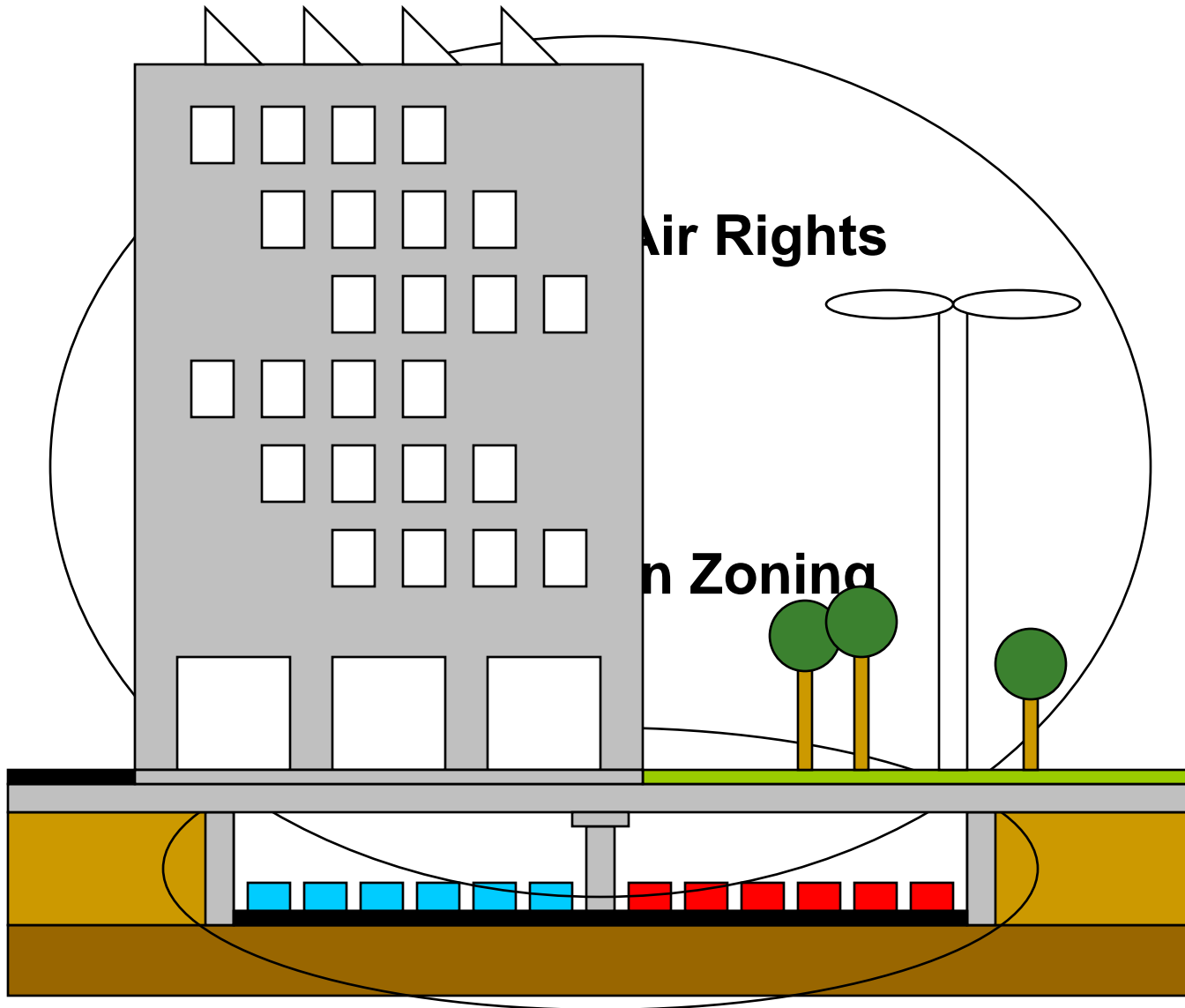

Capping the Connector

Healing Atlanta's
Scarred Urban
Landscape

David Carter
Stephen Causby
Shabana Charaniya
Jenise Jackson
Tony Yonnone



Atlanta's "Overlay"

The Special Public Interest District

- SPI Districts are zoning classifications specifically tailored to address the needs of a particular area.
 - Been in use since 1977 in City of Atlanta.
 - District guidelines are prescriptive and aim to maximize public investment.
 - This SPI District would trump all others.
-

Other SPI Districts

- City of Atlanta has 19 in use today
 - Earliest: SPI 1 – Central Core (Downtown)
 - Latest: SPI 22 – Memorial Dr./Oakland Cem.
 - Most noticeable: SPI 13 and 16
 - Centennial Olympic Park and Midtown
 - Big players in “SPI 23”:
 - Central Atlanta Progress, Midtown Alliance, State Capital, Turner, Georgia Tech.
-

SPI 23 – The Connector

Intent:

- ❑ Establish/codify a growth development framework
 - Encourage non-state parties to cap the connector
 - Provide developers with clear and stable guidelines
 - ❑ Undo the damage caused by the Connector
 - Cover up the “scar”
 - Reconnect East and West
 - ❑ Transform Atlanta’s Urban Core
 - Build an integrated urban greenspace network
 - Show other cities what is possible – be the example!
-

Project Scope

- ❑ Six main segments
- ❑ Estimated 37 acres total
- ❑ Developable land and greenspace
 - Approximately 50/50 each
- ❑ Creates decks, makes use of existing ones
- ❑ Builds on existing proposals
 - Blueprint Midtown
 - Mayor's Park



Atlantic Station



14th St.

Midtown

10th St.

Reconnect
9th St.

Georgia Tech

5th St.

Image © 2007 Sanborn

Google™





5th St.

Georgia Tech

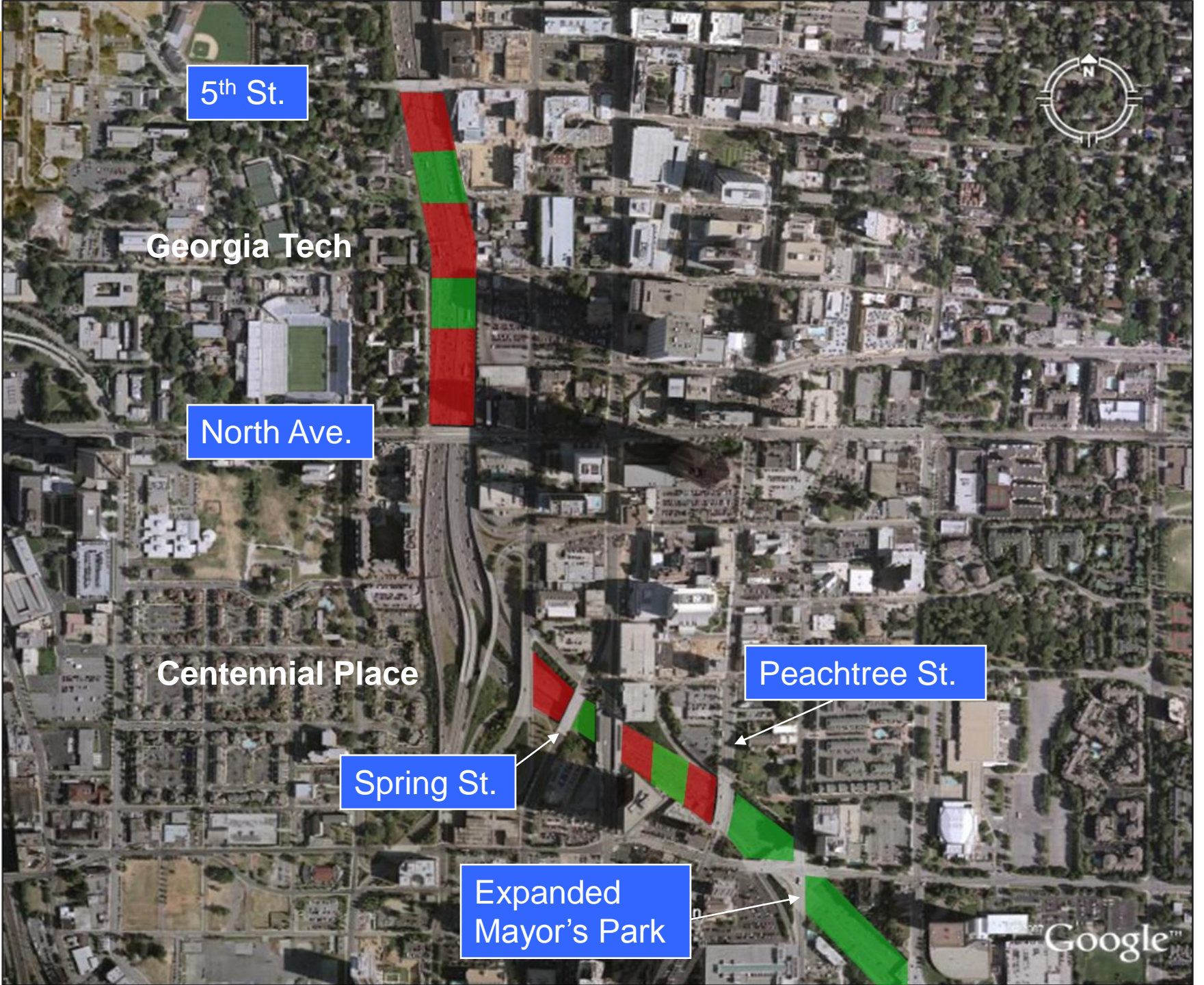
North Ave.

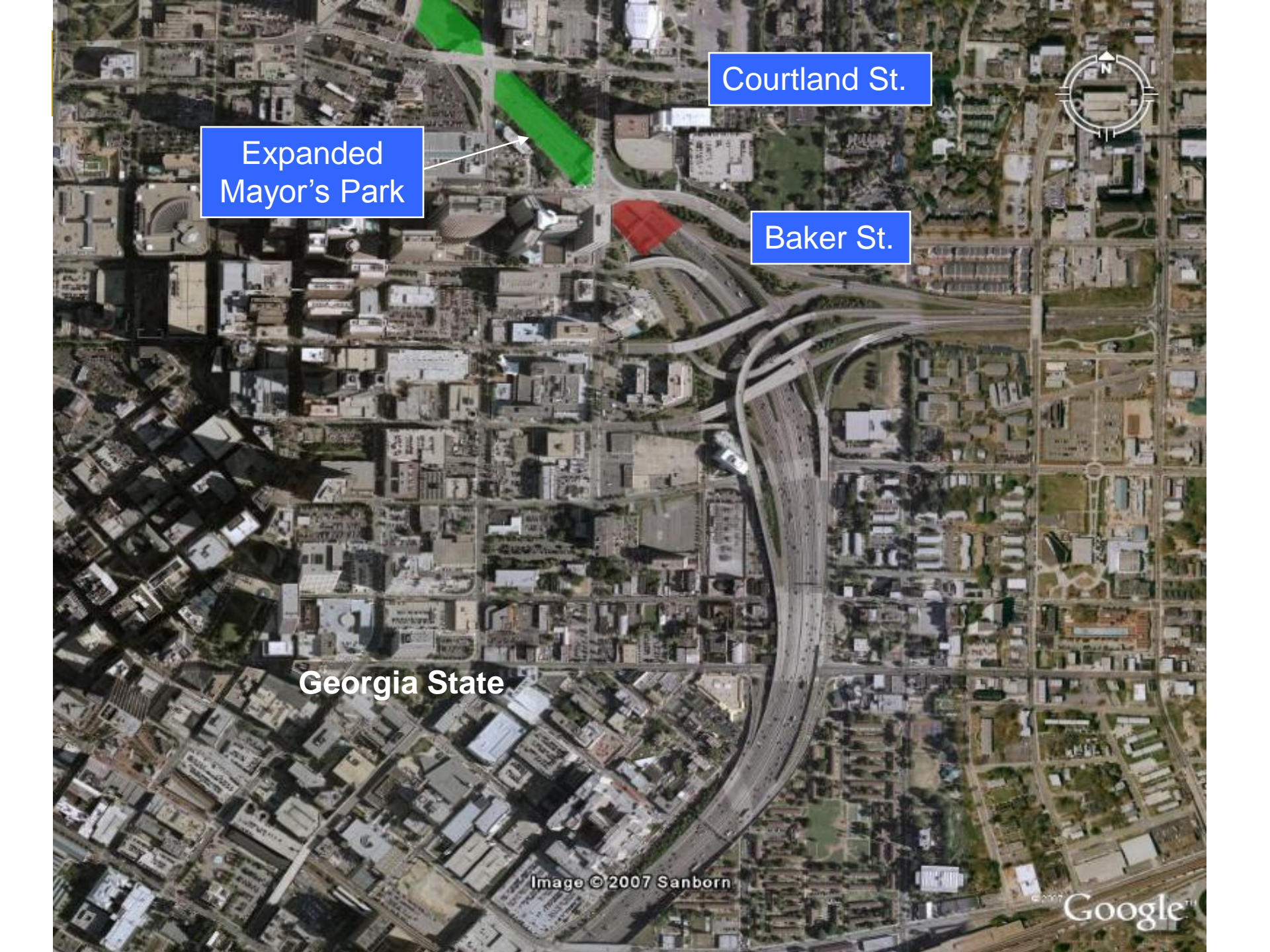
Centennial Place

Peachtree St.

Spring St.

Expanded Mayor's Park





Expanded Mayor's Park

Courtland St.

Baker St.

Georgia State

Image © 2007 Sanborn

Google



Grady Hospital

MLK Jr. Dr.

Memorial Dr.

I-20 Interchange

History

- Built in early 1950's
 - Six-lane thoroughfare
 - Construction began before federal funds
- Expansion
 - 1980's – sixteen lanes in some places
 - 323,000 cars per day
 - Approximately 7.5 miles
- Social Impacts
 - Estimated 67,000 displaced
 - Disconnected neighborhoods
 - Urban Renewal



Social Impacts

- 1959 – African Americans comprised 36% of the city's population, but occupied only 16% of the available residential land
- Auburn Avenue – historic center of African-American commerce – bisected
- Georgia Tech separated from Midtown/Downtown



Planning Issues

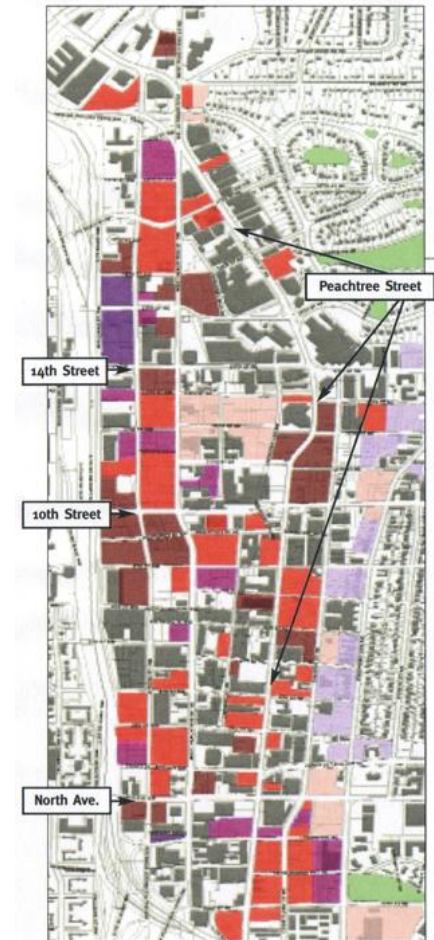
■ Zoning changes

□ Midtown Alliance – “Blueprint Midtown”

- Allows for building heights 8-30 stories tall
- Georgia Tech classroom buildings at 3 stories, but friendly to further development
- Zoning ordinance to include requirements for developers – parking/retail, greenspace

□ Downtown – Central Atlanta Progress

- Most of downtown in SPI One – no height limit on buildings
- Increase Public Space requirements (15%), adjust FAR to create more greenspace



Existing Conditions

- Divided neighborhoods, lack of connectivity
- Barrier to pedestrian / bike activity
- Pollution (air & noise)
- Aesthetically pleasing only to engineers
- Inefficient use of space in a dense urban area



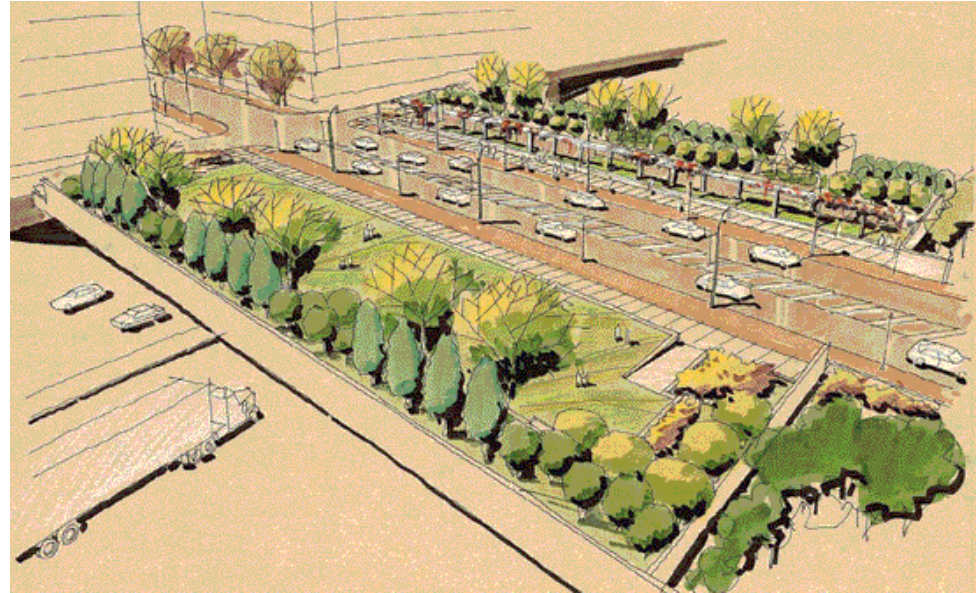
Cost

- High infrastructure cost → up to \$500 a square foot
- Opportunity to let developers pay for part of the decking cost by letting them build above the freeway.
- Free Land in a dense, expensive urban area!
- The new development and increased surrounding property values will increase future tax revenues
- Federal government often pays for the superstructure.



Benefits

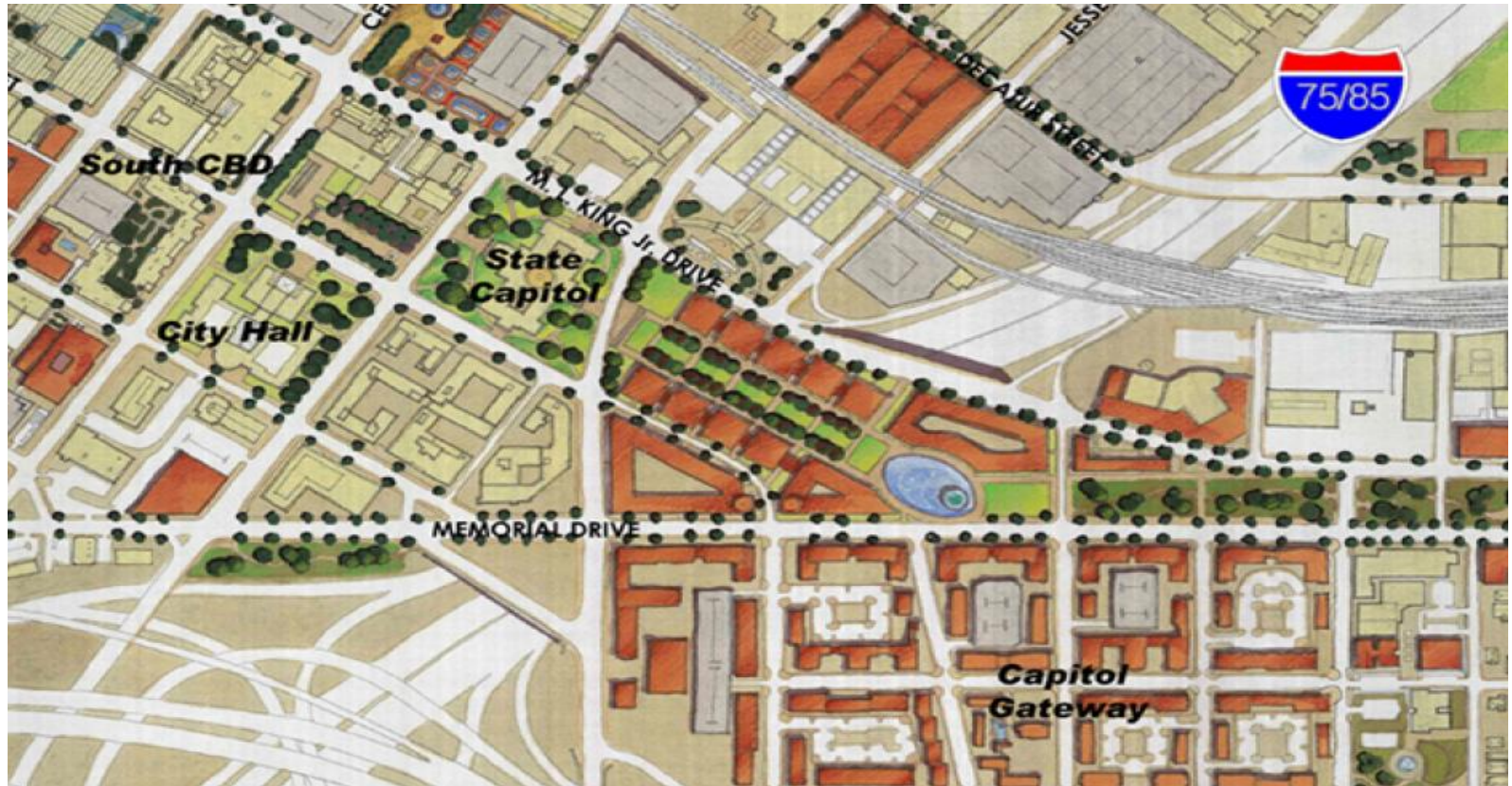
- Reconnect city
- Enhanced pedestrian environment
- Pollution mitigation
- Drastically improved aesthetics
- New parkland
- New development in city center
- Potential for transit adjacent development, institutional expansion



Capitol Park



Capitol Park



Advantages:

Transit Adjacent Development

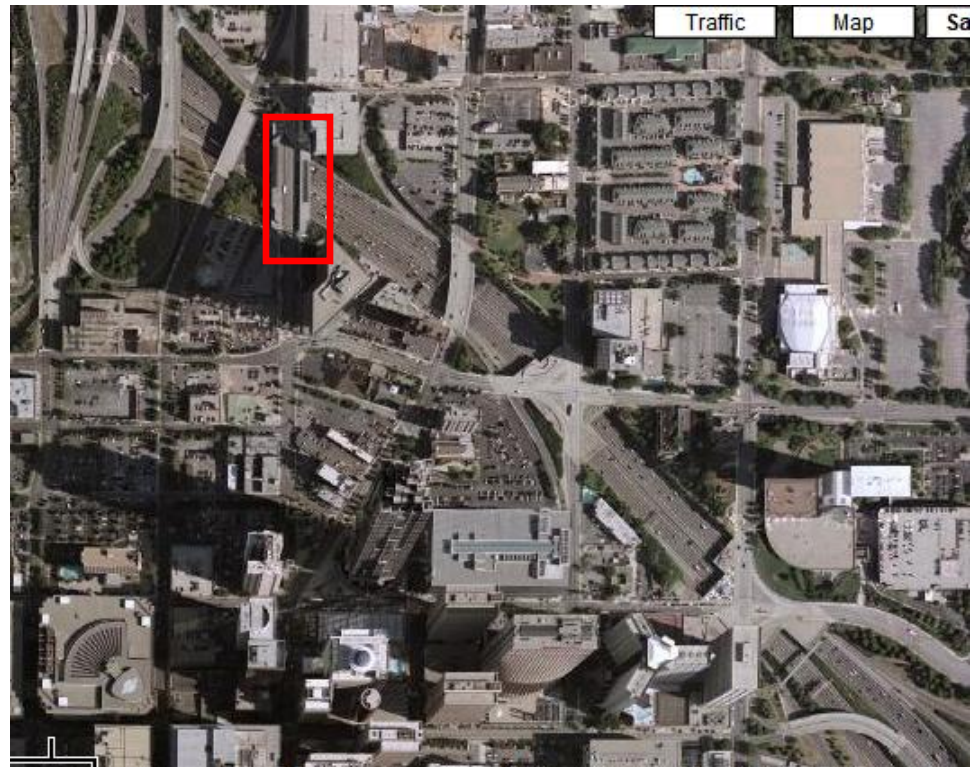


Making the Connection



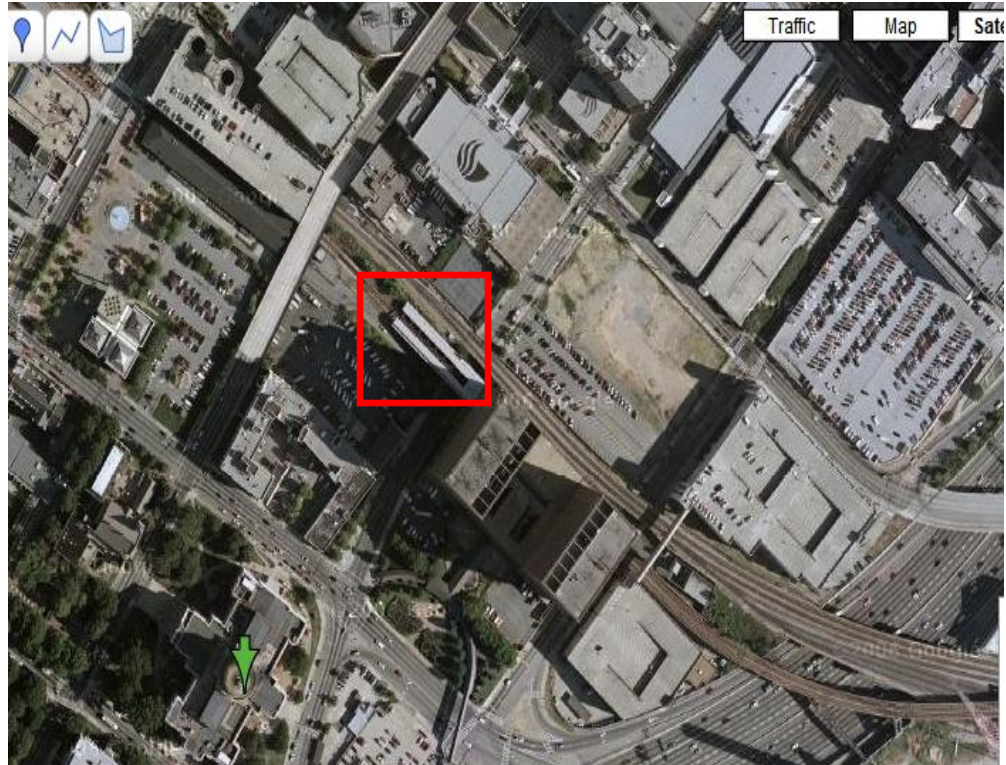
Benefits to Civic Center MARTA Station

- More efficient use
- Potential further development
- Increased connectivity
- Mixed-use, walkable



Benefits to the Georgia State MARTA Station

- More efficient use
- Potential further development
- Increased connectivity
- Mixed-use, walkable



Benefits to MARTA

Transit adjacent development: a source of revenue over and above fare receipts



Six Elements of Transit Adjacent Development

- Moderate to higher density
- Within an easy walk
- A mix of uses
- Designed for the pedestrian
- New construction or redevelopment
- Increases transit ridership



TAD can help:

- Reduce regional vehicle miles traveled by 5%
- Increase regional ridership by 5%
- Decrease local infrastructure costs by 25

This ?

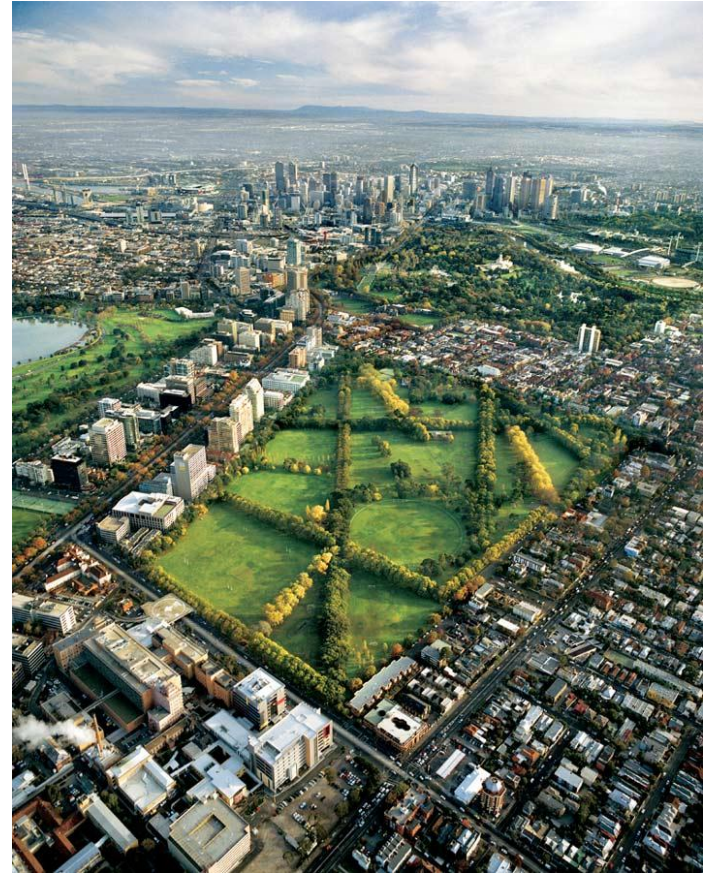


Or this ?



Parks or Parking:

- Give a choice to developer
- Incorporate in the ordinance



How to Get Something from Nothing

- Air rights above connector held by the State
 - Current zoning is “transportation”
 - State keeps what it needs (“terra firma”)
 - State gives the rest away (all the air rights)
 - Creates a **blank slate**
 - Apply the overlay (SPI 23)
 - New “land” from thin air (something from nothing)
 - Open competition for development rights
 - City of Atlanta officiates and awards the “prize”
 - Winner gets to develop – within SPI 23’s framework
-

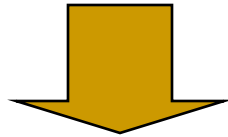
State Level: Air Rights

- Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City (1978)
- In Georgia, under O.C.G.A. 32-6-117
 - The Department [of Transportation] is authorized to lease by negotiation air rights over existing or proposed limited-access highways for development as commercial enterprises or activities



County & City Level: Zoning

Fulton County Zoning Power granted by
Georgia Constitution Art. IX, II, ¶ IV



City of Atlanta Zoning Power

To promote desirable living conditions, sustain stability of neighborhoods or providing for their orderly evolution along lines responsive to public needs and to encourage the most appropriate use and development of land and buildings

Conflict between State & County/City

- State property is immune from local zoning ordinances
 - Private developers leasing air rights want to develop high density, large scale projects
 - Atlanta wants
 - To regulate the physical development of the land and limit the uses to which a property may be put
 - To regulate the height, overall size, and placement of buildings on a lot, the density at which buildings may be constructed
-

Solutions

- Legislation giving air rights to Atlanta
- Contract with community organizations as a public-private initiative
 - CAP/ADID
 - Midtown Alliance



Clean Air Act

- Governs three categories of “sources”
 - Stationary, Mobile, and Indirect
 - Criteria pollutants
 - Sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, particulates, and hydrocarbons
 - SPI 23 may fall under “Indirect” classification
 - Follow the Big Dig model
 - May actually improve air quality
 - But also provides leverage for State/City deal
-

Acknowledgements

- American Public Transportation Assn. www.epta.com
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 - *Benefiting from a Cover Up*. www.governing.com/articles/1parks.htm
 - *Blueprint Midtown*, Midtown Alliance. www.midtownalliance.org
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 - Campbell, Bonnie. *Creating Sustainable Air Rights over Highway Corridors*. MIT. 2004.
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