"Just as Important as Getting to the Moon": The Emergence of the Idea of Public Transit in Atlanta, Georgia, 1952-1961

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PLANNING is the key to our metropolitan future….

Planning is an everyday act in American life.　In our system of free competition, the man who makes better plans is the man who gets ahead.　Planning is the normal way for an intelligent salesman or housewife or business firm or government agency to anticipate and make ready for the future.[2]

Today 800,000 people live in metropolitan Atlanta-DeKalb, Fulton, Cobb, and Clayton counties.　By 1980 another half million will live here… .

How are we going to take care of this growth?[3]

Atlanta's postwar planning literature was filled with the language of *growth*. The commercial civic elites, who had long dominated both the business and political worlds of the city, emphasized that the rapid increase in population and number of businesses represented none other than Atlanta's elevation to the circle of "national cities," a category which already included such major urban centers as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.[4]　In 1961, Atlanta's Chamber of Commerce postulated that the sixties would herald Atlanta's "coming of age."　Atlanta would no longer be "the town which movies and books have long portrayed as the hub of Southern hospitality and the Fried Chicken of the World."　Instead, the city would take its place as the "booming nerve center of the South," showcasing "a broad beamed face of fancy new skyscrapers, fast moving expressways, great wealth, and plenty of hustle."[5]

However, this excitement on the part of the commercial civic elites was not actually genuine.　Their enthusiasm for growth in fact masked serious anxieties about their role and status in the changing city, because that growth accompanied a series of conflicts which threatened to destabilize the status quo.　In particular, these powerful white businessmen could not overlook the fact that their source of power, downtown, was in decline.[6]　No doubt, metropolitan Atlanta had been showing unprecedented growth.　However, at the same time it was painfully evident that only the peripheries, outside the city limits of Atlanta, were displaying the signs of prosperity, while the central city, which had comprised the very heart of Atlanta's commercial and

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social activities, was losing its major constituents, particularly white homeowners and business owners, who were leaving for the surrounding counties. [7]

Commercial civic elites, including city planners and policymakers, sought solutions that would restore the prestige of the center by resolving this "unfair" distribution of postwar prosperity. It is important to note that they did not reject suburbanization outright, but instead attacked the haphazard nature of its expansion which threatened the continuation of the downtown core as the center of commercial, political, and social activity. In particular, they asserted that traffic congestion was a product of this uncontrolled sprawl. They held that such congestion was indicative of a lack of sufficient expressway planning, as people bought more cars and built their houses outside the city limits. Cars clogged streets and necessitated parking spaces, preventing efficient circulation of goods and people. The demand for more highways and parking lots to ease traffic led in turn to the destruction of commercial and residential buildings. Ultimately, this could have a devastating effect on city finances, crippling the city's capability to obtain sufficient tax revenue. To make matters worse, these developments were taking place precisely at a time when further expansion of public services was sorely needed due to the deterioration of the city.

The major countermeasure proposed by commercial civic elites was the rearrangement of the transportation network. First, they would continue to build expressways, following the 1946 Lochner plan, which went on to serve as the foundation of expressway plans for the last half of the twentieth century. [8] Second, they would seek an alternative method of circulating people, in the form of a publicly-constructed, publicly-operated (rail) rapid transit system. The installation of public transit systems was already being considered in several other cities at the time, including Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and Seattle; simultaneously, the federal government was in the process of producing an act that would provide matching grants to local governments for the construction and improvement of mass transit. [9]

For the commercial civic elites in Atlanta, this mass transit represented a bright future that would resolve the tensions with which they were preoccupied. It would enable them to effectively "re-plug" peripheral communities into the downtown area. Moreover, by utilizing existing railway tracks, rapid rail transit would not disrupt *de facto* geographical distribution. The strength of mass transit lay in "its ability to attract and keep riders, and at the same time enhance and not disrupt the residential, commercial, and industrial pattern of the metropolitan area." [10] However, justifying a development project of such enormous scale was no easy task, because it was necessary to convince the citizenry to support their taxes being used for this purpose. In short, the commercial civic elites needed to bring about a citizens' consensus as to how and why mass transit was a public project worthy of the expenditure of billions of dollars of tax money. By drawing upon a range of city planning pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, billboards, and radio and television programs, this paper attempts to demonstrate how the commercial civic elites sought to educate the public as to why it was necessary for Atlanta to eradicate congestion, and moreover convince them that the establishment of rapid transit would be not only desirable, but *publicly* indispensable.

This was no easy task, however, first and foremost because in post-war Atlanta, the very idea of establishing a *public* ("publicly constructed, publicly operated") transit system was not a welcome concept.

In particular, the late fifties and early sixties was not a time well-suited to such expansion, as among whites there was a strong abhorrence of the concept of "public" institutions and spaces. While previously such socio-political elements were firmly under (middle class) white control due to *de jure* segregation, the progress of the civil rights movement destroyed the Jim Crow system and opened these public institutions and spaces to African-Americans.

The desegregation of public transportation, including buses and trains in 1959, was a significant milestone in this process, and represented a major change. Nevertheless, this did not mean that Atlanta whites were willing to surrender privileges which they had long enjoyed; many of them were not ready to discard their "Southern Way of Life."[11] The city's white elites already used private modes of transportation, and working class whites demonstrated their rejection of desegregation by "boycotting the buses… instead of attacking the activists behind bus desegregation."[12] Thus, white Atlantans' abhorrence of desegregation overrode their history of relying on public transportation. Gradually, they came to avoid the public transportation method they had long used, namely the privately-owned Atlanta Transit System bus service, and instead increasingly turned to private automobiles. On the other hand, simultaneously more blacks started to use the ATS bus service. In short, Atlanta's racial divide during the Civil Rights era produced an image of integrated public transportation representing none other than the loss of whites' privileges, and the concurrent, rapid expansion of governmental power in everyday life.

The association of public transportation with "undesirable" elements was not a new phenomenon. Urban historian Eric Avila's cultural analysis of white flight in Los Angeles, California, reveals how streetcars, despite their popularity as a key mode of transportation in the prewar period, declined quickly in the wake of rising automobile ownership in postwar Southern California.[13] Avila explains that streetcars symbolized an "urban public," representing

> a semblance of the heterosocial world that bustled in the public spaces of cities such as New York and Chicago. The experience of riding the streetcar invariably exposed riders to the city's diversity, as people from all walks of life depended on the streetcar as their primary mode of transportation. In many ways, the streetcar and subway lines of American cities at the turn of the century constituted a part of mass culture that first took shape in cities such as New York. Within the crowded spaces of streetcars, sidewalks, subways, amusement parks, and movie arcades, the old distinctions that defined one's position in Victorian society diminished, as diverse peoples incorporated themselves into the new urban mass.[14]

This streetcar's role as a space for the urban public, however, did not long endure. Its "gradual demise" occurred due to not only conspiracies by the automobile industries to debunk mass transit, but also the spread among middle class whites of distaste at the prospect of being forced to share space with Others. The resulting shift in primary mode of transportation entailed "[a] dramatic shift in the experience of moving through Los Angeles," from opportunities to experience the "heterosocial spaces of the streetcars to the insular, privatized cell of the automobile."[15] The parallels with the case in Atlanta are clear.

Investigating the attempts by Atlanta's commercial civic elites to establish a rapid transit system also stands to further enrich such studies of the application of the concept of the "public" within urban space and politics. Previous studies have skillfully uncovered how the concept of the "public," implying a multicultural urban public, began to represent a threat to white middle class values, and how it subsequently functioned as one of the origins of the rise of conservatism in the late seventies and eighties. This increasing privatization of the mode of transportation triggered massive white flight into newly built, racially homogeneous subdivisions, prompting a still further deterioration in old, urban cores. Atlanta's struggle to construct viable public transit, occurring as it did at a time when the use of public institutions and space was becoming more and more problematic due to the revocation of racial barriers, is therefore all the more worthy of analysis.

This paper seeks to demonstrate how Atlanta's commercial civic elites attempted to propagate the concept of "public" transit. From the outset, their mission in selling public transit was far removed from notions of creating a new sense of an urban public, in which every city resident, irrespective of his or her race, class, or sexual orientation should be able to make use of accessible, affordable transit. Neither was the major objective to assist the underprivileged who did not own their own automobiles. Through drawing upon city planning documents as a primary source, this paper sheds light on how the idea of "public" transit in the early stage was presented as a way to improve the quality of life for middle-class (white) suburbanites.

I.   **Envisioning a "New Type of City in the Future":** *Up Ahead* **and** *NOW-For Tomorrow*

The idea of rapid transit naturally emerged in city planning literature. The documents and pamphlets authored by the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) served as clear manifestations of the future that commercial civic elites envisioned and projected for Atlanta. The MPC, metropolitan Atlanta's planning body, itself represented Atlanta's power structure. In 1947, the State of Georgia's General Assembly tabled an act to establish the Metropolitan Planning Commission for the Metropolitan Planning District, which covered the regions comprised of Fulton and DeKalb counties. The Commission was composed of fourteen affluent whites, including the mayors of Atlanta and Decatur, and the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Roads and Revenues of Fulton and DeKalb County. The MPC's mission was "to make... a master plan for the orderly growth and development of the district," but MPC did not itself possess the power to implement its plan and proposals. Rather, "The commission's actions [are to be] advisory only… [it is incumbent on the commission] that it submit its planning proposals in the form of a recommendation only." [16] Supported by "both the city and downtown business leaders," however, the commission played a vital role in articulating commercial civic elites' vision for the future development of Atlanta. After their seminal survey, *Metropolitan Atlanta: Factual Inventory* (1951), the commission produced a report on the present state of their metropolis, in *Up Ahead: A Regional Land Use for Metropolitan Atlanta* (1952), followed by *NOW-For Tomorrow* (1954). The idea of rapid transit was initially introduced and developed in these key documents.

Up Ahead (*UA*) and *NOW- For Tomorrow* (*NOW*) acknowledged Atlanta's current progress and

attendant hopes for its continuation, but the MPC was far from being optimistic. It stressed that the volume of Metropolitan Atlanta's population, trade, industry and commerce would continue to grow for at least the next two or three decades. Yet at the same time, it cautioned that this progress would produce not only wealth, but also confusion. Revealing that the Metropolitan Atlanta – DeKalb, Fulton, Cobb, and Clayton—would gain another half million in population – to embrace "1 1/4 MILLION PEOPLE," *NOW* urged its readers to follow the MPC plan and prepare for this drastic population increase, which would ultimately bring "thousands of new homes, twice as many children in schools, three times as many cars on the streets, more riders on the buses, hundreds of new stores and industries, and comparable increases in every phase of life and economy."[17] For the writers of *NOW*, Atlanta's growth was unavoidable so long as it remained the "center of transportation, communications, commerce, and culture for the entire [Southeast] region," roughly containing such booming Sunbelt states as Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina.[18] As the "center" of the Sunbelt southeast, *NOW-for Tomorrow* contended, Atlanta would continue to "feel [the] maximum impact [of economic progress]."[19]

The troublemaker in this situation was not the development *per se*, but outward expansion, because the continuous trends toward suburbanization were sapping away the heretofore unchallenged superiority of downtown. Metropolitan Atlanta "has been growing faster 'outside' than 'inside'" for the last two decades.[20] Atlanta gained approximately 30,000 people in the 1940s and 50s, while the metropolitan area outside the City of Atlanta obtained approximately 100,000. During these two decades, "the trend of decentralization moved faster than ever."[21] Far from seeing this as a problem, the MPC saw in outward expansion an opportunity to provide metropolitan Atlanta with "great comfort, beauty, and efficiency."[22] According to *NOW*, Atlanta in the early fifties had "a real opportunity to develop patterns of living, working and playing that were not possible in the late Nineteenth Century when most of America's larger cities grew into bigness."[23] Indeed, they may have thought that it was high time to realize Ebenezer Howard's Garden City ideal:

> There is no need to crowd hundreds of thousands of people into a congested central area. Rather, we can find ample living space out in the green countryside, thus combining the social advantages of living in a small town with the economic and social advantages of big city.[24]

It was also evident for MPC members that outward expansion, which was an obvious national trend, would continue. "American genius will make better and better highways"; thus, "suburbs will then push farther and farther out…. Most of the new growth will have to take place in the lateral dimension."[25]

Nevertheless, this did not mean that these planners favored *unregulated* expansion. In particular, they denounced the dispersal of commercial, residential, and industrial functions when this was understood to harm the interests of the downtown area. The MPC staunchly maintained that a strong downtown was the foundation for Atlanta's future progress. From their point of view, the problem lay in the fact that the prosperity ushered in by the rapid growth appeared to only be benefitting the outlying areas. For instance, *UA* expressed concern at the fact that "new construction outside the City of Atlanta has been phenomenal."[26] Fulton County, outside the city limits, had already been through a period of rapid growth, while dwelling

construction in DeKalb's suburban, unincorporated area tripled from 1940 to 1950.[27]   In contrast, in central Atlanta slums were growing.   According to *NOW,* "slum housing encircles the central business district, depreciating property values and choking commercial expansion," while, again, "the areas of superior housing are scattered around the outside in all directions."[28] The fact that "most of the new structures in the outside areas have been single family houses," meaning that they comprised a lucrative source of tax revenue now denied downtown, also bothered downtown business elites.

It was this uncontrolled, "metropolitan explosion" for the MPC cast a "long shadow of emerging problems."   The list of evils contained "TRAFFIC JAMS, PROPERTY BLIGHT, UNWISE LAND USE, [and] DEMAND FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES."[29]   Through such detrimental effects, suburbanization would sap Atlanta's vitality.   The planners emphasized that such dangers could be averted through the introduction of "balanced" growth, which aimed at maintaining *de facto* landscape (and thereby, the status quo) by preserving downtown as the heart of commercial and cultural activities in the expanding metropolis. For example, *UA* insisted, "from an economic point of view, the downtown business district is the single most important area in Metropolitan Atlanta," stressing that it represented "the highest real estate valuations which make up a large part of the local tax base."[30] *NOW* reassured constituents that the CBD (Central Business District) would regain its vibe soon, stating that "The 1980 prospects for Central Atlanta are bright," because by then Atlanta would have seen office space grow by 62%, retail space by 41%, more hotels, and the construction of "convention and entertainment facilities, a University-Culture Center, a Government Center, and a Grady Medical Center."[31]

In short, Atlanta should welcome outward expansion, but only when it would not threaten downtown commercial activities and depress property values. The MPC argued that dispersal would be beneficial only so long as planners and policymakers understood two facts—first, "decay in downtown business activities and property values could be a blow to the local economy," and second, the unplanned dispersal of commercial areas would produce "a serious blight of [suburban] residential properties and an increase in traffic along non-arterial neighborhood streets."[32]

That the planners' goal was to tame expansion in order to retain a strong urban core was also evident in their reluctance to accept the federal defense policies, which in fact demanded the scattering of industrial and administrative functions in major cities. In the midst of the Cold War, *UA* could not ignore national requests, and conceded that *defense* should be afforded prime consideration. "The U.S. city—our city or metropolitan area—can become a TARGET," it wrote, noting that therefore the central government recommended the "dispersal of critical sites" so as to diminish "our target value to a potential enemy."[33]   In sum, Atlanta's "chances of survival" would "depend on how well we [Atlantans] scatter our plants and facilities." However, the MPC clearly did not fully concur with this national trend, observing that while "Defense policy and urban trends point in the same direction—outward," at the same time the "haphazard dispersal" of industry, commerce, and governmental establishments, was "worse than no dispersal at all."[34]   Once again, "To be effective, dispersal must be according to a plan," *UA* asserted, "Defense is not all a matter of targets.   It is also a matter of production."[35]

In other words, the MPC was in favor of outward expansion and the benefits it brought, but only so long as such expansion was carefully regulated in order to prevent the established system – based around a productive and vibrant city center – from being destabilized.   On a host of issues – social, economic, and even military – time and time again the MPC asserted that a strong city center was vital to Atlanta's future.

1)   To Save the Urban Core: Getting Rid of Slums and Traffic Congestion

Accordingly, through "planning," civic and commercial elites tried to keep downtown economically vibrant and socially viable in such a way that they could retain the source of their power.   Consequently, the proposal for future planning articulated in
Up Ahead and *NOW-for Tomorrow* saw a great many pages spent on covering methods for restoring the urban core.   For the MPC, slums and traffic congestion constituted twin evils that were together accelerating the central city's decay; therefore, full restoration of central Atlanta would necessitate first the eradication of these two evils.

The MPC thus proposed conducting slum clearance and improving traffic circulation.   It also attempted to explain the origins of these two problems in terms of unbalanced growth between the center and the periphery, thereby implicitly exonerating the elites themselves from blame.   Neither was the connection between the expanding suburbs and the declining center drawn subtly; rather, the MPC argued that there was a direct correlation, with "the big population growth outside" having *triggered* the downtown area's loss of population from 1910 to 1940.[36]   People with moderate means were leaving the city for the suburbs, the MPC contended, and the poor occupied the old mansions where the affluent once resided.   These buildings gradually degraded into apartment or boarding houses.   According to the 1950 census, "about 18 percent, or nearly one out of five, of the dwelling units in the city limits of Atlanta … were rated substandard."[37]   These became Atlanta's "high-cost, low-revenue-producing areas," necessitating an immediate cure, for here was to be "found most of Atlanta's crime, juvenile delinquency, broken families and welfare cases."[38]

The prosperity, or lack thereof, of certain areas was held to be due in no small part to accessibility and traffic issues.   Failure to provide decent circulation would simply kill the entire city, *NOW* claimed: "Circulation—or the lack of it—can break a city."[39] Moreover, it continued, "Ease of circulation throughout the community determines in large measure the growth and prosperity of our business and industries, the continued soundness of our tax base, and the convenience and safety of our citizens."[40]   According to *NOW*, Atlantans "were losing the traffic battle."   They "face[d] mounting congestion that daily takes its toll in money, time, and trouble."[41]   Moreover, planners argued that the increase in traffic played a major role in the city's decay.   The steep increase in auto-ownership in the postwar period had led to the construction of more highways and parking spaces, and the bulldozing of decent commercial and residential sections of the City of Atlanta.   Planners emphasized moreover that the deterioration of the central city was a result of these "negative factors" stemming from traffic problems, "such as congestion, inadequate parking, and traffic jams."[42]

Furthermore, planners saw heavy traffic itself as a "mark" of decay, a decay which often grew slowly and imperceptibly. Indeed, as *NOW* acknowledged, it was not easy to predict which neighborhoods were in

decline if the rot was in the early stages, although already in Atlanta many lived in "neighborhoods which are beginning to feel the effects of blighting influences, influences which creep in so gradually as to be almost imperceptible until they have gained a strong hold."[43] The consequences of failing to diagnose and remedy the disease, however, were dire: "Many are beginning to feel the blighting effects of heavy traffic on residential streets, conversion of single family homes into apartments, and encroachments on business and industry.   If something isn't done to reverse present trends, these will be 'day after tomorrow's slums."[44]   The ongoing outward expansion, which would then lead to a sharp increase in the number of commuters, would only worsen this encroachment of automobile traffic.

However, addressing the traffic congestion problems and improving circulation posed a difficult challenge for planners.   Fulfilling the demands of street and expressway construction was not easy, even if the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia undertook great efforts to ease the circulation.   After all, to "tie together the 300-square mile 'urbanized' metropolitan area of the future," the MPC asserted, would demand vast quantities of "wide ribbons of asphalt and concrete in all directions."[45]

2)   Public Transit as "A Special Case"

In the meantime, the MPC insisted that in Atlanta expressway construction conducted under the Lochner plan would produce an efficient circulation of people and goods.   Expressway construction was held out as preferable to developing other transportation methods, or to alternative methods of easing circulation. The MPC contended that, "Other U.S. cities built miles of subways at huge expense.   Atlanta would not need it.   Highways, not rapid transit, were explained to be the key for decent local transportation in the future."[46]

On the other hand, however, *UA* referred to the eventual necessity of a new mode of transportation – mass transit.   As it currently stood, transit was facing significant difficulties, again related to the cluster of factors identified above.   *UA* pointed out that "local transit service is getting more difficult to provide" due to the ongoing suburbanization.   Urban and suburban dwellers were becoming scattered in "fringe areas," which made it increasingly difficult for them to reach, for instance, bus or trolley stations, producing as a result "less bus and trolley patronage per operating time." [47]   This would produce a situation where "operating costs rise and revenue drops; on the other [hand], the need for more and better service in the thinly populated suburbs continues to increase."[48]   For the MPC, in 1954 "the big problem—the $64 question— is how to make the transit pay for itself in the fringe areas."[49]   In the age of sprawl, it would be difficult for mass transit companies to provide "good service" in "suburban areas." [50]   At the same time, *Up Ahead* suggested that mass transportation *eventually* be made indispensable in the future, when outlying areas themselves became densely populated (not, of course, at the expense of the downtown core).   "It is possible that, after the [peripheral] area reaches 900,000 people and is connected with fast highways, the transit operation will be profitable as a whole—and provide adequate service in all sections." [51]   Thus, for all its recognition of the long-term value and need of public transit, *UA* did not see it as an urgent necessity. According to *UA*, it was just up to "the public," which "has a right to demand and get good service from its transit system."[52]

In its 1954 report, *NOW* likewise contended that public transit would be needed "within a few years," but, as sociologist Larry Keating argues, *NOW* still "remained vague as to exactly when such a transportation [system] should be built."[53]   Both *UA* and *NOW* thus acknowledged the need for public transit, but denied this being a cause for immediate concern, and declined to commit to a schedule for its implementation. Compared to *UA*, however, *NOW*'s plan was more detailed and practical with regards to clarifying how public policies could solve traffic congestion, although what type of public transit they wanted was ultimately left undetermined.

The particulars that the MPC set forth concerning eventual transit plans deserve attention. According to the MPC, expressways were to have "30- to 40-foot center malls to provide right-of-way for rubber tired or transit vehicles."[54]   After constructing a "center mall [exclusively] for express bus use," the MPC argued, it would be possible to "later turn the trunk into a railway to install rail rapid transit or monorail."[55]   For *NOW*, transit "had a huge advantage" in making "the most efficient use of streets." In fact, the MPC proposed there that "Downtown Transit" would have its "own right-of-way free of automobiles" in the downtown area, which would significantly ease traffic flow.   Moreover, the Commission came up with "Downtown Fringe Parking," which entailed the construction of "large parking lots along the southeastern and southern edges of the central business districts," with the aim of making commuting to the downtown core less stressful for suburbanites.   After parking his or her private automobile in one of these parking lots, a commuter would hop aboard a shuttle bus to get to their CBD destination.   Accordingly, this "expressway transit plan" was primarily designed for suburbanites commuting to downtown to work and shop, which from the perspective of the MPC would enable Atlanta to "restore… the essential close relationship between living and working areas … that existed in pre-automobile days."[56] That is to say, behind the plan lurked the hope of preventing downtown decline through enabling, and more firmly securing, suburbanites' ties with the city center.

NOW-for Tomorrow spent considerable space explaining why "expressway transit" deserved to be constructed and operated *publicly*.   "Why," *NOW* asked, "should the community worry about transit going the way of the horse and buggy?"[57]   First of all, the private bus company, the Atlanta Transit System (ATS), was not able to provide the above-mentioned services, claiming that "for the most part, the recommendations of the Commission are not within the power of the Atlanta Transit Service to achieve."[58]   Clearly, drastic change of the role of local government and financial resources was necessary, the MPC insisted in *NOW*. It also contended that building a "new express transit plan" would "*involve public policy decisions which must be made by local and state governments supported by public understanding of the problem.*"   Because its lines extended from the City of Atlanta deep into suburban counties, the MPC called for the establishment of a larger governmental agency which would provide appropriate service, for "service should not be confined political boundary lines."[59]

The second reason given for Atlanta needing truly *public* transportation was that transit "is important to everybody—to the transit rider, to the automobile rider, and especially to the taxpayer."[60]   According to *NOW*, the State of Georgia's Transit Study Committee discovered in its survey (*A Plan for Transit*

Improvement in the Metropolitan Area of Atlanta, Georgia (Nov. 1953)) that "55 percent of the people in the downtown shipping and office district came by [ATS] bus."[61]   Public transportation was important not only for "the transit rider," however.[62]   In addition to transit riders, it was expected that automobile drivers, whose number was rapidly increasing, would appreciate public transit, for it would play a vital part in eliminating traffic congestion.   For *NOW*, public transit was particularly effective for a city with an old downtown like Atlanta, where "the street system was developed to accommodate the horse-drawn vehicle rather than the automobile."[63]   Reflecting its historical development, spatial usage in downtown Atlanta was not conducive to the construction of numerous more streets and parking lots to accommodate large numbers of private car commuters.   The MPC pointed out that "The intensive development of the land," in the CBD produced "high property values and many physical obstacles," which simply made it impossible to construct more streets and parking lots in the area.   On the other hand, "one trolley bus" that could transport "as many people during peak hours as twenty automobiles" would enable Atlanta to retain more taxable land, since cars would take "*ten to fifteen times as much street space to move people as by transit*."[64]   The MPC concluded, therefore, that public transit would produce an environment where "those who use their automobiles can move smoothly, swiftly, and safely."[65]

Business elites and policymakers unanimously agreed that keeping downtown commercially viable would perpetuate Atlanta's further progress.   Public projects including urban renewal, slum clearance, and expressway construction, were consequently introduced to fulfill this twofold mission —first, deleting slums to recover an attractive downtown core, and second, constructing expressways to promote suburbanites returning to the central city to work and shop.   Within this context of revitalizing and maintaining the city center, the MPC offered public transit as a tool to alleviate traffic congestion and aid downtown renewal. However, this plan was not taken seriously, and what was pursued instead was the construction of more expressways under the Lochner plan.

IV.   **Rapid Transit as an "Essential Part of Long Range Transportation Requirements":** *Access to Central Atlanta*

After their publication of *Up Ahead* and *NOW-for Tomorrow*, the MPC's interest in rapid transit persisted.   William Hartsfield, who served as Atlanta's mayor from 1937 to 1941, and again from 1942-1961, was a strong advocate of downtown revival, urging the carrying out of "more urban renewals, to solve the problems of city center's blight."[66]   Hartsfield proposed various ways to refurbish the urban core, including the construction of auditoriums, parks, and stadiums, recreational facilities, and, of course, rapid transit that could make use of existing railways inside and around Atlanta.[67]   In 1959, Atlanta Chamber of Commerce president Ivan Allen decided to run for mayor, seeking to take over Hartsfield's mission with his endorsement. His political plank was called the "Six Points Program," in which he promised the immediate construction of a civic auditorium, more expressways, and PR programs, along with the construction of a rapid transit system.[68]

In was in 1959 that the MPC began a series of four transportation policy studies, and published *Access to Central Atlanta: Expressway Policy Study*, the purpose of which was to update their freeway planning. It is

significant, therefore, that public transit occupied an important part in its report. [69]   The overarching goal of the MPC, however, had not changed notably from that articulated in the previous reports, *Up Ahead* and *NOW-for Tomorrow*.   The MPC contended that Atlanta's city center would remain the center of metropolitan Atlanta's commercial and business activities, "because the Atlanta Central Business District is squeezed into less than one percent of the city's land area, it provides nearly 20 per cent of Atlanta tax digest, 25 percent of Atlanta's employment, and nearly 20 percent of all employment in the six-county metropolitan area." [70] Traffic congestion would "restrict" the progress of the center (and hence in the MPC's conception, that of metropolitan Atlanta as a whole) by making it more difficult for citizens to access downtown.   Investigation revealed that constructing more expressways would not constitute a solution. Planners had to provide better ways for automobile drivers, the number of which was increasing at an unprecedented pace, to get on (or off) and enter (or exit from) downtown.   *Access to Central Atlanta* explained:

> Even if a hundred expressway lanes were *to* converge on downtown, even if there were unlimited room inside the core area for additional buildings, and even if problems of circulation inside the core were solved for all time, future downtown growth would still depend on the capacity of these "gateway" surface and ramp streets.   *The exit demand on these streets during the evening rush hour has already reached 40,000 persons per hour,* but the net capacity available is less than 36,000 persons per hour under present conditions of street use.   *In other words, our projections indicate that the physical improvements NOW programmed will not bring capacity above the rising demand curve, much less keep it there.*   If future capacity is not maintained above demand, the resulting congestion will not only discourage future downtown development, but it will also discourage full unitization of the downtown buildings already built or programmed. [71]

MPC's "policy recommendations" indicated that they would demand more "operational & physical improvements," including the construction of "downtown expressway connectors…, ramps…, a minimum system of one-way streets…, improved signalization, more viaducts."   Even if all of these recommendations were acted upon, the MPC strongly argued that the provisions would work only until 1975. [72]

Moreover, physical and operational improvements would cost so much that it would be more reasonable to make use of vehicles that could carry more passengers than could private automobiles.   For the MPC, it was evident that "buses represent a much more efficient use of street space than an equivalent number of private autos."   According to the survey, approximately "49 percent of all persons" leaving downtown during the rush hour period used buses ("ride transit").   If the ridership increased to 54 percent by 1970, it would "provide an available exit capacity of some 55,000 persons, even with no pass-through traffic eliminated."   On the other hand, the decline of bus ridership to 46.5 percent would result in a drop in exit capacity to 39,000 persons, which would fall far below the total 1980 exit projection of 57,200 persons. [73]   As was noted, "This illustration points strongly to the fact that, in terms of moving people rather than vehicles, *any slight change in the proportion of persons carried by transit produces a substantial change in the available capacity for getting people in and out of downtown."* [74]

In short, it was now crystal clear that Atlanta needed a public transportation system, which would "be an essential part of our [their] long-range transportation requirements."[75]   While the MPC was still orientated towards preserving the vitality of downtown, in the face of the situation it could no longer postpone plans to implement rapid transit.   The rapid transit plan that emerged was revealed in the MPC's next document in this transportation series – *What YOU Should know about RAPID TRANSIT (What)* – which was presented as "a discussion report" for the MPC's future comprehensive plan.   The MPC proceeded to change its name to the Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission (ARMPC), and as part of a multi-component response to the traffic challenges faced by the city, continued its efforts to bring rapid transit to Atlanta.

V.   "You" as Automobile and Property Owners: *What YOU Should Know about RAPID TRANSIT*

Readers expecting a clear idea of what form rapid transit would take, and what this would mean, would be disappointed by *What*.   The conception of rapid transit set out in *What* remained, as in the previous reports, vague.   The report stated, "Rapid Transit may be defined as the movement of a large number of people by means of fast-moving, self-propelled vehicles operated individually or in trains over an exclusive right-of-way without interference from other traffic."[76]   According to the report, rapid transit could take the form of "subways, elevated railways, conventional two-rail rapid transit (surface), air-cushion vehicles, classical monorails, supported monorails, and suspend monorails."   The ARMPC also considered "Lavacar, Carveyor, Unibus, buses on expressways, and commuter railroads."[77]

As a booklet for education, the significance of *What* stemmed from its attempts to explain articulately how and why rapid transit should be *public* transit.   As with the previous reports, *What* stresses the disastrous economic and social outcomes of traffic congestion, and how by helping to save downtown, public transit constituted a contribution to general welfare.   *What* asserted that without public transit, Atlanta would need "120 EXPRESSWAY LANES RADIATING TO AND FROM CENTRAL ATLANTA, AND A 28 LANE DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR," which would literally flatten out most taxable properties in the urban core.[78] To solve this pressing problem, Atlanta would need "the proper combination of buses, automobiles, expressways, and something new for this region – RAPID TRANSIT."[79]

Furthermore, *What* argued that public transit would work for Atlantans' general welfare, by making it easy for commercial civic   elites to conduct regional planning. Laying out rail or bus routes beforehand in undeveloped peripheries would enable planners and policymakers to anticipate where to build public institutions, including schools, fire stations, and roads.   This would prevent the misuses of tax money, promising "maximum services for each tax dollar spent."   To drive the message home, *What* raised the specter of what Atlanta would look like if this approach was not followed: "random sprawl" without sufficient planning would lead to "added public expense, waste land, and general ugliness."[80]   Moreover, the report continued, rapid transit would promote the efficient use of land between the urban core and the suburbs: public transit

will be necessary to serve the existing highly concentrated population and employment centers. However, these centers in Atlanta are not contiguous, but instead they exist in small clusters in a

scattered pattern throughout the region. If these clusters are connected by a rapid transit system, the area between the existing centers will develop at higher concentration. [81]

Another reason for embracing rapid transit was simply to boost Atlanta's reputation. According to *What,* "major cities," including New York, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York, all had to construct their own rapid transit systems. Rapid transit was therefore indispensable to join the ranks of the "national cities." [82]

As the demand for public transit grew, the advocates became more articulate in formulating just who comprised the "public" to which they addressed their arguments, drawing upon the language of public duty to convey to the readership what was to be done. The stated objective of *What* was to "present the citizens of Greater Atlanta with facts and figures about rapid transit" and to help the "ARMPC develop a rapid transit plan for this urban region," urging the readers to turn in "your reactions—either by mail, by telephone, by visiting the office, or at a series of planned meetings." [83]

However, in practice their target was rather more limited than this language would seem to suggest. According to *What,* public transit was introduced to help all those who were suffering from traffic congestion, including "the businessman, the taxpayer, the bus driver, the housewife, and the government official." This apparent inclusiveness was explained in terms of professions, gender roles, and civic duties, but noticeably racial and class differences were entirely absent. *What* further urged "the public," particularly property and automobile owners, to acknowledge that construction and operation of rapid transit would be a very costly enterprise, but that "the cost of not having it will be even greater." [84] To stress how rapid transit would benefit all, *What*, paradoxically, emphasized how rapid transit would help private auto-owners "re-claim" expressways, revealing perhaps more than the authors had intended about the subtle racial undertones to the project:

> Expressways are indispensable for some during "rush" hours and for everybody during off-peak hours. Rapid Transit, on the other hand, will not only carry the load that expressway can't handle, but it will also facilitate and "re-claim" expressways for normal use. Rapid transit will free expressways of burdensome overloads they were never intended to carry. [85]

What also contended that public transit would boost property value. [86] While referring to Toronto, Canada, where "property values within two blocks of the rapid transit lines have jumped three to seven times their former value," *What* also remarked upon the fact that "assessments in subdivisions of the city adjacent to the lines have gone up 31 percent." [87] These examples, *What* contended, would guarantee that "The property owners of this metropolitan area have much to gain from rapid transit and much to lose without it." [88] Furthermore, *WHAT* demonstrated how cities like Cleveland succeeded in increasing their tax revenue by building a rapid transit system. [89]

Yet another argument that the ARMPC made in this report was that Atlanta's rapid transit would not cost much due to the fact that Atlanta already had a railway network available for the new rapid transit. *What*

introduced three "right of ways" as possibilities for line locations: 1) expressway right-of-way, 2) railroad right-of-way, 3) major street right-of-way, and 4) new exclusive rapid transit right-of-way. The most favorable of these options in Atlanta was a "Railroad Right of Way," *What* asserted. In addition to being a reasonable option, it would also effectively meet the ARMPC's objective, which was to enable the smooth flow of traffic between peripheral communities and downtown. Old towns, including Marietta and Decatur, had developed along railways, and so utilizing existing railroads for rapid transit thus provided the most efficient set up. *What* argued that,

> Although there are historical reasons for this, it is interesting—as well as fortunate—to note that the railroads are laid out along the major corridors of urban growth radiating from the central city. This means that they are well located from the standpoint of 'tapping' – or serving—a rapid transit market.

Because of this advantage, *What* stressed, the amount that drivers of private automobiles were paying for the construction and maintenance of expressways would not exceed the cost that transit users would have to pay. In the words of the report, "Insomuch as the general public is 'subsidizing' private automobile use to such an extent, it would seem appropriate to investigate the desirability of similarly 'subsidizing' rapid transit, which is clearly a more efficient and more 'available' mode of travel for the use of the general public." [90] In subtly drawing upon the imagery of fairness and public duty, this functioned as an effective appeal to automobile drivers to understand supporting rapid transit as a rational and fair extension to the existing system.

With all of these reasons, *What* stressed that this rapid transit proposal was both beneficial and realistic. Moreover, *What* was well aware of the future need for federal assistance, introducing "a bill for aid to urban transportation," which would "make federal money available for rapid transit planning and construction." Although it did not provide the details, the ARMPC predicted that this was "almost certain to become national policy within the next few years." [91] The net result of the report was thus an argument for public transit that was based on a foundation not substantially different from what had come before, but that demonstrated a far greater grasp of the issues and an ability to articulate these to the intended readership.

VI. Public Transit for the White Middle Class Public: *Atlanta Region Comprehensive Plan: Rapid Transit*

Based upon *Up Ahead*, *NOW,* and *What,* the ARMPC produced a comprehensive plan, featuring a major role for public transit. It then published this plan as *Atlanta Region Comprehensive Plan: Rapid Transit*. [92] In this first detailed study of the rapid transit proposal, the ARMPC became still more articulate in demonstrating why Atlanta needed its own public transportation system, and in conveying that message in such a way as to dovetail with the values of the middle class audience. The ARMPC's future projections showed that metropolitan Atlanta's population growth and economic progress would not cease anytime soon. *Rapid Transit* emphasized that "within the next decade there will be a strong need and market for a high quality regional rapid transit system to relieve the expressway network *NOW* under construction." [93] More importantly, *RT* argued that federal assistance was highly expected in the near future. The ARMPC's high

hopes for assistance from the federal government was made overt by the reference on the cover page to President John F. Kennedy's special message to Congress, which stressed the need for early planning for "mass transportation."[94]

The ARMPC's image of public transit also emerged in far greater clarity. According to *Rapid Transit*, the proposed system was to consist of "60 miles of high-speed trunk line serving all five counties, with through service connecting" downtown with communities in outlying areas. Furthermore, the rapid transit cars were to showcase America's state-of-the-art technology, "consisting of lightweight, electrically powered, automated vehicles, with steel or rubber tired wheels operating on double rails of steel or concrete steel generally paralleling railroad right of way, and under central electric control."[95] The 33-page document was filled with visual images stressing rapid transit's state-of-the-art technology and its progressive character, no doubt making a striking and inspiring impression on readers who would then be prepared for the coming referendums.

Behind the visuals and progressive language, though, remained the same basis as those of the previous reports: the assumption of a strong, vibrant downtown, the continued progress and success of which was seen as persevering well into the foreseeable future. "Downtown employment has grown from 46,000 employees in 1941 to 64,400 in 1958," announced the report confidently. Even "conservative estimates… place [downtown employment] at 79,000 in 1970 and 92,000 in 1980."[96] Dividing the metropolitan area into seven categories ("Downtown," "Uptown," "Close-in Industrial Belts," "Close-in Neighborhoods," "Outlying industry and commerce," "Suburban Neighborhoods," and "Rural Fringe"), the ARPMC stressed the continuing, axial significance of the city center:

> The very presence of a big-city downtown with big-city skyscrapers, financial houses, and ideas, makes the Atlanta region an international city with international opportunities, and enhances the outlook for nearby industrial and commercial development in all adjoining counties. Once lost, a good downtown is hard to replace, and the only serious threat to its continued heath and economic destiny is peak-hour congestion.[97]

Building rapid transit was therefore a matter of *public urgency*, for it would contribute to the even distribution of wealth and opportunities that were accumulated in the urban core. It would serve the region because it would help "[tie the] region together" and "[make] a whole out of many parts," preventing a fragmentation of metropolitan Atlanta into a collection of independent residential and industrial areas.

Simultaneously, rapid transit would have "far-reaching effects" in "shaping" the region by promoting development around the transit stations, while it would also drastically improve the downtown environment through encouraging the abolishment of the numerous parking lots established for all the incoming traffic. By so doing, the ARMPC argued, Atlanta would not repeat Los Angeles' mistake, where "approximately two-thirds of downtown is devoted to expressways, streets, and parking facilities."[98] As it had done in *What*, the ARMPC also emphasized that rapid transit would stimulate Atlanta's economic expansion by boosting the property values, "particularly in the general vicinity of the line locations and in the areas beyond the ends of

the lines."[99]   It could also be expected to contribute to the city's revenues.

The ARMPC further explained how public transit's advantage lay in its ability to enhance "a balanced transportation system."[100]   Public and private transportation should "be in balance," a balance that Atlanta had thus far been successful in keeping.   However, "the continued improvement of expressway facilities" over the poor development of public transportation had produced a situation where downtown no longer had the necessary "automobile reception capacity."   Consequently, more than half of the land in the downtown core had become parking lots and streets.   Street congestion had worsened still further.   The alleviation of traffic congestion and protection of downtown from further bulldozing, explained the ARMPC, necessitated fixed railway, rapid transit.

Conclusion

By introducing the concept of "balanced transportation," based on similar notions underlying the previous MPC reports, the ARMPC argued that rapid transit would *contribute to all*, including the affluent and others who had no need to use public transportation.   The notion of "balanced transportation system" also applied to Atlanta's demographic variety, creating the impression that progressive planners and commercial civic   elites were attempting to respond to the demands of an inclusive, urban public:

> The need for a balanced system also grows out of the fact that *people* are different.   Some people *must* drive to work.   Some want and can afford to drive to work.   Others are wholly dependent on public transportation.   Many others will respond either way, depending on the availability of a reasonable choice.   Even now, 49 percent of the people leaving downtown during the evening rush hour travel by public transit, despite the fact that it is mired in street congestion.[101]

However, this language of inclusion masked underlying tensions and biases that carried over from the previous system and reflected middle class white values.   While claiming rapid transit for all, the ARMPC did not do away with the class and racial biases attached to public transportation.   This was evident in their attempt to banish the image of public transportation as a cheap and dirty mode of transportation.   They tried to attract middle and upper class whites, who owned private automobiles, to use public transit, or at least support the system even if they did not actually use it.   This was a consistent thread in the reports, but perhaps most obvious in their introduction of rapid transit features in *Rapid Transit*:

> Appeals to conscience or civic-mindedness will not switch people to more efficient forms of transportation.   Only better service will do this.   Rapid transit must therefore offer complete "portal to portal" service, it must have social prestige, a pleasing appearance, complete grade separation, and a high-volume capacity.   Its fares must be economically competitive, and it must be fast, safe, flexible, dependable, comfortable, convenient, and quiet.[102]

Furthermore, the ARMPC described rapid transit as a more prestigious and luxurious mode of transportation, which was by extension respectable enough for middle and upper class whites to use:

PRESTIGE: Buses sometimes suffer from a lack of social status.   Rapid transit should be designed to appeal to large numbers of people, including the middle and upper-income people who now crowd the streets and expressways.   Recent experience elsewhere shows this to be entirely possible. Rapid transit which is second rate in any sense of the word will not do the job. [103]

PLEASING APPEARANCE: An important factor in passenger appeal is the attractive appearance of a modern vehicle stopping at stations and passing through a nicely landscaped right-of-way. Cleanliness of vehicles and stations is equally important. [104]

The ARMPC's targeting of a certain class was more evident in their route plan.   According to their "portal to portal service," "home to work" commuters were regarded as their major customers. [105]   The four categories of route identified—1) suburban residence to downtown, 2) suburban residence to suburban industry, 3) close-in residence to suburban industry, and 4) suburban residence to close-in industry—seem sufficient to meet the traffic demands of all metro Atlantans; however, the ARMPC's route map revealed that this public transit layout in fact targeted middle and upper class residents, mostly white.[106]   Affluent, predominantly white northeast Atlanta had the Avondale Line, the Norcross Line, and the Sandy Springs Line with the North Druid Hills spur and Clarkston extension, while western Atlanta, which was a predominantly black area, was to received only the Ben Hill Line.   Moreover, there were no plans to construct a railway in the area between Marietta and the Benn Hill Line, while the East and South Line penetrated both black and white residential areas.   It was obvious looking at the plan that it would "provide less service to the African American areas of the city than to the white areas.   The predominantly black Southside was to be served by one line."[107]

In sum, the postwar history of rapid transit planning in Atlanta reveals a disconnect between the progressive language of inclusion – open to all residents and linking together all communities – and the persistence of class and racial biases manifested in the actual plans – which clearly favored white middle class interests. Similarly, while the reports differed in terms of tone and image, other consistent threads, most notably the emphasis on maintaining a strong downtown core, continued. Here again, the interests of the white elite which were served by a strong downtown were transformed into a universal good for the public, with emphasis placed on the continuing economic and social centrality of downtown, the preservation of which was discussed in terms befitting a moral imperative.   The study of rapid transit planning in Atlanta thus sheds light on how behind the imagery and language of progressive change serving the public good persisted old biases and tensions.

[2] Metropolitan Planning Commission, *Up Ahead: A Regional Land Use Plan for Metropolitan Atlanta* (February 1952): 9.
[3] Metropolitan Planning Commission, *NOW for Tomorrow: A Planning Program for the DeKalb-Fulton Metropolitan*

Area (September 1954): 5.

[4] In this paper, I employ the term "commercial civic elites" to refer to, in Blaine Brownell's words, the members of "chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, businessmen's clubs and other major civic organizations," who played a leading role in the field of urban planning since the early twentieth century.　See Blaine Brownell, "The Commercial Civic Elite and City Planning in Atlanta, Memphis, and New Orleans in the 1920s," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 41 no. 3 (Aug. 1975): 340.

[5] *Atlanta Magazine* 1.1 (May 1961): 1.

[6] As for the studies on the decline of downtown, see Robert Foglesong, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), and Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); with regard to investigations on how suburbanization promoted decay of the urban core, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[7] Works investigating economic progress in postwar Atlanta include Harold H. Martin, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of its People and Events,* vol. III (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 460-61, 553-60; and Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City 1946-1996* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1996), 167-68. As for its effects on politics, particularly race relations, see Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (New York: Verso, 1996); Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Larry Keating, *Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

[8] H. W. Lochner and Company, *Highway and Transportation Plan for Atlanta, Georgia* (1946).

[9] On the general history of the postwar development of US rapid transit, see David W. Jones, *Mass Motorization + Mass Transit: An American History and Policy Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); Zachary M. Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

[10] Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, *Atlanta Region Comprehensive Plan: Rapid Transit* (June, 1961): 11.

[11] Regarding how suburbanization prevented improvement in the race relations of post-Civil Rights Atlanta, see Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*.

[12] Kruse, *White Flight*, 114.

[13] Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[14] Ibid., 189.

[15] Ibid., 194. For an analysis of the decline of public space in postwar American cities, see Michael Sorkin ed, *Variations on a Theme Park* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1992); and David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[16] Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics,* 39; as for the history of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, see Metropolitan Planning Commission, "Foreword," *Up Ahead: A Regional Land Use Plan for Metropolitan Atlanta* (February 1952), 2; and Robert White, "Resolution of Adoption," in Metropolitan Planning Commission*, NOW-for Tomorrow: A Planning Program for the DeKalb-Fulton Metropolitan Area* (September 1954): 2.

[17] *Metropolitan Planning Commission, NOW for Tomorrow,* 5.

[18] [18] MPC, *Up Ahead*, 2.

[19] MPC, *NOW-for Tomorrow*, 6. Charles Rutheiser rightly points out in his *Imagineering Atlanta* that the MPC "greatly underestimated the scale and intensity of suburbanization that was to come." *Up Ahead* and *NOW for Tomorrow* reveal that planners at that time noticed that suburbs were growing and ruining the advantages that downtown enjoyed, but they

did not view it as an eminent threat.　　Rather, they believed that it was tamable (Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 152).

[20] MPC, *Up Ahead*, 11.

[21] In 1952, the City of Atlanta annexed a part of Fulton County's unincorporated area, which extended approximately 83 square miles, in order to offset the population rise in the suburbs.　　This so-called "Plan of Improvement" enabled the City of Atlanta to add 100,000 to its population, which was the same number of people the unincorporated area in Metropolitan Atlanta gained.　　Yet, it was obvious that this was not enough to reverse the decentralization.　　On this "Plan of Improvement," see Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century America*.

[22] MPC, *Up Ahead*, 3.

[23] *NOW-for Tomorrow, 6.*

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] MPC, *Up Ahead*, 3.

[27] Ibid., 36.

[28] Ibid.

[29] *NOW-for Tomorrow, 6.*

[30] *Up Ahead*, 42.

[31] *NOW-for Tomorrow*, 10. Charles Rutheiser summarizes their strategy, which was to develop the railroad gulch between Five Points and the Whitehall-Broad Shopping District and to zone the area around the State Capitol as an area for governmental institutions.　　Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, p. 142.

[32] *Up Ahead*, 43.

[33] Ibid., 7.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 39.

[37] Ibid., 67.

[38] Ibid., 36. The MPC did not overlook the role that race played with regard to the downtown's deterioration.　　They acknowledged that "the suburban growth to date is largely a white phenomenon." According to *UA*, "one of Metropolitan Atlanta's pressing problems is that of housing the colored population."　　*NOW* lamented, "Negroes, lacking open space for expansion, continue to concentrate at high densities in the old neighborhoods surrounding the downtown business district."　　For MPC planners, the "Negro housing problem… stems from this group's inability to find either enough available second hand housing or enough open development land to meet its growing needs."　*America had a large second hand housing market, which enabled the "average American family" to access better housing and automotive transportation."*[is this in italics for emphasis? Also, where does the quote start?] Nevertheless, a "large number of colored people" were so underpaid that "a serious concentration of Negroes in unhealthy and inadequate downtown neighborhoods" occurred.[38]　　Evidently, blacks' "inability to find" decent housing stemmed from the Jim Crow system, which prevented blacks from finding decent jobs and accumulating wealth. However, the MPC did not attribute blacks' plights to perpetual, structural discrimination, but instead stressed the dangers of blacks' frustration over the difficulties of finding decent accommodation.　　"The pressure to expand has pushed this group into white neighborhoods and tensions have resulted."[38]　　According to the MPC, this had a detrimental effect because the social unrest over the housing market "hurts property values due to the uncertainty of future."

[39] MPC, *NOW-for Tomorrow*, 41.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] MPC, *Up Ahead*, 42.

[43] MPC, *NOW-for Tomorrow*, 7.

[44] Ibid, 8.

[45] MPC, *Up Ahead,* 61.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 95.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Keating, *Atlanta*, chap. 6.

[54] MPC, *NOW-for Tomorrow*, 54.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 52.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 54.

[60] Ibid., 52.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Harold Martin, *William Berry Hartsfield: Mayor of Atlanta* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 144.

[67] Ibid., 16, 144.

[68] Ivan Allen, Jr. and Paul Hemphill, *Mayor: Notes on the Sixties* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 32-34.

[69] Metropolitan Planning Commission, *Access to Central Atlanta: Expressway Policy Study* (1959), i.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., ii. Italics mine.

[72] Ibid., 30.

[73] Ibid., 21.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, *What YOU Should know About RAPID TRANSIT*, Expressway Policy Study Report, no. 3 (September 1960): 1.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 9.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 10.

[81] Ibid., 13.

[82] Ibid., 22.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid, i.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid, 13.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] *What* also prepared a "questions for discussion" page, and the topics further showed that their scope was limited to

middle class property owners, who did not have to rely upon rapid transit.   Those questions included, "Would you ride rapid transit if it were available, fast, safe, comfortable, and convenient?" "What effect would rapid transit have on your property, or your business?" "Would you be willing to pay a part of the cost of rapid transit in order to have free expressways you could drive on?"   These showed that the MPC's major focus was limited to those who owned property and an automobile.

[90] Ibid., 28.

[91] Ibid., 26.

[92] Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, *Atlanta Region Comprehensive Plan: Rapid Transit* (June 1961).

[93] Ibid., ii.

[94] Ibid., i.

[95] Ibid., iii.

[96] Ibid., 2.

[97] Ibid., ii.

[98] Ibid., 7-8.

[99] Ibid., 8.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid, 11.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid, 10, 15.

[106] Ibid, 14.

[107] Keating, *Atlanta,* 116.