008. Source: BruceTurner.

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

San Francisco's Octavia

San Francisco's Central Freeway was one of two freeways to see their demise after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Originally envisioned as part of a grand spider web of freeways meant to cross through San Francisco many times over, the Central Freeway grew to nothing more than a spur. Despite the fact that the spur blighted swaths of San Francisco's historic Hayes Valley neighborhood, residents wanted to keep it around, for fear of what the resulting traffic jams might hold. However, since removal, gridlock failed to materialize and the area has seen significant revitalization.

Freeway Removal

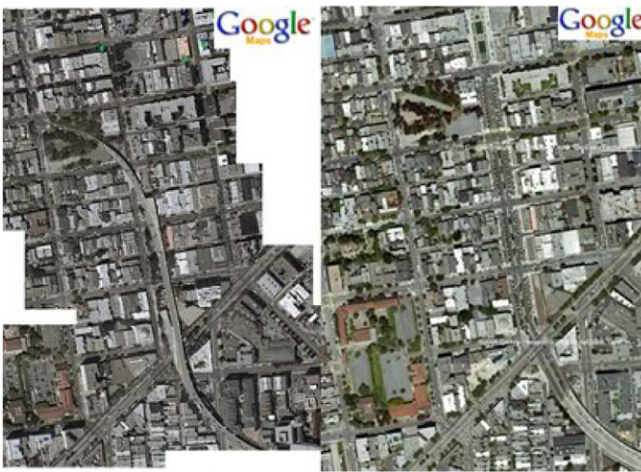
After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the Central Freeway was rendered unsafe for driving. While the calls for its demolition had existed before this time, they had always been resisted as too vital for urban connectivity. It was argued that closure would surely result in unprecedented traffic jams. However, after the earthquake forcibly closed the highway, the congestion failed to materialize. This allowed for planners to seriously consider its removal. Thanks to generous support from San Francisco's then Mayor Brown and well organized neighborhood organizations, in 1992 the freeway was permanently closed, and by 2002 was rebuilt as a surface grade, multi-use boulevard.

The Boulevard

Built in 2002, The new Octavia Boulevard that was built in the footprint of the old Central Freeway was designed to be both visually appealing and pedestrian friendly. This was accomplished by offering generous landscaping, side lanes for local traffic and parking, and special considerations for details like views from side streets and pedestrian amenities like special light fixtures and brick color. Planners also included the new park, Patricia's Green, as well as generous tree-lined pedestrian walkways.

Economic Development

Before the destruction of the Central Freeway, condominium prices in the Hayes Valley neighborhood were 66% of San Francisco average prices. However, after the demolition and subsequent replacement with the new Octavia Boulevard, prices grew to 91% of city average. Beyond this, the most dramatic increases were seen in the areas nearest to the new boulevard. Furthermore, residents noted a significant change in the nature of the commercial establishments in the area. Where it had been previously populated by liquor stores and mechanic shops, soon the area was teeming with trendy restaurants and high-end boutiques.



Octavia Boulevard Before and After. Source: Mr.Wright, GoogleMaps



Octavia Boulevard looking south , circa 2008. Source: sfcondomap.com.



After street redesign, circa 2008. Source: Charles Siegel.

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Portland's Harbor Drive

In the history of American freeway teardowns, Portland's Harbor Drive holds an auspicious position. It stands as the first major highway to be intentionally removed. In 1950, Harbor Drive, running adjacent to downtown along the western bank of the Willamette River, became Portland's first limited-access highway, six lanes carrying US Route 99W. As more freeways were built in the city during the 1960s—including Interstate 5 on the eastern bank of the Willamette and Interstate 405, a western bypass around downtown—Harbor Drive became less important as a long-haul freeway route. In the early 1970's, the average daily traffic using Harbor Drive was about 24,000 vehicles, including approximately 2,500 heavy trucks accessing nearby industrial areas.

Highway Removal

In the late 1960s, newly elected Governor Tom McCall pledged his support for the beautification of the west bank of the Willamette River—harkening back to the City Beautiful plans at the turn of the century that envisioned parks and greenways along the river. Alternatives were proposed for the area, initially various tunnel options were discussed but proved too expensive. Citizens, led by the Riverfront for Citizens coalition, called for a park and boulevard option. McCall ultimately backed the boulevard option and in 1974, Harbor Drive was closed for reconstruction.

The Boulevard

The direct footprint of Harbor Drive was converted into parkland and more park acreage was created by demolishing industrial and commercial buildings that bordered the freeway along Front Avenue. Front Avenue was widened into a landscaped boulevard to handle the local traffic and was later renamed as Naito Parkway. In 1978, construction of the 37-acre Waterfront Park was completed and, in 1984, was named after Governor Tom McCall. The city extended Waterfront Park to the south in 1999, doubling the size of the public open space. Due to the success of the park, the city is currently redesigning sections of Nation Parkway to make the boulevard more pedestrian-friendly.

Economic Development

The success of Portland's downtown is widely known—and the demolition of Harbor Drive should take a good portion of credit. Key developments—like Yards at Union Station to the north and RiverPlace to the south—led to a resurgence in downtown housing. The city continues to develop waterfront plans to build on the river as an asset. The Portland Development Commission's Downtown Waterfront Development Strategies Project aims to increase mixed-use development along the length of the downtown and three blocks from the waters' edge. This is in recognition of the dramatic increases in property value that have resulted from the replacement of Harbor Drive with an at-grade boulevard.



A Postcard of the Harbor Drive. Source: cafeunknown.blogspot.com



The same area as pictured above, as Tom McCall Waterfront Park, circa 2005. Source: PDXplan.org



Source: flickr.com Greg_e

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Milwaukee's Park East Freeway

In the 1960s, highway designers planned to surround the Milwaukee central business district with an expressway. Despite public protest, more than half of the highway loop was built, including a 0.8-mile stretch in 1969 that separated the north side from the rest of downtown, known as the Park East Freeway. Enough opposition emerged to stop the Park East from continuing east to the waterfront of Lake Michigan—but damage was already done. The Park East displaced multiple blocks of development, ultimately occupying 16 acres. In 1999, the Park East Freeway carried an estimated 54,000 vehicles on an average weekday. It limited access to downtown, with exits at only three points, and interrupted the street grid—funneling north-south street traffic to three main intersections.

Freeway Removal

In the 1990s, a new Riverwalk system stretching along the Milwaukee River through the entire downtown renewed interest in the riverfront and sparked a downtown housing boom. But the area around the Park East Freeway remained underutilized with surface parking lots and aging industrial parcels. Leaders began to recognize it as a barrier to redevelopment efforts. Mayor Norquist began a campaign for the complete demolition and removal of the Park East and its replacement with a landscaped boulevard. In 2002, demolition began and the removal of the spur and reconstruction was accomplished with \$45 million through a variety of federal, state, and city sources.

The Boulevard

The freeway was replaced with McKinley Boulevard and the previous urban grid was restored. The City of Milwaukee led the creation of redevelopment plans for the area. Under the direction of City Planner Peter Park, the city drafted a form-based code for the renewal area to encourage development to reinforce the original form and character of the area.

Economic Development

Given the fairly recent opening of the boulevard -- the redevelopment interest is proving the value of converting this area into a walkable urban space. Fortune-500 Manpower Corporation has moved its headquarters a block from the former highway and mixed-use developments are popping up along the boulevard as well as in the surrounding blocks. Between 2001 and 2006, the average assessed land values per acre in the footprint of the Park East Freeway grew by over 180% and average assessed land values in the Park East Tax Increment District grew by 45% between 2001 and 2006. This growth is much higher than the citywide increase of 25% experienced during the same time period.



Park East Expressway Circa 1990, Source: City of Milwaukee Planning Department



Before and after plans for the Park East footprint. Source: City of Milwaukee Planning Department



Milwaukee's new Flat Iron building, in the Park East redevelopment zone. Source: Milwaukee Dept. of City Development

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism