

**CENTRAL ATLANTA  
OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSES  
CENTRAL AREA STUDY (CAS/1)  
SUMMARY**

CAS/1 was a cooperative effort of the City of Atlanta, Central Atlanta Progress,  
and the U.S. Department of Transportation.  
Final Report Released on December 1971

- Opportunities and Responses
- Functions of the Central Economy
- New Roles For Atlanta
- Transportation Policies
- Strategic Responses
- Parking Supply and Demand
- Urban Design for Central Atlanta
- Peachtree Promenade
- Five Points Park
- Subjects Requiring Further Study

The CAS/1 final report is too lengthy to be included in its entirety, but these excerpts and summary provide insights into the issues and recommendations being considered for Downtown Atlanta over 25 years ago. For more information call Central Atlanta Progress at 404-658-1877.

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**OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSES**

The ability to respond to the opportunities inherent in the growth of Central Atlanta is a matter of great importance to the city, the metropolitan area and the State of Georgia. Central Atlanta represents by far the largest concentration of tax values in the State. Within Central Atlanta are some of the most important public and private institutions serving the population of the city and the region.

The forecasts in this report assume that the development opportunities offered in Central Atlanta will indeed be exploited by appropriate public and private responses. The necessary public steps must be taken to respond to the private investment potentials that Central Atlanta's highly specialized functions will generate. Central Atlanta plays a strategic economic role in the expanding regional economy and will be undertaking new national and international functions.

Central Atlanta's economy and that of the metropolitan region are closely interdependent. Without a strong central core, the metropolitan economy ceases to exert its critical leverage on the Southeast region; without the support of an expanding metropolitan area, the central area economy loses its capacity for offering the specialized services that are so obviously in demand. The tax revenue represented by a healthy Central Atlanta will accord the local and state governments the financial base to respond adequately to the demands in the fields of public education, welfare and social services which will expand whether or not Central Atlanta is economically healthy.

The reality of Central Atlanta's strategic importance underlies the plans for a massive rapid transit system centered on Downtown Atlanta with spokes extending to outlying parts of the metropolitan area. The same logic supported the development of the central expressway system with its initial predominant focus on the central area.

As in the past, when the expressway system was originally conceived and the rapid transit system more recently planned, the issue of transportation is given a high priority in this present report. The projected levels of activity

demand creation of a fully developed transportation system, which will not only carry people and goods but will also, produce investment opportunities.

The problems of transportation require major attention in assuring the optimum expansion of Central Atlanta's economic structure. However, other problems, whose solutions are essential to a viable and habitable central city, must also be confronted.

The spectacular development that has taken place in Central Atlanta has not been accidental. Atlanta had one of the nation's first urban renewal programs; its downtown projects cleared the way for the major office-hotel-apartment complex along Piedmont and Courtland Streets in the heart of the area. They also made possible the large-scale housing developments that cleared disreputable slums east of the Downtown Connector and provided sites for the Civic Center and Stadium. The central segment of Atlanta's expressway system was planned and financed locally long before the interstate system was activated. Atlanta's Techwood Homes project was the first public housing project in the nation, taking the first steps toward eliminating substandard housing from the central area. Substantial public projects such as the Civic Center, Stadium, Grady Memorial Hospital and Georgia State University were carefully planned as to location to provide the maximum development leverage. Major decisions affecting the location of other strategic facilities like the Federal Reserve Bank, the Merchandise Mart and the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center were directly influenced by similar planning considerations.

There is strong evidence that Atlanta, among only a few major U.S. cities so fortunate, can avoid the dominant cycle of declining investment that has seriously affected the viability of central areas in recent years. The great bulk of new private investments in most U.S. urban areas since the end of World War II have been made beyond the limits of the central cities. The result has been heavy pressures upon and even widespread collapse of municipal fiscal structures. In the face of an unprecedented suburban expansion into the outer reaches of its metropolitan area, Atlanta has been able to expand its central area economy and to increase its municipal tax base, although the pressure of increased expenditure needs has kept pace with its gain in public wealth.

The key to this continued economic viability for the City, the metropolitan area and the State is the vitality of Atlanta's central area. This is what this report is all about.

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL ECONOMY**

Over the past two decades, Metropolitan Atlanta's economy has had an impressive growth, one of the most spectacular in the U.S. Between 1950 and 1970, it added 353,000 employees to its work force, more than double the 1950 total. While the overall totals were impressive, the central point is that the rate of employment gain in the 1960's was twice as great as in the 1950's, as the Atlanta economy reached new plateaus of competence. The economy has been both broadened and deepened, adding a wide diversity as well as new strength in its traditional sectors of activity.

The most critical factor in this development has been Atlanta's central role as the controller of the Southeast regional economy. Since World War II, the Southeast has undergone an economic revolution that has transformed its basic economic structure into one of broad industrial and agricultural balance. Economic sectors in which the Southeast economy was grossly under-represented in 1940, particularly in the skilled, high-wage categories of manufacturing, have rapidly expanded. The region's dependence upon agriculture, raw materials processing, and low-wage industries has clearly been broken. Real income has risen sharply to support a growing array of consumer activities; large-scale urbanization has generated a wide variety of demands for goods and services.

Atlanta has played a decisive role in this regional economic transformation as:

- the financial and administrative capital of the Southeastern region
- the primary transportation, communications, and distribution center
- the largest complex of regional headquarters functions, both private and governmental
- the Southeast's largest concentrations of educational and medical facilities, professional services and cultural activities
- the region's biggest inventory of conference and transient housing accommodations and one of the nation's leading convention centers outside of tourist-oriented Florida
- the largest manufacturing and industrial service center in the Southeast, with an ever-broadening diversity of plants and supporting activities

- the place of employment for almost 40% of the workers in Georgia

Atlanta's dominant employment role in the Southeast region has generated the basic support for Central Atlanta's tremendous expansion. It has been the central area where a great part of Atlanta's specialized regional service functions has been concentrated. The record of growth in Central Atlanta has clearly reflected its strategic contribution to the metropolitan area's overall role in the Southeast.

### **NEW ROLES FOR ATLANTA**

As it moves closer to the 2,000,000 mark in population, Metropolitan Atlanta will take on new functions to supplement its primary role as the functional capital of the Southeast Region. It is already clear that Atlanta is emerging as one of the "national cities", whose products and services will reach deeply into nationwide markets and whose efficiencies and amenities will be increasingly attractive to national and international firms.

Atlanta is achieving this new competitive status as a national city because it has reached a broad threshold of size and competence in its regional center role. The evidence is on all sides: in the depth of its professional and technical services, the strength of its financial resources, the skills of its manpower, the breadth of its educational facilities, and the variety of its civic and cultural activities. The airport is the nation's third busiest, providing unparalleled flight schedules and connections. The inventory of buildings and services is broad, varied and extensive – office towers and parks, warehouses, hotels, exhibit space, industrial sites and structures – with the full range of public and private support services. Its governmental infrastructure is sound and efficient with an impressive record of performance in meeting urban problems. The area's amenities for living are outstanding.

As Atlanta's economy becomes more oriented to national markets, it will lose a portion of its overwhelming dominance as the regional capital of the Southeast. This is not because of incompatibility between national and regional roles. It is because other strong urban centers – for example, Nashville, Charlotte, Memphis, and Jacksonville – are taking on some of Atlanta's functions as the business capitals of growing subregions. The Southeast is no longer a monolith to be served from a single location; it is a complex of sub-economies capable of supporting a number of central work cities. As these competitive cities grow, however, Atlanta will undoubtedly remain the largest in terms of the specialized services it has to offer. To this regional service role will be added the significant new dimensions of nationally oriented activities.

Also visible on the horizon is an international role for Atlanta, again based on the threshold of size and competence achieved by its present economy. A substantial interchange of trade and commerce is bound to follow the opening of direct air service between Atlanta and major cities in other countries. This can be expected to happen within the next few years. Current plans to build an international conference center, supported by both state and local interests, are anticipating such developments. Atlanta firms are looking increasingly to foreign markets and connections.

Both sets of new directions for the Atlanta economy – national and international – have direct implications for Central Atlanta. Precisely the same combination of specialized services, through which the central area contributes to Atlanta's regional economic leverage, will enable it to play a major role in these emerging new activities. The strength of Central Atlanta is what makes this change possible.

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

To respond to the overall goal of the Central Atlanta Study and also to the general policies stated previously, the following transportation policies were followed in the development and testing of proposals to deal with the anticipated increases and changes in transportation demands within Central Atlanta.

- Convenient peak access, as well as off peak travel, to Central Atlanta from all sectors of the region by roads and mass transit.
- A comprehensive multi-modal transportation system properly coordinated with major access facilities, to provide for adequate internal traffic distribution and circulation within Central Atlanta.
- A transportation system which will encourage those through traffic movements now using Central Atlanta as a corridor to occur outside Central Atlanta.
- A transportation system which will enhance the environmental quality of Central Atlanta by being visually attractive, minimizing air and noise pollution with minimal disruption of the desired physical pattern and appearance of Central Atlanta.

- Reduction of vehicle versus vehicle and vehicle versus pedestrian conflicts.
- Transportation service of a type and location, which shall encourage desired sociological changes and development patterns.
- A transportation plan devised for total development on a rational basis.

## **STRATEGIC RESPONSES**

Alternative transportation networks assumed completion of MARTA before 1983. Traffic assignments to various road networks revealed inadequate "gateway capacity" in critical central area approach corridors for projected 1995 vehicle demands. These analyses, therefore, confirmed the results of the Atlanta Area Transportation Study (AATS) and other previous studies. Serious road congestion will remain in critical corridors after 1983, even with completion of the MARTA plan and the entire AATS freeway system, unless there is additional construction or basic policy changes are made regarding transportation concepts. Completion of the additional freeways, tollways and arterial street widenings included in the plans under consideration, as well as the MARTA public transit plan, will present major challenges and entail very great costs. It seems undesirable and perhaps impractical to plan for development of still more freeways, at least within the planning period for this study. Thus, the main thrust of the Central Atlanta Study transportation analysis has been toward the identification of ways to accommodate the anticipated growth for the central area by more effective utilization of existing and planned roads, freeways, mass transit and other changes not requiring major road construction.

Four major strategies have been identified, which provide the philosophical frame within which actions can be taken to respond to the future traffic needs of Central Atlanta. These strategies are:

- Additional Gateway Capacities
- Rationalization of Central Area Street System
- Auto Intercept Concept
- Public Policy Actions

Each of these subjects will be examined in more detail. However, it must be emphasized that they are mutually supportive, providing for Central Atlanta a comprehensive response to increasing traffic and fitting within the context of the major regional transportation systems proposed by AATS and MARTA. If the AATS system proposals do not advance according to schedule, these strategies will become even more important in order to provide a coordinated approach to Central Atlanta traffic demands.

In each of these strategic approaches the main intent has been to build upon public expenditures which have already been made, exploiting the previous investment to the fullest and providing the greatest possible improvement in traffic capability with the least amount of new financial and social expenditures.

*Additional Gateway Capacity.* There are now some 48 entrances into the central area through the railroad cordon. They range from high-capacity freeways and major arterials like Piedmont and Ponce de Leon avenues to low-capacity local streets such as Park Drive and Lucile Avenue. They have widely differing traffic carrying characteristics. For example, the South Expressway carries about 120,000 vehicles on an average day, while Ponce de Leon accommodates 30,000 vehicles in the same period and Lucile Avenue is used by less than 10,000 vehicles in 24 hours.

It is possible to accommodate more traffic at the gateways by new construction and the widening of existing streets and highways. Another very effective technique is the diversion of traffic that does not need to travel through the gateways. As an example, approximately 50 percent of all the traffic using the Downtown Connector (I-75/ I-85) is not destined for the central area. Diversion of a significant proportion of this traffic to routes which more adequately meet its desires will have the effect of making more of the Connector available for traffic which is oriented to the central area.

The intent of this strategy is to provide, by a variety of means, more access on the relatively limited gateways into the Central Area and to encourage the use of these access routes primarily by traffic having an origin or destination within the Central Area.

*Rationalization of Central Area Street System.* The existing Central Atlanta street system is a chaotic melange of discontinuous roads, unrelated and short streets, odd intersections caused by changes in the street grid and street widths which vary with little relationship to traffic demands.

There is, however, a great public investment represented by the existing street system as well as an unrealized potential to make much more effective use of it by the prudent investment in relatively minor improvements. These improvements can take the form of limited widenings, new construction at some intersections to improve traffic flow, the connection of streets to form a continuous pattern and the introduction of a rational and extensive system of one-way streets controlled by a signal system capable of responding to traffic demands.

Within this strategy is included the separation of vehicle versus vehicle and vehicle versus pedestrian conflicts so that both person and vehicle flow can be improved. It is necessary to take advantage of every opportunity to use pedestrian overpasses and underpasses, particularly in the Five Points area where there is great potential to separate the movement of pedestrians from confrontation with vehicular movement.

The essential thrust of this strategy, thus, is to make better use of the existing inadequate street network by devising a systematic exploitation of its strengths and elimination of its weaknesses. As will be seen, this is possible with a relatively small investment in dollars and with minimal disruptions.

*Intercept Concept.* Even with great improvements in the central area street system and with MARTA a reality there will still be difficulty in accepting in the CBD all the vehicles whose riders have destinations there. This fact is particularly true for those persons who will still be using automobiles as a means of travelling to work. What is needed is a secondary line of defense against the automobile – the first line of defense being MARTA.

A second defense could be a screening technique to intercept the automobile before it enters the high density CBD and other areas of concentrated activity. At the points of interception would be located large reservoirs of parking spaces and a convenient means of transfer of the vehicles' passengers to an alternate mode of transportation. An embryonic form of this system exists in Atlanta in the Town Flyer Service, which uses the parking spaces at the Civic Center and the Atlanta Stadium and provides very low cost, convenient bus service from those two points into the CBD. The intercept concept carries this approach further by expanding the number of parking reservoirs and increasing the level of service between them to the major concentrations of employment.

The prime objective of the intercept strategy is to remove, by relatively inexpensive means, some of the future demand upon the CBD system in order to lessen the need for even more extensive and expensive improvements. It is designed to provide another choice within the transportation system, aimed primarily at the CBD worker whose travel habits are most likely to be subject to this kind of change.

*Public Policy Actions.* The application of the foregoing strategies will have a dramatic effect on the improvement of traffic into and within the central area. However, public policy decisions rather than solely construction activity, can also be effective in providing better use of the transportation network.

The types of activities envisioned under this approach can be in such diverse areas as land development regulations, staggered working hours, restrictions on the size of delivery trucks and their time of operations, encouragement of greater use of mass transit, etc. For instance, if the current, rather tentative experiments, in the staggered four-day work week were to be universally applied, it would be roughly equal to a 20 percent increase in the capacity of the transportation system, because workers would only make four trips weekly to and from work rather than five as at present.

The chief goal of this strategy is to make more effective use of the existing transportation systems rather than merely building more roads and other transportation improvements – the side effects of which are causing growing discontent in urban communities.

## **PARKING SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

A 1971 inventory of parking space within the study area showed that there were about 48,000 spaces within the CBD, primarily in lots and structures; approximately 87,000 spaces were located within the Inner Ring. The vast majority of the spaces within the CBD were available, at a charge, to the public, while the bulk of the spaces in the Inner Ring were available only by special arrangements.

The majority of spaces were required to accommodate workers in the area: 35,000 in the CBD and 65,000 in the Inner Ring. Other significant users are hotel and motel patrons and shoppers. The Inner Ring is also required to provide parking for its residents.

The CBD parking demand by 1995 will grow to about 89,000 spaces, even with a much greater dependency upon mass transit. This total was reached by calculating the traffic generation characteristics of the expected development in each traffic zone within the CBD. Workers' requirements will account for about 40,000 spaces, hotel and motel patrons another 24,000. The balance will be used by the wide variety of shops, offices, places of entertainment and services that will be located in the future CBD.

The parking demand for the Inner Ring will exceed 200,000 spaces by 1995, with 159,000 needed to accommodate employees. Another 10,000 will be needed by customers of hotels and motels in the Inner Ring. Over 33,000 spaces will be required to serve the host of other residential, commercial, service and industrial developments.

It is unreasonable to expect that the future capacity of the street system will be sufficient to accommodate every car whose occupants' final destination is the CBD. This is the justification for the Intercept Strategy, which is primarily aimed at the person who uses an automobile for the journey to work. It is, therefore, recommended that half of the new parking demand for the CBD be located in peripheral locations within the Inner Ring, in close proximity to the expressways and major arterials. This rather massive program of construction – 20,000 spaces within the next 25 years – probably can be accomplished only if the city of Atlanta builds and operates parking structures. An additional 20,000 new spaces would be permitted within the limits of the CBD. The bulk of these would relate to the needs of hotels, hospitals, visitor oriented activities and commercial operations.

The demand for future expansion of parking supply within the Inner Ring should be met within that area. However, it is necessary to revise the zoning and site plan review regulations to insure that the new spaces are in sufficient quantity and properly located in relation to the developments they will serve and the access routes which will serve them.

### **URBAN DESIGN FOR CENTRAL ATLANTA**

Transportation was the reason for Atlanta's founding and has continued to play the dominant role in determining the character of Atlanta's growth. It began as the terminus of the north, south and east rail lines along the major ridges that converged at what is now the heart of Central Atlanta. Ever since the major transportation routes have stamped an indelible impression on the development pattern of Atlanta.

Like the railroad one hundred years earlier, the major system of expressways focused on the central area and affected its development. Their rights-of-way defined the edges of the central area. Their very existence has contained and encouraged particular kinds of development, initiating increased activity in some areas and inhibiting development in others.

Atlanta stands on the threshold of still another opportunity to exploit a major transportation program. This is the programmed investment of more than a billion dollars in a rapid transit system which will provide a quantum jump in the level of transportation service available in the metropolitan area. This is a rich opportunity; one that presents public and private decision-makers with a unique set of circumstances. It is possible to capitalize on this proposal and reshape Atlanta's physical structure with a relatively small additional investment that will profoundly benefit all present and future Atlantans.

Moreover, one of the challenges that will be facing Atlanta is to accept gracefully, and with a substantial increase in the quality of life, the very great increase in activities which will occur. Greater density of development is inevitable within the central area. High density is not inappropriate; it presents the opportunity to create new life styles and greater ranges of choice for shopping, living, and entertainment within the heart of Atlanta; it can have a beneficial effect on traffic congestion and housing problems. Through a series of new development techniques and policy changes, this higher density can be utilized to create a more efficient and pleasant environment for living and working.

The proposals in this portion of the report respond to the effects of this higher density. Every attempt was made to reinforce the existing positive development trends within Central Atlanta, to anticipate the opportunities which the

rapid transit system will offer, and to expand the uses to which the central area can be put. By building upon the increased transportation capacity, particularly around the MARTA stations, it is possible to achieve a new physical form for the center of the city. The major stations and interchange points along the transportation system will become nodes of activity with an underlying circulation system connecting these points. By encouraging dense development around the transit stations and connecting these major activity centers with those which already exist or others which will emerge, it is possible to provide easy access to transit for a great number of people. These strong activity centers will become mutually supportive and provide a wider range of activity over a greater period of time.

Also, by recognizing the fact that center cities are generally pedestrian oriented, it is possible to take advantage of the more rational street system and convert streets that are under-used or not part of the downtown network into pedestrian ways. This in turn can relieve the street system of some of the responsibility of providing for pedestrians as well as vehicles.

This section will be concerned with those major projects that will not only provide the framework for future development, but will also solve some present deficiencies. Like many of the recommended transportation projects, these programs and projects reinforce and exploit existing or emerging positive features. In every instance, the objective was to utilize existing potentials to arrive at projects that could be achieved within the legal, financial and administrative capabilities of the community.

The main organizing element of the urban design proposals for the CBD is the Peachtree and Broad Street Corridor. This choice recognizes Peachtree Street's historic role throughout Atlanta's development as well as the fact that the Peachtree Ridge is the location of many of the major present and potential activity areas in Central Atlanta. Moreover, the impending subway construction presents opportunities for imaginative solutions that would otherwise be impossible or too expensive to achieve.

The overall proposal takes advantage of this propitious set of circumstances. Using the Transit Center as a hub, it is possible to create two major pedestrian precincts linking all major activity nodes with a convenient, safe and attractive system of pedestrian circulation. One, which recognizes the importance of the Peachtree Ridge, would link major concentrations of downtown activities such as Peachtree Center, Margaret Mitchell Square, Five Points and the Transit Center. The second major proposal calls for the development of an east-west spine along the Railroad Gulch. This east-west complement to the north-south spine presents the opportunity to link the governmental complex, Georgia State University, Underground Atlanta and the Arena with the Transit Center.

Small landscaped walkways are designed to extend from the proposed Peachtree Promenade to link the small, existing and underdeveloped open spaces. As part of these proposals, recommendations are made to create more parks as focal points for new development and to increase the inadequate amount of open space on a planned basis within the Central Business District.

The recent anonymous gift of one of the blocks (note: now Woodruff Park) touching Five Points is the springboard for a major component of this overall concept. This portion of the total plans calls for the development of a multipurpose, multilevel activity space in what has historically been the heart of Atlanta, but what is in fact a rather nondescript convergence of five streets.

The major elements of the plan are as follows:

<b>Proposal Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Peachtree Promenade	Develop from Baker Street to Margaret Mitchell Square as multi-level activity spine.
2	Five Points Park Development	Expand gift site to north; fully develop park including lower level shops, landscaping, and multiple-use activity areas. Link to transit Center.
3	Broad Street Mall	Develop mall from Luckie street to Transit Center and from Alabama Street to Garnett Street.
4	Broad Street Second Level Walkway	Develop from connection with Peachtree Promenade to Transit Center Plaza.
5	Garnett Street Park	Develop park on entire block of Garnett Street Transit Station.

6	Cone Street Park	Develop park in two blocks bounded by cone, Spring, Luckie and Walton Streets.
7	Alabama Street	Extend Lower Alabama to Transit Center. Convert Upper Alabama Street to landscaped pedestrian mall.
8	Landscaping on Peachtree and West Peachtree Street north of Baker Street	Installation of trees, shrubs, decorative sidewalks and street furniture.

These proposals deal with specific physical problems of the downtown. Although there are certainly many other problem areas needing attention, these have been selected because they are the most pressing deficiencies and because the opportunity exists to correct them easily. In particular, the concept for Peachtree and Broad Streets merely entails replacing the street after transit construction with a coordinated pedestrian and vehicular system relieving existing traffic problems, avoiding future ones, and resulting in a much more attractive environment. The expense, in addition to transit construction costs, would be small, while the benefits would be great.

No other city in America has the unique opportunity that Atlanta has now. Atlanta is on the verge of investing over one billion dollars on a rapid transit system that could reshape the physical and social structure of the entire metropolitan area and will establish new development parameters for many decades to come. Atlanta grew out of railroads in the 1840's; the expressway system reshaped this metropolis in the 1950's; now rapid transit is bringing a new challenge for the 1970's. This is Atlanta's chance. Creative utilization of the momentum provided by the planning, construction, and operation of rapid transit will help Atlanta avoid the mistakes of many other American cities.

### **PEACHTREE PROMENADE**

The opportunities along Peachtree Street and Broad Street have evolved from a unique set of circumstances. Extensive development of office and retail space in the last few years has greatly increased pedestrian activity on Peachtree Street. Activity on Broad Street has also increased considerably because it is a major link between upper Peachtree and lower downtown shopping districts. With the advent of rapid transit, changes will continue along the Peachtree-Broad Corridor. Initially, transit construction will interrupt many of the present activities, but completion of the system will reinforce the existing concentration of development and patterns of pedestrian and vehicular movement.

The Cain Street (note: now International Boulevard) Rapid Transit Station and Transit Center will become two important activity nodes in downtown, providing maximum access to existing nearby development and stimulating additional development in surrounding areas. Pedestrian movement along the Peachtree-Broad Corridor will also increase. As a consequence, conflict between pedestrians and automobiles will worsen. Rapid transit construction, however, offers an unprecedented opportunity to solve these inevitable problems, while immeasurably increasing the amenities in the preeminent portion of Central Atlanta.

MARTA proposes to install its main north-south line along Peachtree and Broad Streets. After testing various alternatives, it was concluded that the best response to this opportunity is the development of a four level transportation complex along Peachtree between Baker Street and Margaret Mitchell Square. The plan calls for the conversion of the existing level of Peachtree Street to a pedestrian promenade with landscaping, fountains, sitting areas and places of public gathering and entertainment.

The first level below the existing street would be devoted to the north-south vehicle movement presently on Peachtree Street. The second level below the street would be multipurpose; it would be used as the concourse for the MARTA transit stations, as the point of entry to the station from adjacent private property, as a sales area and finally the location of lowered Cain, Ellis and Harris Streets. The lowering of these three streets would separate them from conflict with north-south vehicular traffic along Peachtree Street as well as pedestrian traffic in this congested portion of Central Atlanta. This would dramatically increase the capacity of these streets to carry traffic.

The construction of the MARTA line along Peachtree will indeed be disruptive for a short time. However, the exploitation of the singular opportunity, which this construction presents, will result in a more efficient and attractive system of coping with the future. It is possible to use construction techniques which could reduce the



length of time that Peachtree is out of service and at the same time permit the installation of this four level solution. Failure to move boldly in this direction would be inexcusable.

### **FIVE POINTS PARK**

Five Points has always been a name associated with the center of Atlanta. Congestion, rather than any special physical characteristics, has always been the only identifiable feature associated with it. Despite its lack of identity, Five Points is the center of activity for the surrounding financial district. This area is composed of a number of high-rise buildings and many areas of small shops in scattered ownerships. The few green spaces nearby are passive and not oriented toward Central Atlanta needs. Because the heart of the city lacks sufficient major open space, the Five Points area presents a significant opportunity to develop an active public open space.

This fact was recently confirmed by the generous gift of one of the blocks bordering Five Points. This superb donation has been used as the keystone of the proposal for a major multi-use activity area – the term park is not sufficiently descriptive – for the heart of Atlanta.

Building on the gift, and the obvious need to extend Auburn and Edgewood Avenues to connect with Luckie and Walton Streets, it is proposed that there be created a three level activity area focused around a lavishly landscaped area which has provision for walking, sitting, outdoor exhibits and performances. Surrounding this open space and in the right-of-way of the adjacent streets would be shops, boutiques, and restaurants giving vitality and economic purpose to the area. Surmounting the northern edge of the open space would be a forty-five-foot high, one-hundred-twenty foot long waterfall which would be the highlight of the area. In addition to providing the exciting centerpiece for the park, the waterfall screens the extension of Auburn Avenue.

The main part of the open space is developed one level below the existing street level in order to shield it from the effects of the adjacent streets. A second, and equally important, reason for this lowering is that it permits the development of walkways to nearby buildings. It is feasible, for relatively minor additional cost, to extend this pedestrian system along Marietta and Broad Streets to connect directly to the Transit Center. The extension could take place at the same time this area is disrupted by MARTA subway construction and utility relocation. This underground area could be linked with the same types of activities which are proposed around the park.

Like the proposed Peachtree Promenade, the proposals for the Five Points Park seek to utilize the unique circumstances that are present in Central Atlanta and to provide a safer, more attractive, more efficient and dynamic Central Atlanta. These singular circumstances have too much inherent power to be ignored and their potential effect upon Atlanta is too important to be lost.

### **SUBJECTS REQUIRING FURTHER STUDY**

This study has considered many aspects of past, present and future Central Atlanta. Some of these subjects have been addressed completely, their problems identified and specific recommendations made for their resolution. Other problem areas have been examined, but not to sufficient depth because they lie substantially outside the scope of the study's program.

These problem areas fall generally into two categories: 1) problems whose nature and magnitude have been identified during the course of the study and where additional research is needed, such as center city housing, zoning and development regulations, goods movement and solid waste disposal, and 2) those topics needing additional search for innovative and practical ways to implement the proposals in this study, for example, off-street parking, public open space amenities, and pedestrian movement. There is also an obvious need for a system to continuously monitor changes in Central Atlanta and the creation of a mechanism by which the proposals in this report may be updated and modified as time passes.

*Housing.* Of all the problems, other than transportation, which were considered by the Central Area Study, housing emerged as the most pressing and perplexing. Between 1960 and 1970, Central Atlanta lost nearly 20,000 dwelling units, about one-third of its total housing supply. Almost 8,000 units were built during the same period, nearly all of which were low income, publicly assisted projects. During the same period very little middle to upper income housing was constructed. This concentration on low-income housing reinforced the existing trends toward a reduction in range of housing available in Central Atlanta. The gradual withdrawal of older middle and upper income housing and its replacement with non-residential uses also added to the imbalance.

Ironically, during the same ten-year period, significant increases in middle and upper income employment took place in Central Atlanta. Such incongruity in the relationship between place of residence and place of work has become a severe problem facing Atlanta and other American cities.

The need for adequate low-income housing was and remains a problem of critical importance. There is an obvious movement, backed by administrative and legal sanctions, in many American cities to strive for an improved balance – a wider range of center city housing supply as opposed to the concentration of public housing in areas of least political resistance.

In Atlanta, as elsewhere, movement in this direction will not be easy. It is fraught with social and political complications. Yet actions must be taken to change the situation where over 70% of all low-income publicly assisted housing in the metropolitan area is located in the central area. An improvement in the range of available housing must be made. More middle and upper income housing must be built. More low-income housing located in areas outside of Central Atlanta is a necessity.

To move toward a better housing balance means that a strong and established trend must be changed. Substantial and dramatic public and private actions will be required – actions which will be new to Atlanta, to the State of Georgia and to the business community.

Recommendations to correct these problems should stimulate new thinking about housing policies and priorities, public involvement, the role of the central city in a rapidly expanding region, and the employment of new methods by which public policies can be implemented. Without a firm commitment by both government and private enterprise to change past trends, the central area-housing imbalance will continue to worsen until a hopeless situation exists. Atlanta, unlike many other American cities, has not reached that point – yet. It is still possible to avoid moving much further down that path.

As a first step, central area housing must become a primary study topic. This examination should investigate thoroughly the magnitude of the housing imbalance and its implications for central area social and economic development. Once the relationships among housing trends and potential changes, on the one hand, and future housing markets, employment and related central area activities, on the other, are more clearly identified, the study should develop housing policies, plans and methods of implementation which can lead to an improved housing balance.

There are numerous uncertainties surrounding the development of central area housing, although future market forecasts look more favorable than ever before. The obstructions to housing development, which are unique to the central city, must be removed through public initiative so that private development of a balanced housing inventory can be achieved.

In examining the problem of housing balance, the Central Area Study found that a major reason for the lack of new middle and upper income housing was that the central area was not competitive with other parts of the metropolitan area in attracting such development. To help the central area compete in this housing market, the Central Area Study examined several methods that may be useful in changing the trends. These methods, discussed briefly below, should be examined in the recommended housing study.

*Public Land Acquisition.* The cost and difficulty of acquiring sufficient central area land for competitive housing developments are factors that frequently discourage developers. There appears to be a need for public intervention in the land acquisition process, particularly where the assembly of a large site, normally needed to provide a suitable level of amenities, requires acquisition from many owners.

*Tax Incentives.* Taxation, particularly property taxation, plays an important role in the investment decisions. A package of tax concessions, similar in effect to those used to induce industrial development, might be used to provide an incentive, in the form of temporary tax relief, for developers who cooperated with a declared public policy of widening the range of choice in central city housing.

Property tax relief might come in three fundamental forms:

1. Deferred taxation, whereby tax assessments are withheld until the property is developed to the revenue producing stage.
2. Differential assessments, whereby various uses within a mixed use development are taxed differently, at rates which favor residential use.
3. Preferred tax rates for housing located in the central area.

All three techniques are intended to provide a means by which the central area can become more competitive with outlying areas.

*Public-Private Risk Sharing.* This subject includes the variety of techniques which makes possible the development of desired uses in an area where the private investor alone cannot make a profitable venture. As an example, successful development of middle- and upper-income housing in the central area usually takes the form of large diversified projects with many on-site amenities. Development of this scale usually defies the ability of the private entrepreneur.

There are several forms of risk sharing which ought to be considered for the implementation of central area housing policies. One is the use of public ground leases for middle and upper income housing projects. This device provides a means by which some of the development costs of land acquisition and site preparation is assumed by a public agency. The public benefits by obtaining a land use which satisfies public policy objectives, by gaining revenues from the land lease arrangement, and by increasing the taxes from the improvements located on the leased land.

Another form of risk sharing could be an agreement on the part of a public agency to rent a specified number of units in proposed housing projects. Such a guarantee is helpful to the developer who may be uncertain about the future of the housing market in a particular area which the government would like to see developed. The device is used in some cities to fulfill a low and middle income housing shortage.

The 1970 Federal Housing Act, Title VI I, "New Communities", sets out a program of federal assistance which is also a form of public-private risk sharing. This act established a line of low interest credit, and in some cases matching grants, for both public and private parties in the development of new communities located either inside or outside existing municipalities. Funds in this assistance program are limited to the costs of land acquisition and site preparation.

It is the intent of this legislation to foster the development of new communities on a substantial scale and with a degree of self-sufficiency.

Another form of risk sharing, perhaps the most sweeping, is the creation of a state development corporation. The New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), has been endowed with far reaching powers to carry out the development policies of the state. The deployment of this form of public involvement is necessary when the urban development problems are acute and outside the ability of any private initiative.

All three of these methods, as well as others, need investigation for their ability to alter the existing trends in central Atlanta housing development. Each is designed to relieve the potential developer of some element of cost or risk which is unique to the central area.

*Central Business District Parking.* The Central Area Study has foreseen a need for a greatly increased CBD parking supply by 1995. The number of spaces will exceed what can be accommodated within the CBD itself. This led to the recommendation of a system of peripheral parking reservoirs intended to serve a portion of the CBD needs. Additionally, a recommendation has been made that the location, price, and type of parking be regulated through the public operation of parking, particularly in downtown Atlanta. The research and planning for publicly operated parking should be the subject of additional research stemming from the Central Area Study.

A review was made of some of the public parking legislation and operations in other similar cities and states. Many of their implementation techniques have applicability to the recommended entry of the City of Atlanta into the parking business. At least seventeen states have provided enabling legislation that authorizes municipal parking authorities to supply and regulate parking for central areas. Nineteen states, including Georgia, have legislation that authorizes cities to issue revenue bonds for the purpose of financing parking operations.

Not all cities have used a separate authority to provide public parking. Parking utilities, functioning like sewer and water utilities, often operate as revenue producing departments within the regular city government structures. There are advantages and disadvantages in all of these methods. Each needs to be studied for its specific applicability to Atlanta's needs.

The requirement for the regulation of parking supply in Central Atlanta will arrive in the very near future. Already the street system is failing under the load of parking lots that have been indiscriminately located throughout the area. The appropriate planning for the location and financing of new parking capacity can only come from public regulation of the market.

Additional study must be given to arrive at recommendations covering the methods of public involvement, its effect upon the private parking market and the relationship of the future parking supply to emerging development patterns.

*Circulation of Pedestrians and Goods.* Most of the technical efforts in the Central Area Study have focused on the circulation of vehicles within the framework of the approved regional transportation plans and the MARTA proposal. This work has resulted in a substantial body of recommendations for the improvement of access and circulation within the central area.

A concentrated investigation was made of the movement of people in locations where opportunities for making improvements were directly tied to impending improvement programs by public agencies. There remains, however, much to be done in the investigation and planning for improved pedestrian and goods distribution patterns in areas which lie outside the scope of the Central Area Study.

As a priority item a detailed study should be made of the secondary distribution system which has been recommended for early implementation. This system is new and dependent on the development of innovative transit equipment and will require additional study before implementation can proceed. A detailed investigation of the nature of the available technology, its impacts on the surrounding environment, the relationship to old and new development patterns and methods of project financing are elements which could not be addressed completely in the Central Area Study. Nevertheless, they must be understood before implementation can proceed.

There must also be a thorough study of the problem of pedestrian and goods circulation on a larger scale. This is of particular importance in areas where rapid growth is expected, and where the need for vertical and horizontal separation of vehicles and pedestrians is or will be critical.

*Public Amenities, Urban Design and Open Space.* Significant growth has been forecast for the Atlanta Central Area during the next twenty-five years. Such growth will place new requirements on the Central Area, necessitating new kinds of public involvement in guiding growth and insuring the proper proportion of public benefit.

The greatest development pressure will focus on those areas immediately surrounding public transportation stations and transfer points, as well as new improvements in open space and pedestrian access. The most critical of these lie along the proposed Peachtree Promenade, the Five Points area, including that area immediately surrounding the Transit Center, and the Railroad Gulch. The area to the north of Baker Street along Peachtree and West Peachtree and the area to the south of Alabama Street will become increasingly attractive to developers once the closer-in development has begun. The pressure to develop this land to maximum density will be intense and the resulting increase in development dramatic. The probable effects of these circumstances on public amenities make a strong public role in directing urban growth imperative if the future Central Atlanta is to be an attractive and humane environment.

The City of Atlanta must immediately prepare for a new role in directing private development. There are various techniques for public influence in the private market. Of highest order should be the immediate and careful preparation of new zoning controls which will allow the city to stimulate and direct urban growth, protect public places held in high esteem, and insure the provision of public amenities. These latter should include better pedestrian circulation, open space, light, air, view, and improved urban design that will enhance the lives of workers and residents in the central area. This work must be based on the conviction that concentrations of development in the CBD are not only economically desirable, but also sources of vitality and excitement which have no substitute. These centers of activity, when blended with the proper amenities, can stimulate the highest levels of urban life.

The development of new zoning regulations designed expressly to improve the quality of urban development has several precedents on a scale comparable to Atlanta. An important element of the new zoning is called "incentive" or "bonus" zoning. Cities, which have incorporated incentive elements into Central Business District zoning laws, include San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, and New York. Other American cities are studying different techniques which are variations on the currently used incentive elements. These methods are intended to give public agencies some control over the negative impacts that result from unregulated urban growth.

The development of new zoning provisions for Atlanta's central area should contain as a minimum:

- Designation of the Central Business District as a contiguous group of special function areas.
- Controls over the placement of major parking garages.
- An incentive system of bonuses based on revised development limits.
- Protection of special purpose areas, or areas of high public interest or historical significance.

Other techniques of influencing private development in Central Atlanta must also be used. Among these is the effective use of the Atlanta Civic Design Commission. To date this body has not been used to its full potential with respect to its possible role in guiding urban development. In many cities, such commissions are extremely valuable in obtaining a degree of quality urban design from the private sector which otherwise would not be possible. To do this in Atlanta requires the development of a new ordinance to make this body effective. The drafting of a new ordinance and the policies adopted by the reconstituted commission should be based on the urban design findings and recommendations in this report. The commission should have the powers necessary to preclude the development of any public or private building project which does not meet the urban design standards established by the commission.

The development of public buildings and spaces so that they are outstanding examples of urban design and architecture should be used to stimulate a general increase in the quality of both private and public development generally.

There is very little effective open space in the Central Business District. This subject deserves the attention of continued research based on the findings and recommendations of the urban design elements of the Central Area Study. This study should include an investigation into the methods of implementing desirable open space proposals, such as the use of combined financial resources from special tax districts, city funds and federal grants. The encouragement of public and private developments to include usable public open space must be an objective of policy.