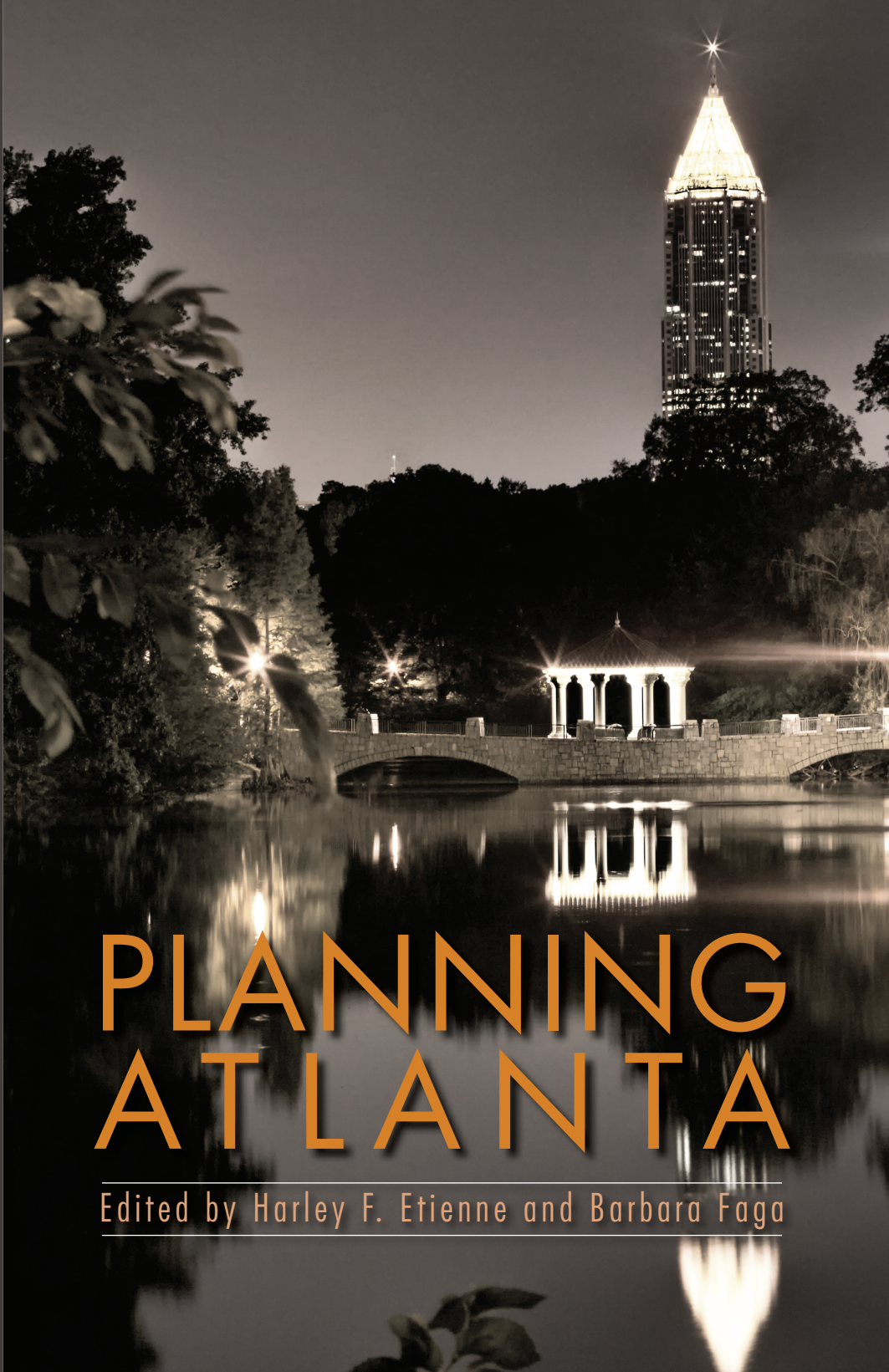

PLANNING ATLANTA

Edited by Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga

Also available in this series
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205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601
1030 15th St., NW, Suite 750 West, Washington, DC 20005

www.planning.org/plannerspress

ISBN: 978-1-61190-126-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014936581

Publication of this book was made possible in part by generous support from several contributors. Financial support was provided by the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning; the Land Economics Foundation and Lambda Alpha International—the Honorary Society of Land Economics; and the Georgia Planning Association. In kind support was provided by LAI's Atlanta Chapter.

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Books are never easy to complete, and this one is no exception. Volumes that bring together voices from across a discipline and practice such as planning face a real challenge in trying to speak to multiple audiences while also creating meaningful and insightful results. We believe that we have accomplished this and hope that readers feel the same way.

First, we must thank the generous support and prodding of the editorial staff at the American Planning Association, specifically Sylvia Lewis, director of publications, and Camille Fink, senior editor, who stepped in at a critical point and helped carry this project to the finish line. Although he is no longer with the press, we also want to mention Tim Mennel, who brought this project to us in the first place.

We must also acknowledge and sincerely thank the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan for their generous subvention grant to support this book project. Steve French, dean of the College of Architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology, deserves special thanks for his support of this project as well.

We gratefully acknowledge the Georgia Planning Association for its early and generous support and Lambda Alpha International (LAI), especially Ian Lord, president of LAI, Steven Gragg, president of the Land Economics Foundation, and Joan Herron, president of the LAI Atlanta chapter. We also thank Laurie Marston, LAI Executive Committee member, and Jon B. DeVries, chair of the Land Economic Foundation Research Committee, for continuing the collaboration between LAI and the American Planning Association.

There are many others who deserve mention for their support of this project. Of course, we are thankful to the contributors to this volume who graciously responded to our numerous requests for revisions and fact-checking, and Kit Sutherland for her perspectives on the nearly completed full draft. Others who helped include our Georgia Institute of Technology colleagues Dan Immergluck, Bruce Stiftel, Brian Stone, and Dana Habeeb; the staff at the Georgia Tech Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development and the Georgia Tech Center for Geographic Information Systems; and University of Michigan colleagues Monica Ponce de Leon, Jean Wineman, Barbara Tiejen, Sandra Patton, Lesli Hoey, Scott Campbell, June Thomas, Margaret Dewar, and Joe Grengs.

Carl Patton deserves special recognition for sharing his knowledge of Georgia State University and Downtown Atlanta, and A.J. Robinson for his in-depth understanding of Downtown. Others who contributed valuable information or images include the staff at Central Atlanta Progress, notably Wilma Sothern and Lynn Williamson; the Atlanta History Center; Paul Morris and the Atlanta BeltLine; Doug Shipman and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights; James Shelby and the Atlanta Department of Planning and Community Development; Shannon Powell and the Midtown Alliance; and Dan Reuter and the Atlanta Regional Commission. Thanks also to George Berry, Tina Arbes, and Karen Huebner, who provided their time and knowledge of Atlanta history.

LEGEND

Interstate Highways
Peachtree Street
Beltline Corridor
MARTA

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Lindbergh Center
2. Woodruff Arts Center
3. Colony Square
4. Turner Headquarters
5. Federal Reserve Building
6. Margaret Mitchell House
7. Fox Theatre
8. Emory Midtown Hospital
9. Center of Civil and Human Rights
10. Georgia Aquarium
11. Children's Museum of Atlanta
12. Georgia World Congress Center
13. CNN Center
14. The Gulch
15. Five Points MARTA Station
16. Underground Atlanta
17. Grady Hospital
18. Georgia State Capitol
19. Atlanta City Hall
20. Turner Field

UNIVERSITIES

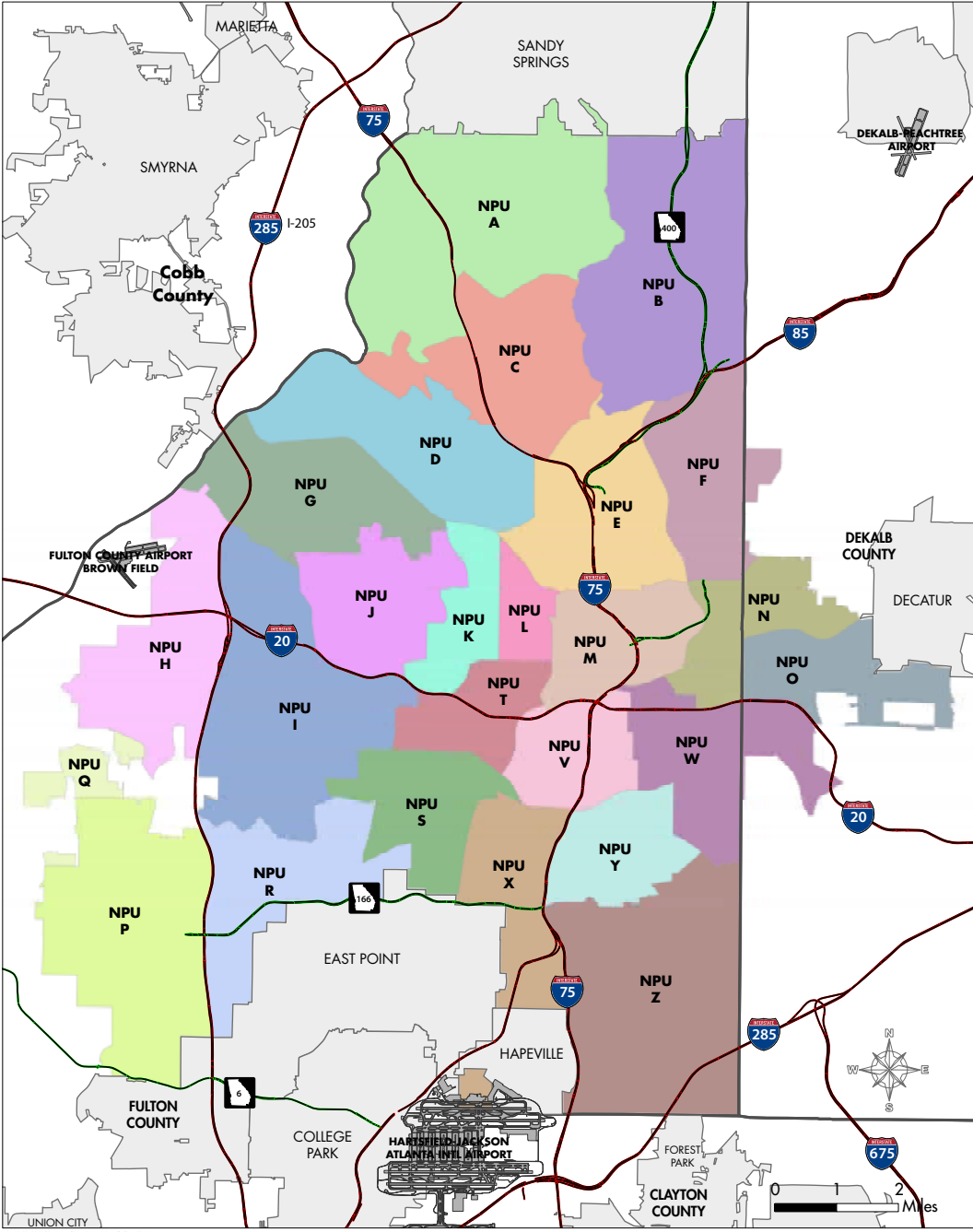
a. SCAD
b. Georgia Institute of Technology
c. Atlanta University Center
d. Georgia State University

PARKS

e. Piedmont Park
f. Old Fourth Ward Park
g. Freedom Park & Carter Center
h. Grant Park
i. Centennial Olympic Park
j. Woodruff Park
k. Washington Park

NEIGHBORHOODS

l. Atlantic Station
m. Midtown
n. Virginia Highland
o. Downtown
p. MLK Jr. Historic District
q. Glenwood Park
r. English Avenue
s. Vine City
t. West End



CITY OF ATLANTA
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING UNIT (NPU) MAP

INTRODUCTION

Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga

As the story goes, in the summer of 1864, Union Army Major General William Tecumsah Sherman invaded and nearly completely destroyed the city of Atlanta. On September 2, the Confederate Army abandoned the city and ordered all Confederate assets destroyed. The aftermath of these events was a significant morale boost for the Union Army and the North and contributed to the reelection of Abraham Lincoln a few months later. Any student of Atlanta's history knows about Sherman's Atlanta campaign and the indelible mark it left on the city's psyche. As the city rebounded from the war, the devastation that it had suffered became one of its many calling cards and a defining feature of the city's emblem: a phoenix rising from flames. The city's official motto is simply the Latin word, *resurgens*, which means "rising again."

Perhaps more than any other major U.S. city, Atlanta continually charts its future by redefining and reshaping itself. The city's history is marked by periods of ruin and resurgence. After each era, the city can be characterized by its misfortunes and dogged effort to leave them behind. From the devastation of the American Civil War to the pre-Olympic boom, to the current housing crisis, the practice of planning in Atlanta reflects the city's struggle to find a core identity and chart a course to its future. It also reflects the city's effort to become and remain economically dominant, connected, and competitive at the regional, national, and global levels.

It is perhaps important to note early in this volume that the city is really only a part of the story. Unlike Los Angeles and Chicago, Atlanta proper actu-

Figure A.1. Atlanta from the Ashes (also known as "Phoenix Rising") was designed by Jim Seigler, fabricated by Gamba Quirino and Feruccia Vezzoni, and commissioned by the Rich Foundation in 1969.

ally occupies a very small piece of the larger region that casually and freely uses its name. The U.S. Census places the city's 2012 population at 443,*775*, which represents only a bit more than eight percent of the metropolitan region (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). While the city's population is growing, it is not keeping pace with the region's growth and certain long-standing populations—namely African Americans—are abandoning the city for neighboring suburbs in significant numbers.

This edited volume has brought together some of Atlanta's most highly regarded planning practitioners and thought leaders to assess how planning has shaped the city's growth and creates challenges and opportunities in the present. There has never before been a view of this city through the various subfields that make up the profession of planning. By bringing together a diversity of perspectives and approaches, this book aspires to combine rigorous analysis with accessible ideas and practical knowledge about how planning and development have happened here and continue to occur.

Market Triumphalism and Mythmaking

In the introduction to the first book of this series, *Planning Los Angeles*, David C. Sloane makes a point of discussing the many myths that make up the City of Angels. In Atlanta, Los Angeles, and many other cities, myth is an important part of city-making. Charles Rutheiser's book *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (1996) challenged Atlanta to face the extent to which the city has been built by dreams and perhaps to some extent "puffery." But then, what is planning but the gap between dreams and current reality? In planning places, planners often must sell the idea of what they hope a city to be to its occupants. Even if the vision for a new place comes from the people themselves, the planner must assemble and present the idea of what could be to a community of people. Atlanta's destruction during the Civil War allowed for a particular myth narrative of a city to be written and believed—one of being rebuilt from little to nothing into a global and regional gateway and hub of finance, entertainment, education, and services over the course of a century.

One of the most dominant public images of Atlanta is the one created by Tom Wolfe in his book *A Man in Full* (1998). All fiction is based partly on reality. The plot of that novel intersects with planning in what we learn about the city's aspirations and the delicate balance of race relations that are unique to any American city—south or north. The trials and tribulations of the characters in the book are actually fairly prescient given what came our way in 2008.

The stories of Atlanta's largest corporations are in many ways symbolic of how cities succeed or fail in a capitalist system. A small, drugstore concoction leads to the existence of one of the most powerful and important corporations on the planet. A little more than a mile to the north of the Coca-Cola head-

quarters is the home of the media giant Turner Broadcasting that manages content on virtually every media platform available today. Ten miles to the south, the city manages one of the busiest passenger and air cargo freight airports in the world that is dominated by one of the largest airlines and one of the largest shippers anywhere else on earth. With Delta Air Lines, Turner Broadcasting, Coca-Cola, and UPS, we find four dominant and important multinational corporations that are as important to the world as they are to Atlanta. The services and goods they provide are essential to the functioning of the global economic system, and yet they grew up alongside the city of Atlanta like siblings.

Our challenge as editors has been to assemble chapters that speak to the reality of planning in Atlanta and provide a thorough narrative of how the city and region have come to be what they are today without appearing to gloat or brag. The abovementioned companies have changed how we get news, what we watch, what we drink, how we travel, and how commerce ships its goods. So, the city and region do have bragging rights. However, there is much to critique and question in this anomaly of urban growth and resilience.

Ongoing Tensions and Injustices

Many who read this volume will no doubt be familiar with former Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen's famous quip about the city's relative lack of civil rights era struggle and controversy when he called Atlanta, "the city too busy to hate" (Bayor 1997, 42; Hein 1972). This did not however mean that there were not real challenges to overcome in terms of the city's racial climate and integration. Georgia state law required the immediate suspension of funding or tax-exempt status at any college or university with an integrated student body. Whereas the integration of the University of Georgia was controversial and violent, Atlanta's Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University integrated without court order or violent unrest (McMath 1985). It is also noteworthy that Atlanta elected progressive mayors who were sympathetic and, in some cases, openly supportive of the civil rights movement from 1942 until 1974, when it elected its first African American mayor, Maynard Jackson.

In the northern sections of the city, and their nearby suburban counterparts of Dunwoody, Sandy Springs, and Johns Creek, metropolitan Atlanta is nearly perfect, aside from the sweltering summer heat and daily traffic jams along Peachtree Road, the Georgia 400 Freeway, and virtually every interstate that runs through, around, or out of the city. In these communities, there is wonderful housing, relatively low crime, abundant shopping and dining amenities, and racial integration that should be the envy of the nation.

To live, shop, and operate in Buckhead is to live at the center of metropolitan Atlanta's paradoxes. In the halls of the historic Lenox Mall, the well-heeled shop at high-end and exclusive brand name stores alongside gay men

in stilettos and pearls, while visitors from all over the state converge to take traditional Christmas photos with Santa Claus and ride the "Pink Pig" holiday coaster, a holdover from a South of not-so-long ago. Here they all compete to belong and own this space. It is a private, lavish space that is a paragon of conspicuous consumption and the living room to a region whose identity is as distinguishable as its growth boundary.

Very close to this world of paradoxes is the stretch of land that rests between Buford Highway and Interstate 85, an alternate universe of middle- to low-income Asian and Latino communities that seems almost bucolic in comparison to the lower-income communities on the west side of Atlanta, just south of the railroad tracks that separate them from the southwestern edge of Buckhead. These heavily industrial and post-industrial spaces are yielding to apartment lofts and condominium communities that cater to recent college graduates and young transplants, coming to enjoy the most cosmopolitan city in the American southeast.

To shop, dine, or live in Buckhead or its counterparts means having the option to have very little contact or exposure to the dilapidated and post-industrial parts of the metropolitan region that have not yet caught up. On the city's southeast, southwest, and western edges are communities with housing abandonment rates and crime rates comparable to some of the most dangerous and blighted cities in the United States. And the evidence suggests that this gulf is widening, not shrinking.

Atlanta's story of growth and dynamism would appear to be nothing short of miraculous, if not for the weaknesses that revealed themselves during the Great Recession of 2008. The city and region have benefitted from "growing by growing." The premise of the entire regional economy has been that in-migration would fuel housing demand, which would then create demand for jobs and services, which would in turn inspire more migration, and lead to even greater housing demand.

As we brought the writing of this book to a close, Atlanta's major league baseball franchise announced its plans to leave Turner Field for a yet-to-be constructed stadium in nearby Cobb County (Bradley 2013). What few commentators have offered is a connection to another fairly quiet event that took place in 2010, when the city's daily paper moved its headquarters for suburban Dunwoody (Henry 2010). This followed another even quieter move of the Atlanta Opera Company to "Sminings" in 2006.[1] So perhaps there is a slow but increasingly loud trickling of amenities and resources out of the city. And as some commentators have noted, these moves may be couched in terms of competitive pricing or transportation but may in part be due to underlying and long-standing racial tensions that put the central city and its issues beyond the interest or attention span of many suburban dwellers (Brown 2013).

Overview of the Book

The volume is divided into five distinct sections representing eras or themes in Atlanta's planning history and development. Part I, *Terminus to International City*, discusses the city's early beginnings and growth with particular attention to how its transportation infrastructure played a major part in creating the context in which Atlanta would grow. Part II, *Diversity and Development*, presents different perspectives on how identity, neighborhoods, power, and access determined which planning projects moved forward, who drove them, and who benefited from their success or failure. Part III, *Travel, Traffic, and Transit Define a City*, provides readers with views of current regional and local transportation planning projects, including the airport, the recent reintroduction of streetcars to the downtown area, and the auspicious Beltline project. Part IV, *Boom and Bust*, speaks to the city and region's reliance on growth through discussions about the 1996 Olympics, notable mixed use communities, and housing and economic development policy. Part V, *Innovation and Challenges Shape the Future*, discusses some of the environmental risks and innovations that may shape the city and region in the decades to come.

No book can possibly incorporate all topics, perspectives, or ideas, and this one similarly does not profess to do this. However, we have gathered chapters that appeal to a larger audience interested in learning about the city and to practitioners wanting to understand how Atlanta has come together and how it struggles to sustain its growth in the face of environmental, demographic, social, and policy challenges. Since this volume contains contributions from academic researchers and practitioners, writing styles and ideological perspectives vary widely. Instead of forcing the book to cater to one audience or another, we sought to reach several audiences. Some chapters contain empirical research, while others are largely historical and descriptive. A few others are highly personal accounts of planning practice that would only make sense if told by the planning practitioner himself or herself. To that end, each section contains discussions on particular topics, "Practitioner Perspectives," that provide an opportunity for well-regarded and experienced planners to speak about their work in Atlanta.

As many other writers have noted, Atlanta is a city of aspirations. Perhaps, then, its ability to transcend its internal tensions and challenges embodies the idea that planning is the "organization of hope." For the conclusion to this volume, former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin shows that she understands the ways in which planning is central to Atlanta's story. In her epilogue, she provides some thoughts about how Atlanta will need planning to chart its path for the next century.

PART 1

Terminus to the International City

From the 1830s through today, Atlanta has been all about growth. What began as "Terminus," a small settlement at the crossroads of four rail lines, has evolved two centuries later into an international city with the world's busiest airport and cache enough to be awarded and host the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Suffice it to say that problems occurred along the way. We are a dichotomy in regard to location and form. Acknowledged as the capital of the south, we are often regarded as an East Coast city but ironically located at a longitude (84° west) that is one degree west of the Midwestern city of Detroit (83° west). Unlike the more traditional cities local business leaders admire—Chicago, Boston, and New York to name a few—the physical plan is similar to the western cities built along rail lines. Roads follow topography leading to street patterns that are indecipherable to visitors.

These chapters, written by planning leaders, practitioners, and scholars, characterize the planning process, which is in essence a *local way* of doing things. The phrase *you dance with the one that brung you* illustrates how alliances are formed. Just as Stone (1989) described, Atlanta remains coalition-based. Successful planning practice in Atlanta requires the insight to look beyond what people are saying to understand their realities. Issues of race, location, background, and intentions are often not as they appear. The community speaks in code, and practice here involves listening intently to understand the real issues.

Figure B.1. Peachtree Street looking south

Douglas Allen's "Learning from Atlanta" examines the topography, land lots, and railroads that initially formed the city. Allen describes Atlanta's development pattern as having more in common with cities of the "wild west" than with the more traditionally planned southern towns of Savannah, Charleston, and Richmond. Without an Oglethorpe, Burnham, or L'Enfant to guide design, the geometry of this city was set by businessmen, and businessmen have continued throughout each century to reshape the form of the city through their projects.

In "Changing Demographics and Unprecedented Growth", Ellen Heath and John Heath illustrate the changes over time in the population due to fast growth. Race, income, immigration, and education have repositioned population throughout the city and counties as Atlanta established its reputation as an international city. Like many U.S. cities, Atlanta has turned itself inside out. White suburban residents are moving back to the city as African American residents, along with a growing Hispanic community, are moving to the suburbs. The Heaths combine their private and public sector experience to put together this insightful overview of regional demographics.

Mtamanika Youngblood describes her experience and the success of planning and financing tools such as the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) in "The Historic District Development Corporation and the Challenge of Urban Revitalization." Youngblood's personal account describes the strategic planning and funding needed to guide development, mitigate gentrification, and address displacement in the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood. Fighting to keep residents in their homes is a priority for the intown neighborhoods, in light of years of displacement due to urban renewal and big projects including sports facilities and public housing redevelopments. Old Fourth Ward is home to the legacies of Martin Luther King Jr., community activist Marie Cowser, the "Sweet Auburn" district, and a litany of residents and entities that have collaborated as pioneers for intown neighborhood planning.

Paul Kelman, in "Creating Urban Reinvention: Downtown Atlanta," describes the planning that in some cases guide—and in many times follow development projects. Kelman relates his experience with big downtown projects, including transportation improvements, the Centennial Olympic Park Area, and Georgia State University's growth from a Georgia Tech night school in the 1970s to a city university of 32,000 students.

Leslie Sharp's "Crazy Like The Fox: Atlanta's Preservation Schizophrenia" recounts Atlanta's significant preservation wins, including the Fox Theatre and the Margaret Mitchell House, as well as its tragic losses, including four majestic rail stations, major downtown department stores, grand theaters, and numerous mansions and public buildings. Atlanta's struggle to retain historic structures is constantly under pressure from new development projects. Atlantans are impressed by the next new thing, which Sharp refers

to as the tension of past value compared to worshiping the future. In other words, General Sherman's legacy of demolition reigns in regard to historic structures. The unfortunate tendency is to value new construction over iconic buildings, a preference that confounds residents who value important structures and places.

Joseph G. Martin Jr. discusses how the public and private sector work together on projects where such collaborations might seem impossible. In "Public-Private Partnerships: Atlanta Style," Martin outlines the methods used to redevelop the Underground Atlanta entertainment complex, the civic center, mixed use housing at Bedford Pine, and venues for the 1996 Olympics. Atlanta is home to many public-private partnerships that highlight the organizational and management complexity of these relationships.

"Building Public Transit in Atlanta: From Streetcars to MARTA" by Harry West is the history of transit over the last two centuries. From the crossroads founded on transportation to this century's city of sprawl, the issues are explained in detail. Starting with the railroads and Joel Hurt's first streetcar, expanded by the age of the automobile and highway construction, strengthened by federal funding for MARTA, the city's transportation situation has evolved into a dream or a nightmare depending on where you live. West's intriguing first-person account of the evolution of transit is detailed and insightful.

These chapters explain how Terminus evolved into a region of over six million. We anticipate that you will come to understand how planning built this city as you enjoy these chapters.

CHAPTER 1

Learning from Atlanta

Douglas Allen

In the history of city planning, the significance of Atlanta is its insignificance. Unlike Savannah, Atlanta was not the product of a plan devised by speculative intellectuals in a West London drawing room. In contrast to the Puritan towns of New England, it was not the creation of a visionary religious community. Nor was it the result of idealistic philanthropy, as was Philadelphia. The city never had a L'Enfant, a Haussmann, or a Burnham. It was never planned as a capital city, becoming one only because of its strategic location during the American Civil War. For city planners and urban designers, however, it is arguably one of the best cities to study precisely for this reason—it never had any great plan at all. Yet with only a few rudimentary elements, it developed into the nation's ninth-largest metropolitan area and its sixth-largest urban economy. How the city grew, and the forces underlying its patterns of growth, make Atlanta the perfect case study. It is a living laboratory for understanding urban formation and the powerful resilience of a constitutional framework of streets, blocks, infrastructure, and public space as the vicissitudes of social and economic forces shaped cities in nineteenth-century America.

The focus of this essay will be how circumstantial topography combined with the initial pattern of streets, blocks, lots, and infrastructure has influenced the city over time, despite the absence of any overall plan. This pattern remains as the present governing condition of Atlanta's downtown. This pattern not only persisted to the present but shaped further patterns of growth in extraordinary ways, constraining and forming a variety of land uses into a coherent whole. An examination of each geometric circumstance

and how they interacted to produce the physical structure of Atlanta is the subject of this chapter.

Topography

Atlanta sits on the southern slope of the Appalachian Piedmont. Here, during the Cambrian period, an underlayment of granitic intrusions into the metamorphic substrata folded the piedmont along a northeast strike of 25 degrees. This fold captured the Chattahoochee River and redirected its course away from the Savannah River watershed and the Atlantic Ocean into the Apalachicola and the Gulf of Mexico. The watershed of the Chattahoochee, Atlanta's only source of fresh water, is the narrowest of any major river, with its eastern limit only seven miles from the riverbed. This limit is the eastern continental divide, splitting rainfall between the Atlantic and the Gulf. This divide, Peachtree ridge, is now the alignment of Peachtree Street (Figure 1.1).

The ridgeline became a major trail, and the original path predates European or colonial settlement. Today Peachtree Street remains the oldest human artifact in Atlanta, and the ridge that it followed generated much of the formal structure of the city. Further, it generated a host of "Peachtrees," including Peachtree Way, Peachtree Circle, Peachtree Place, and West Peachtree Street, a portion of which actually lies to the east of Peachtree Street. At last count, Atlanta has 71 streets that incorporate the name Peachtree. Especially considering that peach trees are not native to North America, the plethora of Peachtrees has jokingly been called a planned attempt to confuse everyone, especially visitors. In fact, it offers a glimpse into the patchwork process of subdivision that characterizes the absence of an overall plan.

At the southern tip of the Peachtree ridge, just south of present-day Marietta Street, the land flattened out into a saddle, then re-formed into a ridge a few hundred yards to the south. A small spring erupted into the flattened area as it dipped down into the natural saddle; it would be here that three major railroads, each following high ground orthogonal to the Peachtree ridge, would intersect (Figure 1.1).

Land Lots: Creek and Cherokee Cessions

Though Georgia was a colonial enterprise, predating the formation of the United States by almost fifty years, the part of the state that Atlanta is now in was frontier as late as the 1820s. In fact, it was not even part of Georgia. The land where the future city would form belonged to a loose confederation of Creek Indian tribes. To the north and northwest, across the Chattahoochee, lay the Cherokee Nation, one of the Five Civilized Tribes, with a written language, a legislature, and a capital city at New Echota.

Creek and Cherokee land cessions in Georgia had begun as early as 1763 and continued through the eighteenth century. In 1802 colonial Geor-

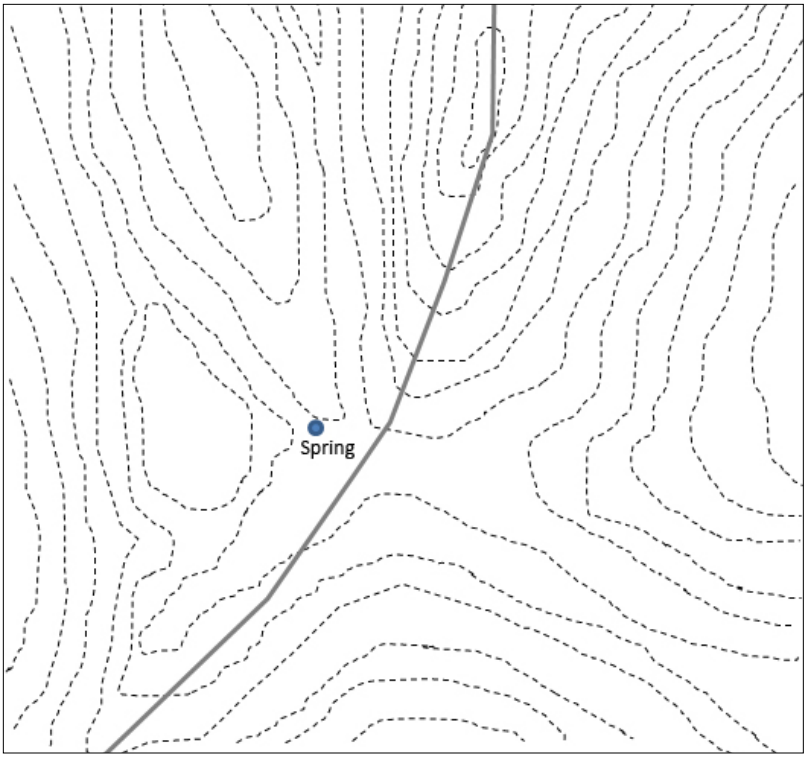


Figure 1.1. Topography with the Peachtree ridge and Peachtree Ridge Trail. (Source: Map by author.)

gia's western territory (in today's northern Alabama and northern Mississippi) was claimed by the United States. In return for Georgia ceding its claim, the federal government promised to remove the Creeks and Cherokees from Georgia soil. By 1804, with the cessions of land secured for the state, Georgia changed the colonial headright system to one it deemed fairer, where any white man with four dollars could enter a lottery for land taken or ceded from Native Americans (Coleman 1977). In 1827 land lots were surveyed over the former Creek lands extending northward to the Chattahoochee. These lots, ranging between 160 and 202.5 acres in size, were distributed via lottery and surveyed between 1827 and 1832.

Georgia, as one of the 13 original states, was exempt from the National Land Ordinance of 1785 that produced the great grid of the American Midwest and West. Under that system, square-mile sections, quartered into 160-acre squares and further subdivided into 330-foot blocks, produced both the family farms of the Midwest prairies and the urban blocks of its cities. Though Georgia's land lots developed with the land ordinance as a precedent, their

size varied considerably. The core of the future Atlanta would develop in Land Lots 51, 52, 77, and 78 of the former Creek territory, each with the peculiar dimension of 202.5 acres. Each owner then subdivided these individual land lots into streets, blocks, and building lots as he or she saw fit.

Shortly after the lottery of 1827, two events signaled the end of the Cherokee Nation in Georgia. In 1828, 50 miles to the northeast of today's Atlanta in what is now White and Lumpkin Counties, gold was discovered on land that was part of the Cherokee Nation. Mining operations grew and the gold attracted speculators, increasing the pressure to claim the Cherokee lands in total. Second, the state of Georgia wanted to construct a railroad to connect the expanding settlements of the upper Midwest with the Gulf and Atlantic ports of Mobile, Charleston, and Savannah. In 1830 the Georgia legislature initiated a plan for the removal of the region's original inhabitants. It did so by simply annexing the Cherokee Nation, calling upon the U.S. government to enforce its earlier agreement.

Having no great army, and believing naively in the courts, the Cherokees filed suit against the state of Georgia. In Worcester v. Georgia in 1832, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the laws of Georgia were invalid in Cherokee lands. President Andrew Jackson and Vice President John C. Calhoun, who had interests in one of the gold-mining enterprises near what is now Dahlonega, refused to abide by the ruling, resulting in the removal of the Cherokee in the dark chapter of our history that became known as the Trail of Tears.

To facilitate the settlement of the Cherokee lands, the Georgia legislature extended a land lottery to cover the recently ceded territories. According to a law passed in 1838, assignment of the lots had been by a draw open to any free citizen over the age of eighteen, with the following exceptions:

> *Any fortunate drawer in any previous Land Lottery who has taken out a grant of said Land Lot; any person who mined, or caused to be mined, gold or other metal in the Cherokee Territory; any person who has taken up residence in said Cherokee Territory; or any person who is a member of or concerned with a horde of thieves known as the Pony Club.* (Georgia General Assembly 1831)

Railroads

In 1836 the legislature authorized the construction of a railroad at state expense, which would be known as the Western and Atlantic Railroad. The establishing act called for a survey to be conducted from the Tennessee River near Ross's Landing (now Chattanooga) to a practical crossing point on the Chattahoochee (Garrett 1954). From there, a route would be surveyed to connect the cities of Athens, Madison, Milledgeville, and Forsyth to the east and south. Once the point of crossing was established, a well-watered area was

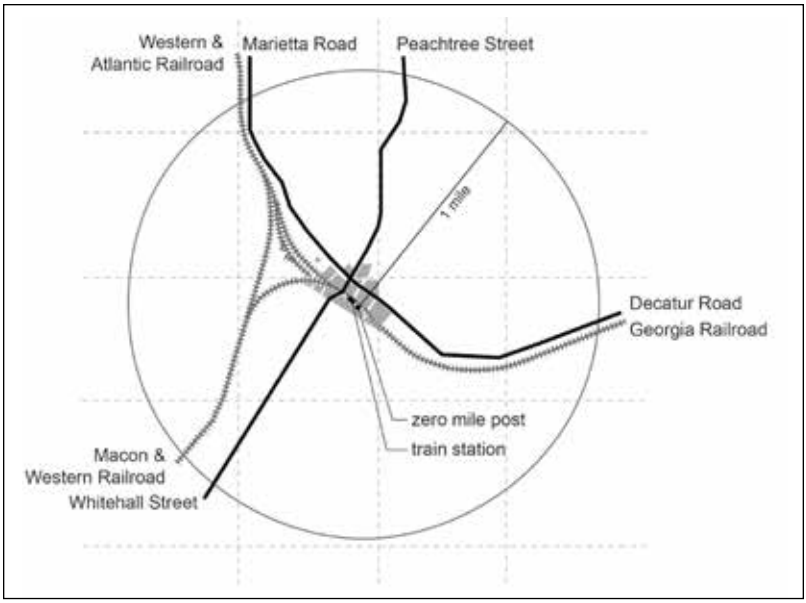


Figure 1.2. Central Atlanta, primary roads and railroad lines, 1847. (Source: Map by Elizabeth Ward and Douglas Allen.)

needed that was also flat enough to turn cars around at the intersection, with future lines to be extended from the Gulf and Atlantic ports. The plan was for three railroads— the Western and Atlantic Railroad, the Georgia Railroad, and the Macon and Western Railroad—to intersect at the terminus in the land lot identified by the survey.

On May 22, 1836, Colonel Stephen Harriman Long, formerly a topographical engineer under the command of General Andrew Jackson, crossed the small creek at Fort Peachtree on the Chattahoochee River, heading in a southeasterly direction (Johnston 1931). Commissioned by the legislature, Long and his surveying crew sought the tract of land required by the railroad. To his north, south, and east lay the recently ceded lands of the Creek Nation, vacated by cessions in 1802, 1822, 1826, and 1828. To his west across the river was the Cherokee Nation. Fort Peachtree stood at the border of the two territories. After four months, working his way southward and eastward from Fort Peachtree, Long found what he had been looking for, the flat saddle that split the central portion of the Peachtree ridge: a plain of about 20 acres fed by a small spring in Land Lot 78 of the recently platted but unsettled territory of the former Creek Nation. In November of 1836, Long filed his report with the legislature, referring to the site as "Terminus," and the future city of Atlanta was born.

Figure 1.3. Western and Atlantic roundhouse, Land Lot 78, 1864

By 1839 John Thrasher had built a home and a general store at this location, and the settlement was nicknamed Thrasherville. By 1842 the settlement at the terminus had six buildings and thirty residents (Garrett 1954). In the face of dissatisfaction with the name Terminus, a petition was sent to Governor Wilson Lumpkin to rename the settlement in honor of his daughter, Martha, and for three years the new town was known as Marthasville. By 1845 the chief engineer of the Georgia Railroad, J. Edgar Thomson, suggested that Marthasville be renamed to the feminine form of Atlantic, and in 1847 a one-mile radius was drawn from a "zero mile post" and the area was incorporated as Atlanta (Figure 1.2) (Garrett 1954).

In 1846 the Georgia Railroad, originally known as the Monroe Railroad, completed tracks to Atlanta from the east. The two railroads spurred growth and by 1850, the year of the city's first census, the population was 2,569. Wagon roads paralleled the rail lines to the northwest (presently Marietta Street) and to the east (presently Decatur Street). They intersected the Peachtree ridge in Land Lots 77 and 78 (Figure 1.3).

In 1851 a third rail line, the Macon and Western, was finally connected to the earlier two; once the three railroads were joined, the settlement began to grow rapidly. With the economic growth brought by the railroads, the city commissioned its first map in 1853. Edward Vincent, a British surveyor and architect, was given the job, along with a commission to design a rail depot. The potential importance of the junction of three rail lines was not lost on the legislature, and a part of DeKalb County was carved out and renamed Fulton County, with Atlanta as its county seat. The following year, a county court-

TABLE 1.1 **City of Atlanta, Early Employment Sectors**

Employment Sector	Percentage of Population
Construction-related trades	46
Railroad-related	23
Mercantile	10
Prostitutes and barkeepers	6
Medical and legal	6
All else	9

Source: Garrett 1954

house combined with a city hall was constructed on the site of the present state capitol. In 1854 a fourth rail line, the Atlanta and LaGrange Rail Road (later Atlanta and West Point Railroad) arrived, connecting Atlanta with LaGrange, Georgia, to the southwest. This sealed Atlanta's role as a rail hub for the entire South, with lines to the northwest, east, southeast, and southwest.

Despite the images made popular by books and movies, Atlanta shared more with western cities than it did with the older cities of Charleston, Savannah, and Richmond. Its economy was driven entirely by the railroad; the city's first detailed census, in 1860, reveals much about the character of the place. From its earliest period, Atlanta was associated with transportation and construction. Almost 80 percent of the population was engaged in construction-related activities, transportation, and the mercantile functions that naturally followed (Table 1.1).

By the outbreak of the Civil War, Atlanta had grown to a total population of 7,741 (Garrett 1954). The nature of the city as a transportation hub made it of vital importance; Atlanta would become one of the chief military supply centers for the South, which made it a major target of federal military strategy. After a two-month march against heavy opposition, General William Tecumseh Sherman arrived on the outskirts of Atlanta in early July of 1864. Camped to the north and west, he encircled the city and a prolonged siege ensued. The strategy was to outflank the entrenched defenses and cut rail lines to the east and south, the Western and Atlantic line having already been rendered useless. Realizing the importance of Atlanta's transportation network, Georgia Governor Joseph E. Brown had written to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that "this place is to the Confederacy as the heart is to the body" (Foote 1974, 411). Sherman's strategy had been to hold positions on the east, north, and west and to forego a direct assault on the city in favor of seizing the rail lines to the south. If all three main lines could be severed, the city had no choice but to surrender, though his intent was, in his own words, to "destroy Atlanta and make it a desolation." Sherman's flanking strategy worked, and on September 2,

1864, the city found itself isolated (Foote 1974). Sherman, now fifteen miles to the south of the city, heard a series of enormous explosions at 4:00 a.m. in the early morning following the surrender. General Hood, the commanding general of the Confederate army in charge of the defense of the city, had blown up 82 carloads of ammunition and five locomotives when he realized that the city was lost (Foote 1974). The ensuing fire destroyed virtually everything and became part of the city's identity and mythology, though General Sherman had little to do with it. The official seal of the city would be changed from a locomotive engine to a phoenix, the mythological bird that obtains new life by rising from the ashes of its predecessor.

Urban Form

As the Vincent Map of 1853 (Figure 1.4) shows, the form of the city was derived entirely from the circumstantial collision of square land lots, Peachtree ridge, Peachtree Street, the flat topographic saddle used to form both the intersection

Figure 1.4. Vincent's subdivision map of the city of Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia, 1853

and the terminus of the three main rail lines, and the rail lines themselves radiating east, south, and northwest from the terminus. In the absence of prior streets or a governing plan, the only connection to the rest of the world was through the rail lines that followed topographic high ground and the wagon roads that traveled along the Peachtree ridge to the north and south and paralleled the railroads to the east and west. Each land lot owner was free to subdivide the land as he or she saw fit, and although a tacit convention was reached concerning orthogonal geometry and rectangular blocks, each owner used a different street width and block size. Streets and blocks adjacent to a rail line ran orthogonal to the railroad. Those on the edges of the three land lots that contained rail lines ran orthogonal to Peachtree Street.

Land Lot 78

Of the four land lots, number 78 was the most significant. The original owner, Jane Doss, sold it to Matthew Henry of Gwinnett County for fifty dollars. Henry held onto it for twelve years and then sold it to Reuben Cone for $300 dollars (Garrett 1954). This land lot was bounded by Peachtree Street on the northeast and would later contain the railroad terminus, the spring, and the small early settlement known as Thrasherville (Garrett 1954, 165). The irregular geometries of both its boundaries and the elements it contained would lead Cone to use a 200-by-200-foot block in his land lot. This small block grid, rotated almost 45 degrees from north, was driven by the angle that the Marietta Road created as it paralleled the Western and Atlantic Railroad to the northwest. Peachtree Street sliced through the southwestern corner of the land lot, and the alignment of Marietta Street followed the Western and Atlantic line to the northwest. Today this area of Downtown Atlanta is known as the Fairlie-Poplar Historic District; the land lot contains the Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Phillips Arena, CNN Center, Woodruff Park, and Centennial Olympic Park. The irregularly shaped triangular lots that take up the rotation of the grid at Peachtree Street as a seam with Land Lot 51 would later be occupied by Woodruff Park.

Land Lot 77

In 1842 Samuel Mitchell donated five acres of Land Lot 77 to the state for the railroad right-of-way (Cagle 1991). This tract, known as "State Square," became the site of the depot designed by Edward Vincent, and the official terminus point was moved to its eastern edge (Figure 1.5). Earlier, Samuel Mitchell, Frederick Arms, and former governor Wilson Lumpkin subdivided Land Lot 77 into 17 blocks, 400 feet by 400 feet, with streets aligned orthogonal to the eastern rail line. This created a second orientation within the original four land lots. Land Lot 77 would contain the original depot and market, and would later hold the present state capitol, the Fulton County Courthouse and Administration

Figure 1.5. State Square, Land Lot 77, 1864

Building, and Atlanta's City Hall. The intersection of Peachtree Street and the wagon roads to Marietta and Decatur would become known as Five Points and would function as the center of the downtown commercial city until the interstate highways reordered commercial functions.

Land Lot 52

Along the eastern boundary of Land Lot 77, the streets continued the block pattern into Land Lot 52. As the eastern rail line curved to the north, however, the street pattern rotated with the curve, creating trapezoidal blocks. In 1844 Land Lot 52 was purchased by L.P. Grant. A civil engineer and surveyor, Grant would donate a substantial suburban tract to the south of the city in 1881 as its first park and planned suburb. In the mid-1960s, the construction of Interstates 75 and 85 cut through this rotated section and erased the block geometries present at the initial subdivision. Today Georgia State University occupies most of the remainder the land lot.

Land Lot 51

Along the northern edge of Land Lot 52, the streets rotated again to meet those in Land Lot 51. The owner, Hardy Ivy, had acquired the land lot from the origi-

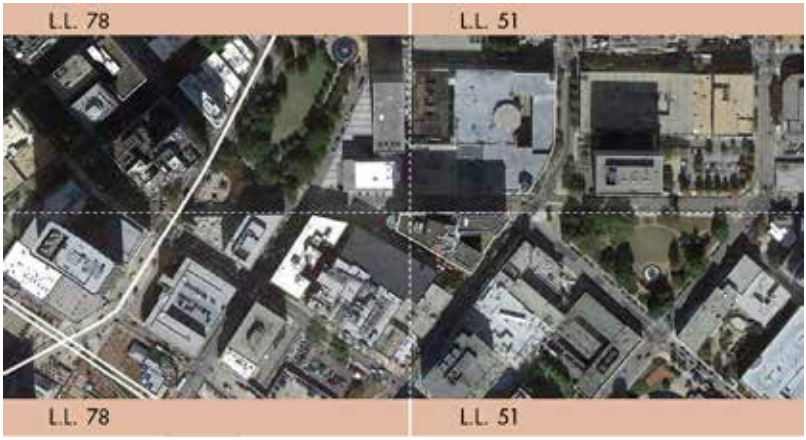


Figure 1.6 Present land uses with relation to historic land lots, railroads, and streets. (Source: Map from Google Earth; analysis by Douglas Allen.)

nal owner, James Paden, for $225 in 1833. Considered by many to be the first settler in what would later become Atlanta, Ivy originally constructed only his own home. As the city grew northward along the Peachtree ridge, however, he soon subdivided Land Lot 51 into streets and blocks. Following his own logic, and perhaps because other land lots had been subdivided, Ivy seemed obligated to the north-south alignment of Peachtree Street, as no rail line was tangent to any point within boundaries of the land lot. This meant that the streets running north from Land Lot 52 had to rotate approximately 45 degrees along the seam, creating triangular parcels at its northern edge. Ivy's blocks were also not square but rectangular. The blocks varied in size as they expanded or contracted in their north-south alignment to connect to the rotated grids of Cone's Land Lot 78. The first row of blocks was set at 500 feet east-to-west and 525 feet north-to-south, with three 175-foot parcels facing the streets aligned north-south. In the second row the block dimension was compressed to 400 feet in the north-south orientation, while the full 525 feet was maintained east to west. In 1880 the developer of Atlanta's second planned suburb, Joel Hurt, would insert Edgewood Avenue along the seam between Land Lots 51 and 52. The 45-degree rotation remains today (Figure 1.6).

Land Lot 51 would later contain some of the most heterogeneous land uses in the city. To the north, John Portman would construct Peachtree Center, the mixed use development, between 1959 and 1990, while on the south the famous Auburn Avenue (Wheat Street on the Vincent Map of 1853) would extend eastward into what would later become the Old Fourth Ward. This street would see the birth of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), as well as the breakout of rhythm and blues into mainstream

white America. This major African American business district from the late 1870s to the abolition of Jim Crow in the early 1960s is now the national landmark, the Sweet Auburn Historic District. On Saturday night in 1953, Ray Charles among others would change the face of American music at the Royal Peacock nightclub at 186 Auburn Avenue. Then, on the following Sunday, down the street at 407 Auburn Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. would begin to change the face of social justice from the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

As the city grew, the presence of the railroad dividing north from south made crossing difficult. In 1854 a wooden viaduct was constructed across the tracks, connecting Alabama Street on the south to Marietta Street on the north. This would remain the only connection across the tracks until 1899, when the viaduct connecting Peachtree Street to Whitehall Street (now South Peachtree) was constructed (Garrett 1954). Between 1900 and 1920, additional viaducts would span the tracks and by 1950, the eastbound tracks were covered completely. This area became known as Underground Atlanta despite the fact that it was never actually underground. This bifurcation of the city by railroads into a northern portion in Land Lots 51 and 78 seems to have affected the movement of wealth as well. Wealthy residential areas clustered to the north along the Peachtree ridge as early as the 1870s (Preston 1979). The area immediately south of the railroad in Land Lots 77 and 52 contained most of the state and local government functions. The residential areas immediately adjacent to Land Lots 77 and 52 to the south, east, and west ranged from working class to poor. This pattern continued well into the twentieth century and at a macro level continues today.

Conclusion

These rudimentary elements combined to form a patchwork of squares and streets with anomalies at the edges where the land lots joined. In this way, the core of the city had six distinct geometric conditions. The Peachtree ridge ran due north and south at its high point between Land Lots 78 and 51, then departed from true north as it moved south through Land Lot 78 at an angle of approximately 28 degrees. The land lots were abstractly placed as political lines, subdividing undifferentiated territory into 202.5-acre squares running north-south and east-west. The geometry of the railroads followed their own logic: a combination of high ground for drainage and flat land for intersection.

This collision between topographic circumstance, the arc and tangent geometries of railroad construction, and the political overlay of land lots ordered by the Georgia legislature as a tool of occupation, resulted in a remarkably resilient pattern. The subdivision of the land lots in the absence of rules or regulations resulted in an amalgam of rotated blocks of varying sizes and streets of varying widths. The extent to which any of the streets within each land lot actually connected, or aligned with others, appears to be governed

only by a pragmatic necessity to be a part of some larger whole. The result was a city that, while neither physically beautiful nor socially just, contained within its constituent parts a latent potential for civic virtue.

Stephen Harriman Long, shortly after surveying the initial rail lines from which the city would develop, was offered a land lot for the princely sum of $100. In a letter refusing the offer, he stated that "the Terminus will be a good location for one tavern, a blacksmith shop, a grocery store and nothing else" (Shingleton 1985, 12). In a similar way, it is impossible to think that Hardy Ivy, owner of Land Lot 51, could ever have imagined a world where John Portman's Peachtree Center or the Royal Peacock Club would occupy any of the simple blocks laid out shortly after 1836. Nor could he have imagined that the street he designated as Wheat Street would one day be home to the headquarters of the SCLC or Ebenezer Baptist Church. Nor could Reuben Cone have possibly foreseen that in Land Lot 78, John Pemberton would open a drugstore in 1886 serving a carbonated elixir called Coca-Cola. Nor could he have known that the interstitial and leftover spaces of his rotated grids would one day contain Centennial Olympic Park, Woodruff Park, or the global headquarters of CNN.

Atlanta contains lessons, and they are clear. The simple subdivision of land lots into streets and blocks varying between 200 and 525 feet, with resulting geometric anomalies, formed scaffolding that could accommodate enormous changes in land use over time. The leftover areas produced by the circumstantial rotation of streets and blocks, to meet up with topographic features such as the Peachtree ridge or the railroad alignments, were later filled in with parks and public spaces. Collectively, this arrangement projected a public frame prior to occupation or use, whose stability allowed land uses to fluctuate according to the vicissitudes of social and economic change in land use, while assuring continuity between past and future. Each successive generation, subject to its own circumstances and needs, its sense of justice and economic benefit, conditioned by the simplest of urban constitutional and infrastructural elements, was able to write its own story into a place as a coherent whole. In so doing, they built a good city. Imagine if a Burnham or a L'Enfant had been involved.

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ISBN 978-1-61190-126-9

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