



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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GOVERNOR

DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
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SAM HUNT  
SECRETARY

June 1, 1993

MEMORANDUM TO: Calvin W. Leggett, P. E.  
Manager, Program Development Branch

FROM: Whitmel H. Webb, P. E.  
Head, Feasibility Studies Unit

SUBJECT: Wilmington, Independence Boulevard

At your request, I have reviewed the proposed Independence Boulevard extension in Wilmington. Based on discussions with the Statewide Planning Branch, the project, if programmed, should extend from US 76 (Oleander Drive) to the proposed Smith Creek Parkway (See Figure 1). The project could be constructed in two stages. The first stage could extend from US 76 to Market Street. The second stage, from Market Street to the Smith Creek Parkway, could be constructed either with or subsequent to the construction of the Parkway.

Two alternative locations have been considered by Statewide Planning and the City of Wilmington between Oleander Drive and Randall Parkway (See Figure 2). One alternative involves some new location in the vicinity of Park Avenue to align Independence Boulevard with East Forest Hills Road. East Forest Hills Road and Mercer Avenue would then be widened to a five lane curb and gutter roadway. Based on a functional design supplied by Statewide Planning, this alternative will require approximately 5 relocations. There is apparently strong local opposition to this alternative by residents along East Forest Hills Road because it will increase traffic and require right-of-way from the front yards. None of the relocations are in this section.

The other alternative is almost completely on new location between Park Avenue and Randall Parkway (See Figure 2). It crosses a city park with a four lane road divided by a 16-foot median. The park has been developed with federal Land and Water Conservation funds. This alternative will result in approximately 18 relocations. According to Statewide Planning, the City of Wilmington strongly supports this alternative.

In my opinion there are serious problems with the new location alternative. If the project is federally funded, Section 4(f) will apply. The alternative along East Forest

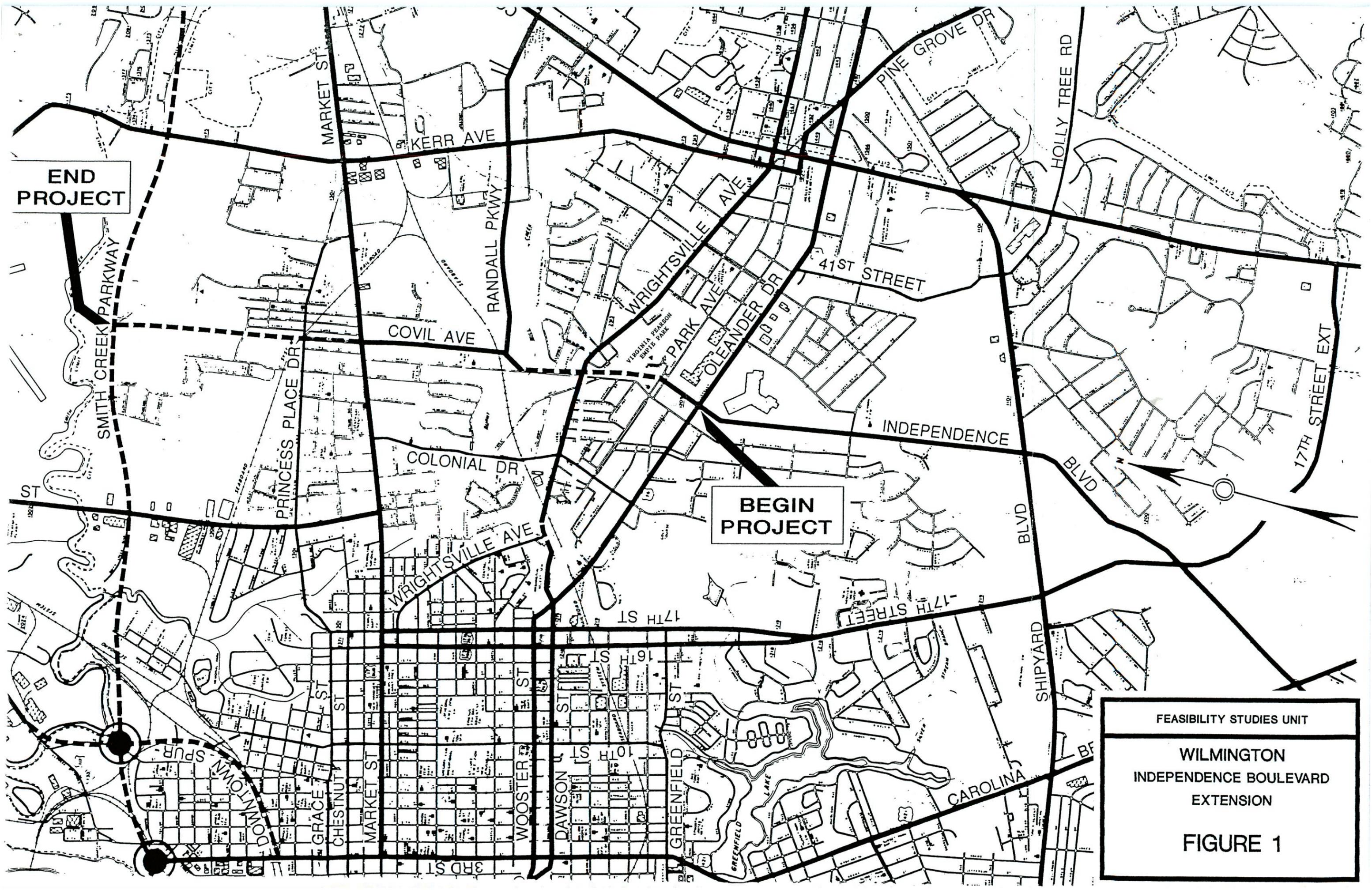


Hills Road appears to be a feasible and prudent alternative; therefore, the alternative using park land probably would not be approved by the Federal Highway Administration. In addition, use of the park land constitutes a conversion under Section 6(f)(3) of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. The provisions of Section 6(f) apply whether the funding source of the project is federal or state. Statewide Planning has already discussed this with the Division of Parks and Recreation, who approve mitigation plans for Section 6(f) conversions. Parks and Recreation have indicated that suitable mitigation will likely require NCDOT to acquire a group of homes adjacent to the park, remove the houses and convert the land to park uses. This will add approximately 10 relocatees to the 18 already required.

In summary, if the project is to be programed with federal-aid funds, the City of Wilmington should be made aware that the Federal Highway Administration will likely not allow the use of park land if a feasible alternative exists. While it may be possible to build the new location alternative with state funds, it may be difficult to justify the relocation of approximately 13 to 23 additional families to avoid utilizing East Forest Hills Road.

If you would like additional information or have any questions, please let me know.

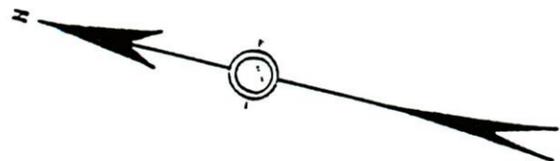
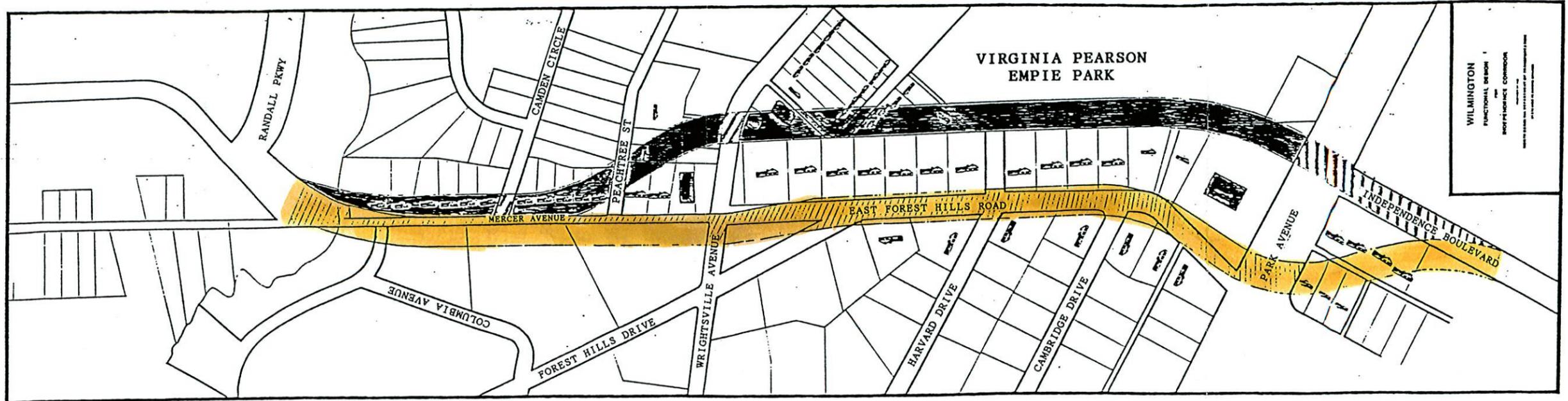
cc: Mr. Mike Bruff, P. E.



**END PROJECT**

**BEGIN PROJECT**

FEASIBILITY STUDIES UNIT  
WILMINGTON  
INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD  
EXTENSION  
FIGURE 1



FEASIBILITY STUDIES UNIT

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FIGURE 2