

**360 Degrees of Development:  
Universities as Real Estate Developers in Atlanta**

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**Lincoln Institute of Land Policy  
Working Paper**

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**Lincoln Institute Product Code: WP08DP1**

## **Abstract**

The university is increasingly viewed as one of the key institutions of urban development. Where there may have been a time when campus development could have occurred as if the university were an “ivory tower” removed from the “turmoil” of everyday life (Bender, 1988), the institutional importance of academic institution to economic development, local job formation and even to the cultural identity of the city as well as to knowledge formation is now recognized. However important the university may be to the city, the conditions and practices that make up the university - city relationship are not necessarily smooth or well understood. The purpose of this report is to contribute to this understanding.

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This case study is a product of collaboration between David Perry and Scott Levitan, at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Andre Bertrand of Morehouse College and Dwan Packnett, Higher Education Consultant and Carl Patton and Lawrence Kelley of Georgia State University. The case discussion of Morehouse is written by Andre Bertrand, the case discussion of Georgia Tech is provided by Scott Levitan and the case of Georgia State University is derived in part from a case study by Carl Patton and Lawrence Kelley that previously appeared in chapter form in a book edited by David Perry and Wim Wiewel, *The University as Urban Developer: Case Study and Analysis* (M.E. Sharpe, 2005) organized as part of the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy program *The City, Land and the University*, under the direction of Rosalind Greenstein.

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# **360 Degrees of Development: Universities as Real Estate Developers in Atlanta**

## **I INTRODUCTION: The University and “360 Degrees” of Land Development**

The university is increasingly viewed as one of the key institutions of urban development. Where there may have been a time when campus development could have occurred as if the university were an “ivory tower” removed from the “turmoil” of everyday life (Bender, 1988), the institutional importance of academic institution to economic development, local job formation and even to the cultural identity of the city as well as to knowledge formation is now recognized.<sup>1</sup> However important the university may be to the city, the conditions and practices that make up the university - city relationship are not necessarily smooth or well understood. The purpose of this report is to contribute to this understanding. Here we select one city and three of its universities as a good example of the range of functions a university is required to undertake in building its campus and the city of which it is a part. This full range of challenges and roles of urban development we call the “360 degrees” of the development process.<sup>2</sup>

We have chosen the city/region of Atlanta as our case city and the Georgia Institute of Technology, the Georgia State University and Morehouse College as our three case institutions. The three key development roles that comprise our version of 360 degrees of university-based urban land development are those of “neighbor,” “entrepreneur,” and “planner.” The role of the university as “neighbor” describes the most proximate, sometimes contentious “town and gown,” relations that often result when a university participates in land development in the communities adjacent to or closely tied to the campus. The role of “entrepreneur” includes the range of responsibilities that obtain when a university leverages its research capacity and the products of such capacity in ways that advance the market value of its buildings, land and intellectual property, and, by extension, contribute to the economic development of the city. Higher education has come to be recognized as one of the key elements in the new “knowledge economy,”<sup>3</sup> serving as a source of knowledge,<sup>4</sup> public private research and development<sup>5</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Along with Perry and Wiewel (2005), see, for example, U.S. policy studies by the Clusters on Innovation Group of the Council on Competitiveness. 2004. “Regional Foundations of U.S. Competitiveness,” the CEOs for Cities. 2002. “Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Revitalization,” the Council on Competitiveness, 2006 “Innovate America: “National Innovation Initiative,” the Domestic Policy Council 2006. “American Competitiveness Initiative: “Leading the World in Innovation” and the NASULGC National Commission on the Urban Agenda 2006. “A New “Urban Land Grant Act,” plus international studies such as Breton and Lambert (2003), Bond and Lemasson (1999), Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) , Shapiro (2005) among many others on the rising importance of universities in the contemporary urban and global environment

<sup>2</sup> This employs the approach of The City, Land and The University program at the Lincoln Institute which views “the planning and development of land from “360 degrees” . . . understanding university expansion and development from a variety of angles or points of view (i.e., neighborhood, city, etc.)”

<sup>3</sup> Achieving Competitive Excellence, 2005, CEO’s for Cities, 2002, Rhodes, 2001, Grogan and Proscio, 2000

<sup>4</sup> Lambert and Butler, 2006

<sup>5</sup> Lambert and Butler, 2006, Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004, Gieger, 2004

training<sup>6</sup>. Much is made of the importance of higher education ingenerating the high skill human capital and the innovative intellectual property that will be the center of new productive economic development.<sup>7</sup>

The role of the university as “planner” is most closely tied to the land development strategies and policies that obtain from university relations (or *lack* of relations) with the public sector, most particularly the city’s planning, zoning and regulation entities tasked with advancing the city/region as an equitable, economic and social site of quality of life, growth and development. In some cities, university campus plans have come to be considered part of city master plans and conversely cities are beginning to view such university plans as significant land-use guides as well.<sup>8</sup>

## II. THE CITY/REGION OF ATLANTA

Like many great American cities, Atlanta, at its inception, was a site of land speculation and development. The city was established to be the southeastern hub for the Southern Railroad. Originally named Marthasville, after the daughter of the progenitor of the railroad hub idea, the leaders of the city have always embraced real estate development as a key contributor to Atlanta’s vitality.

At the time of the Civil War the land development-transportation hub strategy of early Atlanta made the city one of a network of nodes throughout the South able to convey the valuable raw commodities grown here to the industrialized centers of the north. Cities like Birmingham, Montgomery, Jackson, New Orleans, Raleigh, Memphis, Savannah, Charleston and Nashville, all of similar size and population, linked the agrarian and natural resource economies (mining, timber) to their source of manufacture.

After the war and the failure of Reconstruction, Georgia and the southern Atlantic states purposefully set out to invent new economies based on manufacturing activities meant to replace the old economic dependence on the transport raw materials to distant manufacturing centers and take advantage of the favorable labor rates of a devastated region. (Perry and Watkins, 1978). This shift in economic strategy did little to create competitive advantage for the city and, by the 1950’s, Atlanta remained an equal among others in the South, all subordinate to New Orleans which, with the river and a deep

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<sup>6</sup> ICIC, 2002, CEOs for Cities 2002, Peirce, Neal. “Wake-up call for academia.” The Washington Post. May 29, 2002., NCES, NSOPF, 2004 Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Council on Competitiveness Regional Innovation Summit, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Clusters on Innovation Group, Council on Competitiveness, 2004, “CEOs for Cities”, 2002 “Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Development,” Council on Competitiveness, 2006, Domestic Policy Council, Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2006 “Leading the World in Innovation” (New federal legislation geared to technology pipeline, STEM and enhanced research.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example present city university practices in Washington D.C. and Boston, MA. In Boston the city has gone so far as to assign a deputy director for economic development planning at the Boston Redevelopment Authority to the post of Special Assistant to the Mayor for University and College Relations and in Washington university campus planning is fully tied to District neighborhood planning requirements.

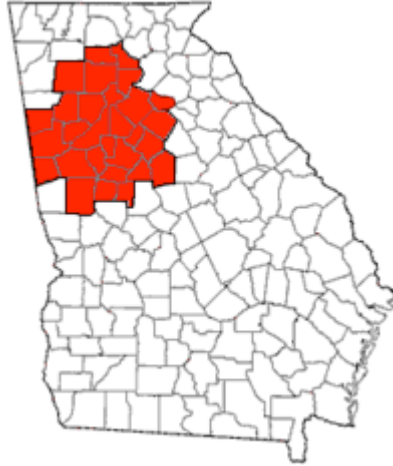
rooted cultural and business base, retained its regional preeminence as “Queen City of the South”.

The Civil Rights movement was a watershed for political leadership and urban development in these southern cities. While the Georgia state leadership was slow to embrace this portent for change or recognize its opportunities, the leaders of the city of Atlanta were open to a new social order and created alliances with minority leaders in the community to allow for leadership opportunities in business, education and local government. (Stone, 1989) A milestone occurred when Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Atlanta’s own, was awarded the Nobel Prize and the leaders of the city organized a gala celebration of this honor for the man, his message and the City. Collaborations built among the founding families of Atlanta, its political and business leadership and emerging leaders in the black communities were the foundation of new alliances that allowed Atlanta to address directly the racial divisiveness that distracted the leadership of other southern cities from establishing inclusive practices of civic governance and economic development. (Stone, 1989)

### **Post War Atlanta and the Reinvention of the “hub:” From Railroad to Commercial Airport**

If the last decades of the twentieth century represented a new more inclusive politics in Atlanta, the city/region’s approach to urban development represented something of a return to its original transportation hub strategy. With the emerging dominance of commercial air travel, Atlanta set about to build the major hub airport for the Southeast – leveraging its mid-route location between the northeast and Florida, mid-point location between the west coast and Europe and its ability to procure a vast tract of land owing to the lack of natural barriers to the city’s unlimited expansion. Within 30 years, Atlanta leapfrogged its “among equal” status to become the business and transportation crossroads of the Southeast – once more a hub aligned as much if not more with the centers of New York and Chicago than with its historical southern sisters and became the South’s largest city in population.

**Map 1**  
**Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Marietta**



*Common name: Metro Atlanta*  
*The 33-county Consolidated Metropolitan Area*

This rapid transformation of the regional status of Atlanta and its return to importance as a “hub” not only of the region but internationally, with its premier airport, has been accompanied by an equally historic shift in the population and the economy of the metropolitan area. It is the fourth fastest growing metropolitan area in the country with a 250 percent increase in population in the past three decades. The fundamental makeover of Atlanta-- with its airport, to its sprawling metropolitan status and the fluctuations in its downtown-- has made it a magnate for high tech industry and jobs that are the foundation of future changes that scholars predict could bring “two million more residents in the next twenty five years” (Brookings, 2000, 4) This growth is also an indication of how the region is perceived as a site of opportunity “for both whites and African-Americans, and it is a magnet for new immigrants from Latin America and Asia.” (Brookings, 2000, 4)

**Table 1. Atlanta Metropolitan Growth from 1960**  
**Census Data Shows Suburban Growth Acceleration: 2000-2004**

<b>POPULATION (x1000)</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>Core (City of Atlanta)</b>	419	416	394	425	497	487
<b>Inner Suburbs</b>	1,071	1,066	801	648	526	326
<b>Total Inner Area</b>	1,490	1,482	1,195	1,073	1,023	813
<b>2nd Ring</b>	2,582	2,217	1,458	917	547	334
<b>3rd Ring</b>	487	414	306	244	194	165
<b>4th Ring</b>	475	436	357	317	272	262
<b>Total Outer</b>	3,544	3,067	2,121	1,478	1,013	761



**Suburban**

**Metropolitan Area**            5,034        4,548        3,317        2,550        2,036        1,575

<b>GROWTH (x1000)</b>	<b>2000-2004</b>	<b>1990-2000</b>	<b>1980-2000</b>	<b>1970-1980</b>	<b>1960-1970</b>
<b>Core (City of Atlanta)</b>	3	22	(31)	(72)	10
<b>Inner Suburbs</b>	5	265	153	122	200
<b>Total Inner Area</b>	8	287	122	50	210
<b>2nd Ring</b>	365	759	541	370	213
<b>3rd Ring</b>	73	108	62	50	29
<b>4th Ring</b>	39	79	40	45	10
<b>Total Outer Suburban</b>	477	946	643	465	252
<b>Metropolitan Area</b>	486	1,231	767	514	461

<b>SHARE OF GROWTH</b>	<b>2000-2004</b>	<b>1990-2000</b>	<b>1980-2000</b>	<b>1970-1980</b>	<b>1960-1970</b>
<b>Core (City of Atlanta)</b>	0.6%	1.8%	-4.0%	-14.0%	2.2%
<b>Inner Suburbs</b>	1.1%	21.5%	19.9%	23.7%	43.4%
<b>Total Inner Area</b>	1.7%	23.3%	15.9%	9.7%	45.6%
<b>2nd Ring</b>	75.1%	61.7%	70.5%	72.0%	46.2%
<b>3rd Ring</b>	15.0%	8.8%	8.1%	9.7%	6.3%
<b>4th Ring</b>	7.9%	6.4%	5.2%	8.8%	2.2%
<b>Total Outer Suburban</b>	98.1%	76.8%	83.8%	90.5%	54.7%
<b>Metropolitan Area</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Core: City of Atlanta**

**Inner Ring: DeKalb & Fulton Counties, Excluding City of Atlanta**

**2nd Ring: 13 County Area, excluding Core & Inner Ring**

**3rd Ring: 20 County Area, excluding 13 county area**

**4th Ring: 33 County Area, excluding 20 county area (Consolidated metropolitan area per US Census)**

**Note: Urbanized area (area of continuous development) is largely contained within the 13 county areas.**

**SOURCE:** 1994-2005 www.demographia.com --- Wendell Cox Consultancy

However this growth has a decidedly mixed edge to it. The metropolitan area which once was no bigger than the core Fulton and Dekalb county areas has now exploded, encompassing twenty eight counties—so that it is not simply a core city and a surrounding suburban ring, but a city with literally four discernible rings of exurban development and sprawl (see Table 1 and Map 1). In short the growth of Atlanta, is in some ways, the paradigmatic example of low density development and sprawl. The impact of such sprawling regional development on the area’s infrastructure, water systems and natural environment is evidenced in major issues of environmental degradation, traffic congestion and uneven socio-economic disparities. For example, between 1960 and 1990, while the outside central city areas of the metropolitan region grew by over 240%, the population of the city of Atlanta declined by almost 100,000 or almost 18 percent. Such unevenness in population mirrors similar patterns of poverty, joblessness and racial segregation in the area. The core counties of Fulton and DeKalb, in which the city of Atlanta is found, contain between two thirds and three quarters of the region’s poor, jobless and racial minorities.

Between 1990 and the present, the region continued its rapid growth, expanding at a rate of over 150%. What is new about this growth is the fact that the city of Atlanta grew as well: between 1990 and 2000, adding new residents (22,000) for first time since 1970. This growth at the core appears to be ongoing, with 3,000 new residents moving to the city since 2000. While the preponderance of jobs, population and wealth is still in the growth areas of the region’s northern suburbs and the conditions of poverty, unemployment and racial segregation are still dramatically skewed to the urban core,<sup>9</sup> this new pattern of demographic growth in the city is not trivial. It is too soon to tell if it portends a permanent shift in the political geography of Atlanta but it certainly mirrors other changes in the institutional infrastructure of the region, beginning with the 1995 Olympics.

The Olympics was something of a second twentieth century watershed for Atlanta – especially the city and its urban institutions. For a city that had been “reinventing itself” for almost 50 years, snagging the Olympics and the major infrastructure investments it generated (MARTA subway, Centennial Olympic Park and its expansion of the core downtown to the west, expansion of the burgeoning airport, downtown infrastructure and park rejuvenations) was perceived as an affirmation that Atlanta was emerging into international city status—having finally validated its claim that it was more than a city in the south—it was the center of the “new South”—a “city too busy to hate.” That the process of securing the Olympics stretched back to the 1970’s with the presidency of

Jimmy Carter, the appointment of former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young as US delegate to the United Nations and a long-tenured powerful US Congressional delegation confirmed the advantaged re-alignment of the city and its region on the national , even international, scene.

In short, the post war history of Atlanta is in many ways the history of modern urban America, at its most dramatic: full of regional economic restructuring, the rise of sunbelt economies and the accompanying market-driven, low-density development of metropolitan sprawl. At the same time, Atlanta is a center of both uneven urban disparities, especially at its core and inner ring suburbs, and rapid urban redevelopment.. This increasingly marketized urban economy, stimulated by investments in the Olympics and the airport most dramatically, has been something of a hothouse environment for the growth and development of area's urban colleges and universities as well: the numbers of students and institutions of higher education are substantial—with over 180,000 students enrolled making the region the 7<sup>th</sup> most active center of higher education training in the U.S. It is unclear to us how much the regional environment of Atlanta has been a trigger for the development of universities or has otherwise been “triggered by” the rise of the higher education sector in Atlanta. The answer is probably more than a bit of both. But it is clear that the region has seen substantial development of its units of post secondary education (ARCHE, 2006).

It is equally clear that among the region's four year institutions, especially those located in the city, the demands they make upon the urban and, in turn, the challenges their urban context offers them in return are significant. Colleges and universities can no longer conceive of themselves as “enclaves”. They are a recognized part of the mix of urban change — key elements in the new “knowledge economy”<sup>10</sup> and substantial anchors of the region's employment sector. But we will argue below, universities are more than economic generators. With the population shifts described above, the *neighborhoods* of Atlanta are changing—the mix of residents altered by immigrants and forces of redevelopment and gentrification. Universities and colleges can and do play a role in such change. The new economic and community development of Atlanta is also part and parcel of the *planning* of the city—plans that can clearly be a part of the way the campus as urban space is planned as well. Campus planning is certainly a part of the body of plans that makes up the city whether it is viewed that way by its participants or not.

The shifting roles of institutions of higher education in all three of these changing areas (or the 360 degrees) of development—neighborhood development patterns, city plans for urban development, and the ways that research and training are paving the way for Atlanta's growing role in the high tech future of the global economy --all represent new challenges of policy and practice for everyone in the “new south” of Atlanta , not the least of which for Atlanta's universities.

The Atlanta region can claim well over fifty institutions of higher education, 32 of which are four year, accredited public and

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<sup>10</sup> Achieving Competitive Excellence, 2005, CEO's for Cities, 2002, Rhodes, 2001, Grogan and Proscio, 2000

private universities and it is estimated that they employ over 130,000 people in the area and contribute \$10.8 billion to the metropolitan economy. (Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE), 2006) It would be beyond the scope of this study to trace the practices of each of these institutions; therefore, as a result of direct work with the land development officers of certain key colleges and universities, we have chosen the three institutions mentioned above for case review. One is a private nationally recognized historic black college, Morehouse College, the second is an equally nationally known public research university, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the third is a public university with a decided urban mission that is also transforming into a national research and residential institution. All three of these institutions are located inside the governmental boundaries of the core city of Atlanta.

Each of the following case reviews of these three institutions concentrate, as the title of our program at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy suggests, on university land policy in the city. Each also could equally be about the roles that the neighborhood, the private sector or the city government take on when working with universities, but this study concentrates land relations through the lens of university practice. Finally each of the institutions we report on here have their own well practiced relations with each of the “sides” of the 360 degrees of the urban development process—be they neighborhood, economy or government. What we have chosen to do here is focus on the particular practices of each institution in one key area, without ignoring but also without focusing on the full range of development challenges that the university must undertake if it is to be a fully vested institution.

### III. THE UNIVERSITIES OF ATLANTA

#### Three Universities and 360 Degrees of Development

##### Development

Leveraging the investments of the Olympics and the wealth generated from the growth of the tax base from dramatic population and business growth (Atlanta ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> nationally as a corporate headquarters location), the last decade has been a significant one for the universities and colleges of Atlanta. In **Downtown** Atlanta, Georgia State University, has been challenged to meet a dramatic increase in enrollment demand for State higher education by blending the residential infrastructure provided by the Olympics with the unfulfilled physical planning agenda of Downtown Atlanta. In doing so, Georgia State has emerged as a residential, 4-year University – no longer a commuter based college—with a strong corporate presence at the center of the city. The historically black colleges<sup>11</sup> located in the **Westside** – a historic middle class black community that had mirrored the decline of the City center – organized around the Atlanta University Center<sup>12</sup> to redefine their role broadly in higher education and become an economic and

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<sup>12</sup> The historically black colleges of the Westside combine to make up the Atlanta University Center: Morehouse College, Spelman College, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Clark Atlanta University

cultural anchor for their constituencies. At the center of this development effort is Morehouse College which chose to be a “good neighbor” by partnering with other community entities in order to produce a truly collaborative urban redevelopment approach. Georgia Tech, located in **Midtown** just north of the city center, benefited from a mixed research and technology development strategy that helped redefine and rebuild the Institute and the catalyze the regional shaky Midtown economy through an infusion of capital investment in the physical plant of Midtown and the research infrastructure of the university.<sup>13</sup>

The leaders of these institutions all built upon the seed capital from the Atlanta Olympics and the ensuing investment of the City of Atlanta to pursue redevelopment of the urban core consistent the goals of the city and at the same time consistent with their ability to reinvent and redefine themselves and their roles within their host communities. After 40 years of isolation from the commercially driven real estate boom in the broader region of Atlanta, these three university centers (Downtown, Midtown and the Westside) within Atlanta’s core have emerged as the initiators of development activity. Particularly since an early 2000’s economic downturn, university institutional development has been a lead component (and often the “credit”) for mixed use developments that established real estate submarkets and produced related commercially developed office and retail(in the cases of Georgia Tech and Georgia State) and residential and commercial development (in all three cases, especially Morehouse College).

Coincident with the need for the higher education institutions to address the booming population growth and student demand in the State, community based or quasi-publicly funded planning efforts were afoot in these submarkets. These planning initiatives produced new “quality-of-life” zoning regulations and special zoning overlay districts within the areas adjacent to the campuses. Although not always obligated to comply with local zoning regulations (i.e. universities as instrumentalities of the State are exempt from local ordinances), each of these institutions actively participated in the land use planning efforts and were willing to comply with the spirit of the new or proposed urban design and planning guidelines. Institutional development in the early 2000’s instead produced “demonstration” projects that have become the touchstones for subsequent commercial developers. It is these projects that we concentrate in the following case descriptions, emphasizing recent land development practices of the universities of Atlanta that incorporate real estate development with good community and urban planning and design practice.

### Institutions

Georgia Institute of Technology and Georgia State University are units of the 35 institution Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. They are 2 of the 4

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<sup>13</sup> In Appendix A, a map of the 27 Neighborhood Planning Units of the city of Atlanta shows the location of the neighborhoods of the three institutions of higher education studied here are identified. The neighborhoods of Morehouse (Unit T) in the Westside, Georgia State (Unit M) Downtown and Georgia Tech (Unit E) in Midtown are relatively contiguous.

research institutions within the system. The Georgia university system is unusual in that all public colleges and universities in the state are resident within the Board of Regents System. While this consolidation provides strong political unity of support for higher education, a one-size-fits-all university system provides challenges within the system to differentiate and address the unique needs of individual units. The research institutions, for instance, have national competitive challenges that are not shared with 2-year commuter schools.

Capital resources are allocated across the entire system with no differentiation for the vastly different demands placed on the schools. Based on the competition for limited capital funds, the research institutions, in particular, have developed alternative procurement strategies to enhance and expand facilities and land. *Under the legislative priorities for the past decade, there have been no funds available for procuring land for campus expansion.* GSU, GT and other institutions that are land-constrained within densely urbanized communities have leveraged their endowment resources or revenue-producing activities (housing, parking, auxiliary services, sponsored research) and partnered with private developers or financial partners to enhance their physical campuses through acquisition and development.

Morehouse University is a private institution that is similarly constrained by its land boundaries, but also partners with private financing entities to enhance its campus and maintain its competitiveness. It is key here to note that Morehouse represents a truly different level of scale and purpose in terms of its mission as a teaching institution, its student size—less than ten percent of the student base represented by either Georgia Tech or Georgia State-- and its resource base, which is also significantly less than that of either GSU or Tech. The ability of Morehouse to play a role in the redevelopment of the community and advance the interests of its campus raises different challenges that make it at once qualitatively and structurally different from the other cases.

The cases will examine the strategies and challenges faced by the three Atlanta universities as they sought to implement campus growth and development that furthered the needs of their academic enterprises, but also enhanced the environment external to the campus. This 360 degree approach to development, maintaining support for campus needs *and* community redevelopment, is producing results far exceeding the investments made by the institutions. In the case of Georgia Tech, the university seeks to link the expansion of the Institute to the resuscitation of Midtown Atlanta and two residential neighborhoods (Home Park and English Avenue) that directly abut the campus. At Georgia State, the strategic decision to meet the State's burgeoning student demand by expansion of the residential population on campus is producing a 24/7 downtown population that has the potential to contribute to the re-vitalization of the core. Morehouse College and the other four institutions constituting the Atlanta University Center are reaching into their communities to support new housing, retail and commercial development that will help stabilize and return these neighborhoods to viability.

## IV. THE UNIVERSITY AS PLANNER: GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY<sup>14</sup>

### The University and the Case

Several billion dollars in development is underway in downtown Atlanta. Included in this total are numerous projects initiated by Georgia State University. Working to make itself part of the community, not apart from it, Georgia State, along with its private Foundation and business partners, developed a number of building projects that breathed life into the downtown area. Without a city master plan for the central core, the university took on a planning process and became, through its own planning and development process, the lead institution in redeveloping the downtown area. This case study describes the learning process in which the university and its partners were involved, how it built support, utilized a private foundation approach to float bond issues, leveraged private funds and developed the expertise required to rebuild itself and downtown Atlanta.

Georgia State University, now serving 40,000 students annually from 145 countries, was founded by the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1913 as its evening school of commerce. With an initial class of six students in rented downtown Atlanta office space, the school quickly developed a strong reputation for its academic training in business. Moving several times to accommodate increases in enrollment and academic scope, it eventually located permanently just east of Atlanta's central downtown Five Points area. By the late 1960's, the school had become Georgia State University with six colleges, a campus of a dozen buildings and an annual enrollment of 12,000 students.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, as the university grew, the downtown business community surrounding the campus lost much of its vitality. Many downtown corporations relocated to new space outside the downtown core. The state, county and city government operations continued to expand south of the campus, but remained physically isolated from the business community.

### Campus Plan/City Plan

Leadership. Carl Patton became president of Georgia State in 1992. An urban planner and academic leader, he had extensive experience in urban planning, university campus planning and economic development. He wanted the university to be a part of the community, not apart from it. Patton also believed that the university should focus on (i) measurable results and (ii) accountability.

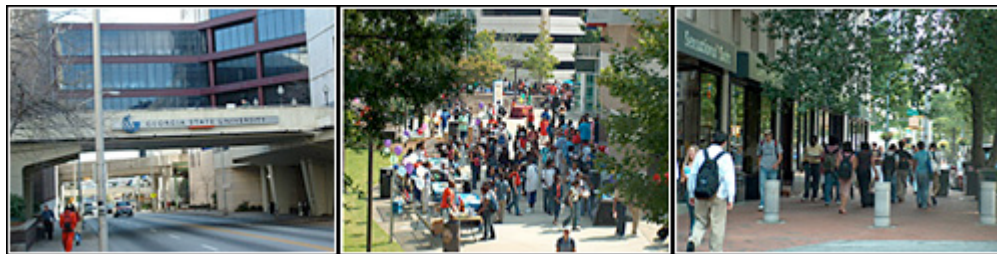
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<sup>14</sup> Much of the text of this case is directly extracted from a larger chapter on the topic by Carl Patton and Lawrence Kelley titled "The University as an Engine for Downtown Renewal in Atlanta," in David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel (eds.) *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*. M.E. Sharpe, 2005.

Plan. These two tenets guided Georgia State’s initial academic strategic plan that not only included annual action plans and budgets for the university but began to articulate an urban plan as well. This approach to campus planning was undertaken in a new environment of university-city cooperation. It strengthened the bond between the university and the central city and forged personal relationships that would prove to be decisive in future development opportunities. The strategic approach of a university undertaking a campus plan that informed broader urban master planning through a series of concrete activities of campus building as part of a system of measurable results and accountability helped assure supporters, donors and lenders that the university would deliver the projects it proposed. It also resulted in a successful approach to both *campus* planning and *city master plan* development.

Politics. To better position the university for development, Patton moved into active leadership roles with community organizations. This allowed him to help reshape much of the downtown environment as he introduced clear and measurable campus plans integrated into urban master planning outcomes. Under Patton’s leadership, Centennial Olympic Park Area, Inc. (COPA) leveraged housing development around Centennial Olympic Park and began to create a 24-hour environment. Patton went on to serve as chair of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), a business coalition striving to make Atlanta a more livable, workable and safe 24-hour city. Both COPA and CAP developed initiatives that enhanced the projects Georgia State was undertaking.

### **The Plan for Development**



Historically, many universities, even those located in the center of cities, have tried to separate themselves from the community. Sometimes they have done so with gates and fences. Georgia State did this with platforms and catwalks. The platform system at the center of the campus raised it above the streets and sidewalks and created sitting areas and plazas intended to be used only by faculty, staff and students. Today, the philosophy at Georgia State is quite different. The academic, strategic and fiscal plans focus on the university being intertwined with the community.

A conceptual master plan for future campus growth was developed in 1994, leading to the university’s 10-year blueprint for development, the Main Street Master Plan. The conceptual master plan was based on academic policies developed through the university strategic planning process led by the university’s provost and voted into policy by the university senate. These policies were then translated into physical needs using a



student-faculty team of planners and architects from neighboring Georgia Tech’s City and Regional Planning and Architecture programs. Faculty, students and staff from the university as well as downtown stakeholders and alumni participated in the planning process. This plan gave physical form to the concept of being part of the community by opening new and existing campus buildings to the city and its streets with large windows and new and inviting community-based spaces in which to sit, walk and congregate.

This conceptual master plan was further developed when the University System of Georgia mandated a template to guide planning at all of its 34 institutions. Because of the jump-start with the conceptual plan, Georgia State University was able to use the template to devise a more complete plan for its downtown campus. The refined master plan sought to transform one of the downtown streets that crosses through the heart of the campus into a pedestrian-friendly “Main Street” corridor through a traffic-calming project, making it even easier for students, faculty and staff to be a part of the urban environment.<sup>15</sup>

This plan was the product of widespread participation by faculty, students, staff, neighbors and alumni. It was presented widely in the local community and around the state and nation to alumni groups. It was placed on the university website where comments on it were received and shared. The plan as finalized focused on creating an inviting campus, outlined the construction of several new academic buildings and is based on the following principles:

- Integrate institutional buildings and their use into the city environment.
- Use existing and planned structures to help define and connect campus spaces.
- Use housing opportunities to attract the population necessary to create a viable community.
- Support transportation patterns that encourage pedestrian traffic and enhance the safety and convenience of Georgia State for students, faculty and staff.
- Create a sense of place and identity.
- Establish a central core of campus facilities and a secondary zone of support services.

The projects described in the remainder of the case study are directly responsive to the planning principles described above, in various ways. They are either buildings that place activities at the center of campus or at street level, facilities that encourage pedestrian traffic along important corridors or define the Main Street area, or are projects that attract people to the campus for living or recreation. The remainder of this case details certain key examples of the planning practices of urban land development.

## **The Projects, Funding and City Plans**

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<sup>15</sup> Funding to plan for the traffic-calming project for the Decatur Street corridor, with drop-off lanes, wider sidewalks and landscaping, has been received from the Atlanta Regional Commission. Construction funds await the issuance of a state transportation bond issue.

## Financing

Georgia State's dramatic growth in the early 1990's increased the need for more teaching, research and administrative space, and these needs were then specified in the Main Street plan. With a rapidly growing state university system of 34 institutions, however, public funding was not available to meet Georgia State's facility needs. In a good year, the state might provide a total of \$100 million for capital projects for all of the state's public colleges and universities combined, and a typical project at one of the research universities could be \$50 million or more. In addition, individual institutions in Georgia are prohibited from issuing bonds themselves.

To secure the capital for new facilities, Georgia State would have to find funding sources to supplement state appropriations. This led to a decade of new institutional practices in leasing, acquiring, and building new facilities, with each deal being more complicated than the last. To gain financial flexibility, the university worked through its private foundation, the Georgia State University Foundation (GSUF).

GSUF played several important roles in university development that ranged from financial intermediary to bond issuer to fund source. In Georgia, state entities are not allowed to contract for services for more than one year at a time. This means that a university by itself is not able to float a bond issue or enter into an agreement to lease a facility for more than one year at a time. In this situation, it is impossible for a university to enter into a real estate deal without a third party who is willing to act as an intermediary and accept the risk of one-year contracts. This is one of the roles that GSUF played.

An entity such as GSUF can also serve as a source of risk capital, helping to finance up-front costs of development, such as title searches, options on land, and legal fees. GSUF directly funded some of these costs for the university and loaned the funds for other expenditures to be paid back from project costs.

GSUF also helped raise private funds to cover the gap between state funding and total costs for some projects and as the entity that would arrange bond financing for other projects. It also purchased property outright that it in turn leased to the university to meet pressing space needs that could not be met by the state.

## Projects

Through the intermediary financial, ownership and leasing capacity of the GSUF, Georgia State was able to acquire and renovate a host of office buildings in the Downtown Area. The first GSUF project was the acquisition in 1992 of a 136,500 square foot office building that it now leases to the university. The university pays a square-foot rental cost. The facility houses office, classroom, and research functions and creates a net cash flow for the Foundation. GSUF leases the facility to the university on a year-to-year basis since, as mentioned above, state law prohibits the university from entering into multiple-year leases.

GSUF then acquired control of three buildings and the land under two of them for support of the university's music program and the development of a center for performing arts in 1994. The project included the renovation of the three buildings. Financing was achieved through ten million dollars in private contributions to GSUF and four million dollars in bonds issued by the Downtown Development Authority of the City of Atlanta, with the proceeds assigned to The University Financing Foundation (TUFF), an independent foundation supporting higher education development.

GSUF leases the facilities from TUFF and sublets them to the university through a series of one-year renewable leases. The lease payments are serviced with operating revenue from the performing arts center as well as the university's general operating budget. The fifty-year ground lease for the performing arts center site will result in the reversion of the building to the owner of the land at the end of the lease period. Ownership of the other two buildings, which houses the School of Music, will revert to GSUF when the debt is expired.

Also in 1994, the university acquired part of the site for its new student activities center through an agreement with the City of Atlanta, negotiated between the mayor and the university president. The university paid half of the cost of the needed site in the form of a five hundred thousand dollar line of credit against which city employees could draw to finance their education at Georgia State. The city's new police chief will be the most recent city employee to take advantage of this arrangement. The bond issue for the student activities center is being paid off through a dedicated student activity center fee.

Another real estate deal in which the university was involved enabled the former downtown Atlanta headquarters of First Union Bank to become a condominium development. GSUF was offered the building as a gift, but concluded that renovation for academic needs would not be feasible. A deal was struck in which First Union traded the bank building to a local newspaper in exchange for a line of advertising credit; the newspaper then gave the building to GSUF which then sold the building to a local developer at a price that allowed the building to be converted into condominiums. The bank gained advertising and wrote the building off of its books at its basis value. The newspaper gained a charitable contribution, and the new housing near campus benefited the university and added a little more life to the downtown.<sup>16</sup>

## **The University and Post-Olympics Development**

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<sup>16</sup> The University has since also acquired the historic Commerce Building, housing the Commerce Club, a private club in which many important civic decisions had been made. Acquiring the building allowed the Commerce Club to downscale and rent a reduced amount of space from the University, enabling it to stay in business. The university uses the balance of the building for meetings and office space. The building acquisition was financed by gifts from NationsBank, now Bank of America, and a private foundation. Substantial legal work went into clearing up the ground leases under the building, including canceling a provision that the building be torn down at the end of the ground lease and the land be returned to the original owners

The university next stepped up to answer the question about what would happen to downtown Atlanta in the wake of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Georgia State had served as a commuter school for decades. But that would change with the establishment of a housing department in 1993, in anticipation of the 1996 Summer Olympics. Historically being prohibited from developing housing by the Regents of the University System, the university agreed to purchase the Olympic Village after the games for use as undergraduate housing when other potential users backed out. The Regents issued \$85 million in debt for the purchase. Student rent payments service the debt.

The Georgia State Village opened in the fall of 1996 with a 2,000-student capacity. Operated as an auxiliary service, the facility has developed an annual waiting list of 400 to 800 students. Located on nine acres a mile and a half north of the campus on the edge of downtown, and along one of the city's rapid rail transit lines, each resident receives a transit pass paid for with his or her rent.

### **New Construction**

To construct a student recreation center as the next phase of adding student life to campus, GSUF leased a campus parking lot from the university in 1998 as a means of putting a hold on a future development site. The Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) issued twenty-year bonds with the proceeds loaned to GSUF for the construction and equipping of the recreation center and the expansion of an existing parking deck to replace the lost parking. The recreation center is located across the street from the student activities center that had been built in 1995.

The recreation center bonds are special limited obligation bonds payable pursuant to a promissory note between the ADA and GSUF, which leases the facility to the university on an annual basis. A recreation fee paid by the students provides the revenue stream for payment of the lease. Ownership of this building will revert to the university when the bonds are retired. The recreation center was opened in August 2001 and serves approximately 2,500 users a day.

### **Crossing Peachtree Street: Community Push-Back and University Change**

Over the years, the campus had grown westward, crossing Peachtree Street to acquire office space to house a growing faculty. Because there was no classroom building serving the three colleges housed west of Peachtree Street, it was essential that a classroom facility be constructed in this vicinity. Virtually all of the city blocks in this area were occupied by recently renovated or older substantial buildings, save one block with vacant structures scattered among retail and office uses.

The Regents agreed to provide \$23 million toward a \$40 million classroom building, but following a long-standing practice, would not provide funding to purchase land in downtown because of its high cost and an anti-urban bias of the legislature. This financial shortfall left the university the challenge of funding privately the acquisition of

the city block, demolition of the existing structures on the site and part of the new construction.

The acquisition of the city block was controversial since some of the derelict buildings had historical connections. One was a former restaurant that had been the site of sit-ins during desegregation. Another was a building designed by the firm of a famous local architect. A small but vocal group of historic preservationists held that the university should renovate the old buildings. The university's position was that the result would be an inefficient and costly structure yielding poor results for its students and an equally poor accounting of both public and private funds.

The preservationists held a small rally opposing the university's acquisition of the block, and members of the university who would benefit from the new building held an anti-rally punctuated by music played by students and faculty of the School of Music, which would have practice rooms on the top floor of the proposed building. A flurry of pro and con letters appeared in the local paper, and one newspaper writer, whose architect father had added a false façade to one of the buildings decades earlier, took on opposition to the project as a personal cause. The irony was that all but one of the landowners was happy to sell. An old, well-loved greasy spoon on the block was even guaranteed a relocation space in the new building. The lone holdout would not negotiate a selling price.

The university successfully acquired the block using a court-appointed Special Master to resolve the price of the last parcel. Because of the controversy over acquiring the site, the university president appointed a citizen advisory committee to give advice to the architects. The committee was chaired by a highly regarded local businessman and included the dean of the College of Architecture at Georgia Tech, individuals who had sold their property on the block to the university, preservationists, alumni and downtown business owners. The committee reviewed the architectural design and provided continuing input to the architectural firm designing the building. This assured that the building would fit into the context of the neighborhood and continue the street fabric in the historical area. The result was a building that even former critics describe as breathtaking.

During this process, GSUF raised more than 13 million dollars so the land could be gifted to the university for the construction of the classroom facility. The building opened for classes in the fall of 2002, bringing 3,000 students per hour to the center of the city.

### **A. Conclusion**

Georgia State University has acted as an engine for downtown renewal in Atlanta. The leadership of the university worked with the business community and the city, allowing Georgia State to develop the facilities it needs to meet its mission. Having a master plan that identified the academic goals of the university and advanced it as an active member of the downtown community led to a mutual understanding that helped to promote success.

The university involved community leaders and neighbors in developing the campus physical plans. Community advisory groups worked with the university to be sure facility designs fit with the neighborhood, and the business leaders helped Georgia State in its capital campaigns both by giving and by opening doors to gifts from others. Positive relationships with the mayor and city staff led to assistance with certain projects and flexibility in code interpretation.

To some extent, Georgia State has been its own worst enemy in these development endeavors. The university's initial investments in downtown renewal did keep the lights on, but at the same time, these investments pushed up the price of the real estate – for the university as well as others. Georgia State's actions that resulted in new life in old buildings also whetted the community's desire to have the university take over old buildings that would "save the downtown." Even though Georgia State made it as clear as possible that university projects would be focused on meeting the academic and service goals of the institution, there have been projects brought to the university "for the good of the community" that have been rejected. In fact the present director for real estate at Georgia State indicated recently that, as a rule of thumb, it costs the university substantially more to renovate an existing building for academic use than it does to build a new structure. In a way he said "we have become victims of our own success at revitalizing the buildings of our sector of Downtown. We are challenged by increasingly land prices for new construction and challenged by the innovation costs of buildings the city would wish we could renovate."<sup>17</sup>

To meet the mission of the university and serve the students, faculty, staff, and guests who enjoy the campus daily, Georgia State has been an active player in renewing downtown Atlanta. Students, faculty and staff are now involved in, and are a part of, the community. The Georgia State presence is obvious on the streets. This involvement has certainly been to the benefit of the university, and, we believe, also to the benefit of downtown.

## **V. THE UNIVERSITY AS NEIGHBOR: MOREHOUSE COLLEGE<sup>18</sup>**

### **The College and the Case**

Morehouse College has as its motto the mission to develop "leaders – men who make profound differences in society through service and a commitment to excellence". As such it is

- Ranked, for the third consecutive time, as the number one college in the nation for educating African American Students by Black Enterprise magazine,<sup>19</sup>
- Recognized by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top feeder schools for the 15 most prominent graduate and professional schools in the country;<sup>20</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Lawson on a tour of the downtown area with Lincoln Work shop, fall, 2006

<sup>18</sup> This case is a product of a collaboration with Andre Bertrand of Morehouse College and his colleague Dawn Packnett, a member of *The City, Land and the University* advisory group.

<sup>19</sup> BE, October 2004

- One of only two Historically Black Colleges or Universities to produce three Rhodes Scholars.

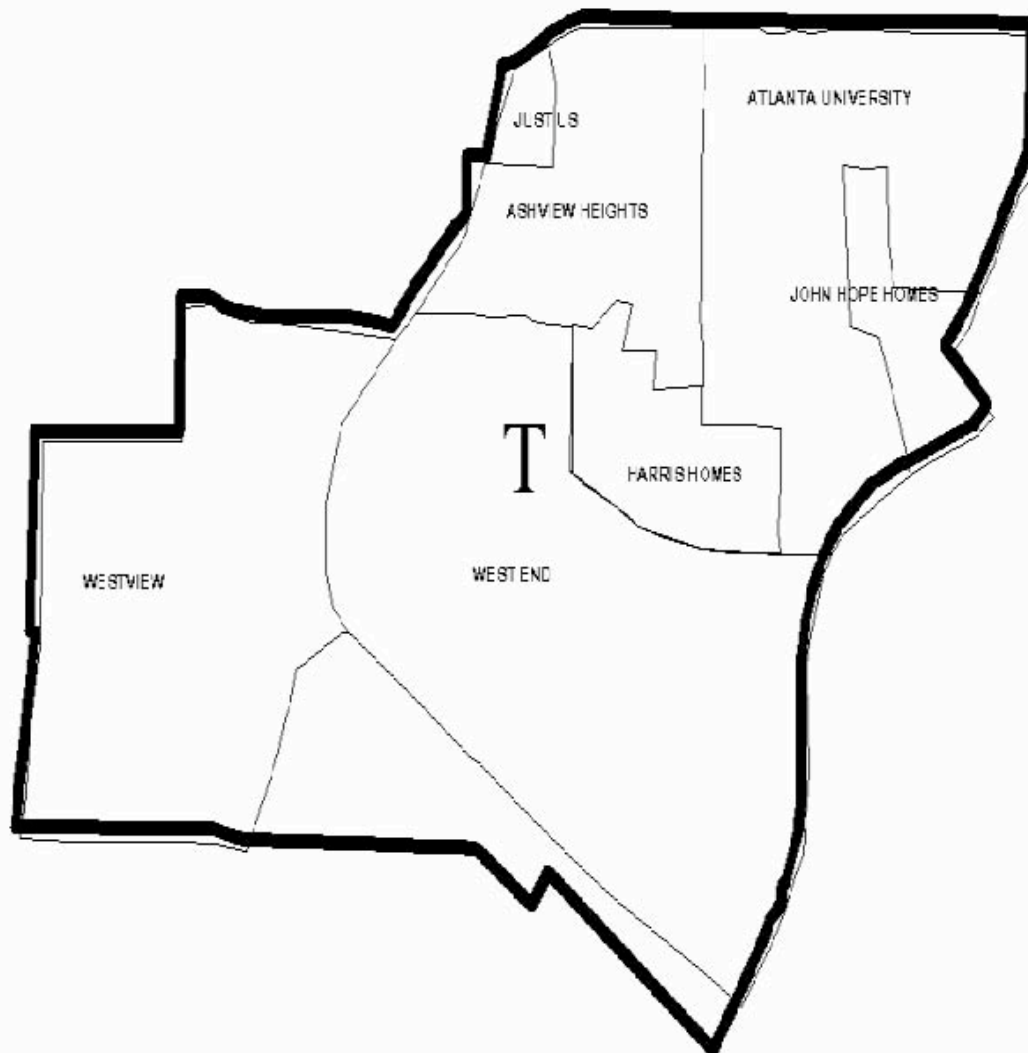
These accomplishments are impressive evidence of the College's long history of educating African American men. Founded in 1867 as the Augusta Institute, Morehouse College is the nation's largest liberal arts college for men conferring bachelors' degrees on more African American men than any other college or University in the United States. With an enrollment of approximately 3,000 students, the College is located on 61 acres just three miles southwest of downtown Atlanta. Morehouse College is a member of the Georgia Research Alliance, the Associated Colleges of the South, and the Atlanta University Center (AUC), a consortium of five historically black institutions, including Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse School of Medicine and Spellman College. Morehouse College is a member of Neighborhood Planning Unit T (NPU – T). The College, along with the other AUC institutions, is one of the largest employers in the area, a fact that has little impact on the concentration of poverty and severe economic deterioration that has engulfed this community.

### **The Surrounding Community: Neighborhood Planning Unit – T**

The neighborhood surrounding Morehouse College and the AUC was once a thriving, economically diverse middle class African American community comprised of AUC faculty, business owners, teachers, doctors, dentists and other professionals. By 1990, all of this had changed. With the end of segregation in the 1960's, this neighborhood, like many black middle class neighborhoods all across the United States, suffered from severe economic decline and disinvestment as black middle class residents moved away in search of better housing. The urban renewal programs of the 1970's and Housing and Urban Development policies changed public housing. Once temporary housing for the working class in a tight, segregated real estate market with few affordable housing options, by the 1980's public housing communities were housing of last resort for very low-income residents. By 1990, the number of people living in public housing with a generational dependence on public assistance had increased.

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<sup>20</sup>WSJ, September 2003



Anchored by more than 2700 units of public housing with very-low income,<sup>21</sup> largely unemployed residents living within a one-mile radius of the Morehouse College campus,<sup>22</sup> the community was powerless as single family homes became transient rooming houses or unkempt vacant lots. This property became a breeding ground for crime and anti-social behavior. The neighborhood, fractured by the location of one or two of these distressed properties on each block, began to reflect this lowest common denominator. By the mid 1990's, this neighborhood was, for all practical purposes, a

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<sup>21</sup> The south side area of Atlanta is renowned for a long-term structural and economic dislocation. The per capita income of NPU-T is \$10,550, 48.9% of the 2000 United States average of \$21,587. With an average unemployment rate of almost 21.47% or four times the national unemployment rate of 5.77%. NPU-T is located in the most distressed sector of the Atlanta metropolitan statistical area.

<sup>22</sup> Public housing communities within a one-mile radius of Morehouse College include Eagan Homes, John Hope Homes, University Homes, Herndon Homes and Harris Homes. To date, all but University Homes has been revitalized or undergoing revitalization using public private partnerships and tax credits. However, the revitalization has done little to positively impact the low-income status of the residents.



slum. The AUC schools in response to these deteriorating conditions would simply build their walls higher and focus their campus activities inward.

In preparation for the 1995 Summer Olympic Games, the AUC institutions, like the rest of Atlanta, underwent a revitalization transformation. Morehouse College, Morris Brown and Clark Atlanta University, were each designated Olympic venues and, as such, became heavily engaged in land acquisition and related activities. These revitalization activities, although ostensibly for the games, would have the long-term effect of supplementing the Colleges' campus master plans and were, for the most part, inwardly focused and of little benefit to the surrounding neighborhood. This inward focus of the schools' master plans would minimize the impact of the attendant societal problems generated by this economically depressed neighborhood.

Morehouse College's circumstances were different. The neighborhood actually abuts the campus on three sides and included land that the school ultimately planned to use for future growth. The proximity of the neighborhood coupled with Atlanta's community-based Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) model requiring community consultation and approval of development plans,<sup>23</sup> gave the surrounding neighborhood leverage to encourage Morehouse to consider taking a major role in the revitalization of the community. The community used this leverage to challenge Morehouse College to use its capital, both intellectual and monetary, in a way that would also benefit the community. With a change in administration in 1995, Morehouse College would give the community's challenge serious consideration.

### **Morehouse College Becomes a Member of the Community**

*“My vision was that my alma mater would become among the very finest private, undergraduate liberal arts colleges in the world. Period. I believe one of the keys to achieving that vision is through leadership development.”*

*Dr. Walter Massey, immediate Past- President  
of Morehouse College*

In 1995, Walter E. Massey became the ninth President of Morehouse College. And, with the advent of the Massey administration, Morehouse College accepted the community's challenge to refocus its campus planning to incorporate the community. Through this incorporation, Dr. Massey suggested that the College align its master planning activities with the planning activities of the community, not simply because this made good community development sense for a “land locked” institution, but because including the college in the community would also be an avenue of good ‘leadership development’ for students and faculty at Morehouse College. The notion that Morehouse would no longer be an enclave of student training but a partner in providing responsible community leadership to the community and the students thereby offering learning through

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<sup>23</sup> Ironically, the NPU model was a product of the mayoral administration of Maynard Jackson (a Morehouse man, Class of 1956).

experience under real life conditions was a key element of Massey's reinvigoration of the Morehouse mission. This incorporation of the community into the Morehouse College agenda was soon apparent throughout the campus:

- Participation in the Morehouse College service program would now have a community development opportunity.
- The College's physical plan called for the construction of Davidson House, home of the President, on land located across the street from the campus. The President of Morehouse College would live, not behind the hallowed walls of the College, but across the street from the school – a member of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The Emma and Joe Adams Public Service Institute, a clearinghouse for Morehouse College's community service activities and strategies was created.
- The President conducts regular community breakfast meetings with the community leaders at Davidson House to discuss community issues.
- Massey was appointed by the Mayor to the Atlanta committee for Progress a consortium of business and academic leaders brought together for the purpose of collaborating with the City of Atlanta on economic development initiatives and guiding the City's business recruitment efforts.

This connection to the community was more than a recalibration of the Morehouse mission, it also was a strategic ingredient in gaining the support of the community for campus land development. The requirements of the Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit<sup>24</sup> process pushed Morehouse as much as the new 'leadership development' mission to new practices of neighborhood partnership—whereby the institution would be viewed less as a catalyst of neighborhood change and more of a *partner* in such change, like all other neighbors. This combination of campus development with community development was assigned to the Vice President of Campus Operations—sending a clear message both inside the college and in the community that Morehouse's relations with its neighbors would not only be the concern of the President of the college but would be the responsibility a senior administrative officer with staff and budgetary authority.

The Vice President for Campus Operations oversees a department has the primary responsibility for acquiring land, procuring planning consultants and coordinating campus master plan activities with the students, staff and faculty. Assigning this senior administrator to the community relations task was therefore, administratively sound as well. Because of the NPU system, land use regulations, such as obtaining a zoning variance for the number of parking spaces required for an institutional building, were subject to community approval. The past history between the college and the community on such matter was a contentious one. Clearly, Morehouse College's ability to develop its campus was in the hands of its neighbors and therefore it behooved the institution to reassess its role as part of the community. On the other hand, in order for its neighbors to make fully informed decisions on such real estate matters, they needed information about

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<sup>24</sup> Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit System at <http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/neighborhoodlist.aspx>

the inwardly focused master plans and growth projections of Morehouse and allof its AUC cohort.

### **The Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative (MCCRI)**

The combination of community oversight in the NPU, the desire of Morehouse to advance its own land development interests in the neighborhoods immediately abutting the campus and the limited funding options available to a college of Morehouse’s size and resources pushed the college in the direction of a model of community development that was not simply one of institutional leadership, but was, first and foremost, one of *membership* in a cohesive community group working toward common community goals (including those of the college).

The college began by identifying not the plans of its campus but the revitalization target area of the broader community as the site of its development goals. Among the single family and multi-family rental units of the neighborhoods *surrounding* Morehouse were also five public housing communities (See the lower part of map in Appendix B). Altogether these various housing units contained almost 15,000 people.. The public housing units essentially fractured, and indeed continue to impact, the neighborhood, isolating remaining pockets of single-family homes between their more densely populated, high-crime sites. To the north and west of the campus was a larger segment of single family transient rental homes (See the upper part of the map in Appendix B) But it was the isolated fragments of ownership homes, nearest the campus and ‘salted’ among the public housing communities, that had slipped through the planning cracks and were not, by the late 1990s, included in any agency revitalization plan. As a result, a goodly portion of the neighborhood abutting Morehouse College was, aside from public housing programs, without a development strategy or assistance,. These residential “holes” in the redevelopment plans became the target area of the Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative (MCCRI).

MCCRI was later expanded to include a programmatic component that would generate resources to help all community residents—both north and directly abutting the campus-- establish and implement revitalization goals. With a staff of three, MCCRI successfully generated over \$1.25 million in program funding<sup>25</sup> to assist the eleven community organizations within NPU-T<sup>26</sup> using the following model:

1. Create a cohesive and structured forum for interaction with all of the stakeholders and community groups;

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<sup>25</sup> Morehouse College received a grant award from the Fannie Mae Foundation in 1998 in the amount of \$250,000 and two HBCU program grants in 1999 (\$400,000) and 2002 (\$516,414). In 2005, MCCRI in partnership with UCDC received a Community and Economic Development grant in the amount of \$220,000.

<sup>26</sup> The eleven community organizations include Ashview Heights Neighborhood Association, Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Association, John O. Chiles Resident Association, JUST US, It’s Our Neighborhood, University Villas Resident Association, West End Coalition Group, Inc., West End Neighborhood Development, Inc., West End Merchant Coalition and Westview Community Organization.

2. Conduct a community needs assessment and plan of action; and
3. Most importantly, implement the plan of action.

Through MCCRI, Morehouse College and the surrounding neighborhood were now inextricably linked—each holding a full membership stake in the MCCRI and in the CDC that they reinvigorated and tasked with neighborhood renovation and land development.

### **The University Community Development Corporation (UCDC)**

The forum for community interaction began to take shape and its vehicle would be the University Community Development Corporation (UCDC). UCDC was formed in 1988 by the AUC institutions, and until now, it was a seldom used forum for the schools to meet with their community opposition and to defend themselves against community complaints. But in this new process, the UCDC was refocused as a tool for the community to work with the AUC institutions to develop a revitalization plan that encompassed the *entire* community, not just the individual campuses. Again the change here was profound Morehouse and its academic partners should join with the rest of the community partners of the NPU-T area as members of a full community development effort.

Established to create affordable housing opportunities in NPU-T, UCDC is a non-profit corporation structured with a board of directors who select an executive director, Pete Hayley, who along with staff handles the day-to-day operation of the corporation. The board of directors is comprised of twenty-two members including members from each of the AUC institutions, community groups and other stakeholders. The AUC institutions and the proceeds from investment and land acquisition activities primarily fund UCDC operations. At present the UCDC has emerged as the most active developer in the area with 18 new, infill, homes, 25 renovated homes completed, new CDC ownership of six additional land parcels, and plans completed and development ready to start on fourteen new townhomes. All of this in the most economically distressed neighborhood in Atlanta. To inform this development, the revitalization area described in the MCCRI has created its own set of community-based objectives defining the “development” agenda in the UCDC area of NPU-T through a two year needs assessment process:

### **Needs Assessment – The Urban Summit**

The community, through UCDC, hired a planning consultant to conduct a review of each of the AUC institutions’ master plans and assess the neighborhood conditions in the target area. After an arduous two-year process fraught with contentious community meetings, the result was a target area master plan aptly named *Blueprint for Development* which became the neighborhood’s blueprint for implementation and development.

The Urban Summit was the most critical meeting of the community needs assessment process. For the first time, the schools would share their master plans and growth patterns with the community. This meeting of neighborhood residents, officials of the eleven community organizations and representatives from the government could then

discuss the most pressing needs of the community and, from these needs, begin the process for a planned development in NPU-T.

As the result of the Urban Summit, the community reached consensus about the key elements of a viable community:

**Increase in Housing Ownership** – The community concluded that the dearth of clean, decent safe rental housing for families, contributed to the decline of the neighborhood, especially the concentration of very low-income residents. Before the public housing revitalizations and the UCDC rehabilitations, many of the housing units were rental units, (family housing in public housing or dilapidated apartment units) for very low-income families or, even worse, rooming houses with transient tenants living week to week. Drug dealers, who could launder drug proceeds through “flipping” the property and inflating the real estate prices, owned many of these rooming houses. As a consequence, land prices have skyrocketed.

**Income Diversity** – As there were few homeownership opportunities in the community, many of the residents were primarily low or very low-income receiving some type of government subsidy. The community realized that income diversity was needed, but should be accomplished through the addition of new residents without the displacement of existing community members.

**Safe, Livable Neighborhood** – The community concluded that the most important element of a viable community was safety and freedom to live without crime and fear for safety.

The college, as a member of the community, has signed on to these objectives. Through this process, the conditions of the summit and the needs of the campus have been joined -- in some ways, due to the ways in which the mission of the college and the *real politique* of the NPU process are “inextricably joined,” as one administrator put it.

## **Conclusions**

In this case we see, again, the importance of strong institutional leadership. A new president was able to take the traditional Morehouse mission of “leadership,” reinvigorate it with a community-based approach which ironically calls upon the academic institution to be less a “leader” and more an engaged “member” of the community. The result has been a successful development approach for the college. The requirements of city planning and the CDC tool combine to give Morehouse a clear context for engaging the community in a development process that blends campus and neighborhood. The university participation in a community-based needs assessment summit has the added advantage of producing a collaborative, “neighborly” development discourse that places community-wide objectives, rather than college objectives, at the forefront of the university-community development relationship.

One of the ironies of a CDC collaboration built around goals of “income diversity and “home ownership” is the fact that, as the development proceeds, many existing community members, especially residents presently renting in the neighborhoods, will likely be replaced if the transient rental rooming houses are eliminated and replaced with single-family homes. The success of the community development model underway in the Morehouse community is such that as the neighborhood improves, the potential for displacement of existing community members has been heightened and the process is creating its own set of tensions.

If renters face pressure of displacement in one direction, present homeowners, especially those living on fixed incomes, are facing pressure as the taxable values of their properties begin to rise in the redeveloping area. The director of the CDC reports that there are already several examples, especially among the elderly homeowners, of increased inability to pay the increased taxes attached to rising property costs. In short, the threat of gentrification is squarely on the agenda of the members of the MCCRI and their major development tool the UCDC.

## **VI. THE UNIVERSITY AS “ENTREPRENEUR”: GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

### **The Institute and the Case: From “Tech School” to “Global Player”**

Georgia Tech was founded in 1888, affectionately derided as “The Trade School on North Ave” by its rival State colleges. However, to read the original mission of the Institute with its three-part attention to teaching, research and economic development was to see the university as a part of a larger developmental agenda, one that embedded technical higher education in the conversion of Georgia’s economy from an agrarian to a manufacturing base. Georgia Tech, in 2007 is equally ambitious in that it seeks to define the technological institution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But a decade ago this technical future seemed less secure. In 1996, Wayne Clough was hired as the new President of Georgia Tech. He arrived to find a physical plant and faculty and staff organization that were not commensurate with the reputation of the Institution. The institution was saddled with significant deferred capital investment and insufficiently endowed to provide resource support to advance its mission. The President’s early analysis of the core mission and lack of research focus argued for a new campus master plan and capital campaign to fund the initiative. In the 10 years since his arrival, the campus has grown from 9 million to 13 million square feet of facilities. The Georgia Tech endowment has been increased from \$250 million to \$1 billion. Total capital investment in the campus and construction of a new campus in Savannah, Georgia over the last 5 years is approximately \$1.2 billion, most of which is privately financed.

In his first status report to the Regents, Clough acknowledged a physical plant that was obsolete for a major research institution, an inability for the State to fund all the capital requirements and acquisition needs for the Institute, and a desire to not only correct deferred investment, but to advance the Institute into a higher competitive position

among US schools. The 1996 Campus Master Plan (“CMP”) was the first comprehensive evaluation of the physical plan in over 25 years and established a 3,000,000 SF expansion and rehabilitation program costing over \$1 billion. The schedule for this campus plan was set at 15-20 years. To assist in funding this program, the Institute, embarked on a capital campaign to double its then, \$265M endowment. When the campaign ended in 2001, the Institute had increased its endowment to \$1 billion, ranking it 7<sup>th</sup> among public US institutions. By 2004, GT had completed its 20 year construction program envisioned in the 1996 Campus Master Plan and implemented Technology Square – 1,000,000 square foot project and its associated 800,000 SF private ‘sister’ project flanking 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Midtown, called Centergy. Neither of these projects was even contemplated in the 1996 Plan.

### C. The Projects of Midtown:

The US Interstate I75/I85 “Connector” is a 14 lane highway that bisects the core of the City. (See Image) Across the Connector to the east of the campus is Midtown Atlanta. In the early 1990’s, while Midtown was blessed with many of the City’s cultural institutions (Woodruff Arts Center, High Museum of Art, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Fox Theater, Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center, Atlanta Botanical Garden), it had also become an economically challenged area with over 60% of its land inventory consisting of vacant lots served by poor infrastructure and even poorer communicative connectivity.

The Connector, with all its 14 lanes, had expanded to become a defacto barrier between the eastern edge of the Georgia Tech campus and the seedy side, Midtown. The Midtown Alliance was established in the mid-1980’s by business leaders in the district to re-vision and promote the redevelopment of Midtown. In 2000, *Blueprint Midtown* was produced to promulgate new zoning, land use and infrastructure improvements for the area. A self-taxing district was created by the resident businesses to generate seed equity to leverage public funding for infrastructure improvements. The City of Atlanta adopted the zoning recommendations to be administered by an appointed citizen-based Development Review Committee. The infrastructure design was completed to a detailed level and public funding was procured through ISTEAs grants. Everything was ready, but the main players. Speculative land developers had tainted title to numerous developable parcels in Midtown and a substantial part of the area was tied up in litigation, foreclosure and bankruptcy.

Three local institutions, one federal, one state and one utility, acted independently of each other, but in synch with the area plan, or *Blueprint Midtown* to break the development stalemate in Midtown. A collaboration of institutional master planners and the local planning staff of the Midtown Alliance allowed both the city and three key institutions to trigger new development:

- The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, one of the largest of the 12 FRB districts, relocated from downtown to a particularly derelict but centrally prominent full block on Peachtree Street in Midtown. The Fed acquired the parcel adjacent to the Midtown MARTA station on 10<sup>th</sup> Street and sold off approximately 1/3 of the

site to a private developer for a mixed use, high rise housing and office project. On the remaining portion of the block facing Peachtree Street, the Fed constructed a new headquarters designed by Robert A.M. Stern in a classical post-modern style that made it an instant and prominent landmark and a proof project that major investment in Midtown by institutional investors was a good move.

- BellSouth Company, headquartered in Atlanta, developed a new corporate agenda to rationalize its disparate Atlanta real estate portfolio into 3 major nodes. The siting criteria for new facilities required immediate adjacency to a MARTA stop. In Midtown, the existing 2,000,000 SF headquarters was augmented by another 1,000,000 SF of space built on 3 adjacent city blocks on Peachtree Street in Midtown. BellSouth's architects adopted the Blueprint Midtown infrastructure standards prior to their official adoption into the zoning ordinance to physically demonstrate a commitment to strengthening the vision for Midtown.

The third institution that moved to anchor development in Midtown was Georgia Tech and its endowment trustee, Georgia Tech Foundation. The university sought to open a new portal to the campus across the 14 lane Connector via a new 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. While the initial program sought to develop an expanded continuing education and hospitality program in Midtown, it became immediately clear that a critical mass of campus facilities would need to co-locate across the Connector into Midtown to insure the success of the expanded campus precinct. A tenuous step would surely fail – a major gamble was required for any chance of success. Working with the GT Foundation, a sole purpose partnership of 3 developers and a special initiative funding from the Governor's office for a telecommunications research lab, a program was developed to include GT programs that would benefit from physical extension into the business and commercial community:

- A new college building for the Business School;
- A hotel and conference center to support the hospitality and outreach demand for Georgia Tech and the Atlanta business community;
- A global learning center that would house the GT continuing education program, but also service the expanding requirements for the international University to trade content among its disparate units and affiliates;
- A building for the university's Economic Development Institute;
- The previously mentioned Telecommunications Research Laboratory;
- A new and expanded headquarters for the GATV tech incubation facility to include ATDC technology incubator, Venture Labs and other business development programs;
- Uncommitted commercial office space that would provide co-location opportunities for commercial companies to locate and benefit from the connections with the Georgia Tech campus community.

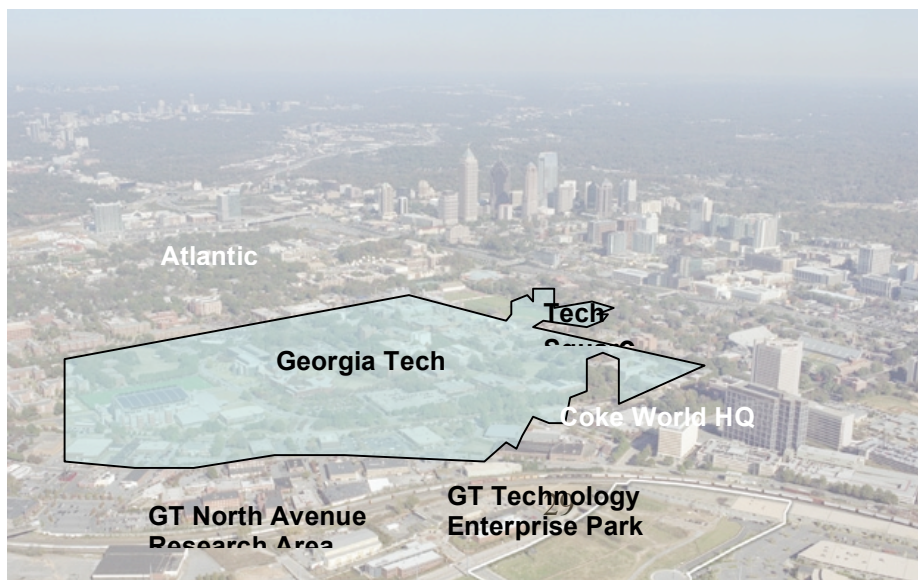
The result of this effort was a substantial project: Technology Square and the associated Centergy Office Building now flank 5<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides between the campus and the landmark Biltmore Office Building and condominiums on W. Peachtree Street. These two sister projects not only met the programming requirements of the campus, but they



also fully implemented the infrastructure and zoning envelope standards of Blueprint Midtown thereby producing the “beta-project” that served to establish the development parameters for *all* future Midtown development.

The expansion of the academic precinct across the Connector was more than the imposition of a new university-based real estate geography, it also represented a mixture of academic and proprietary space, creating, in the process, new “sites of knowledge”—built around academic and commercial clusters or ‘translational research nodes’ within the campus and the city. For example, in 2007, GT will complete the 4<sup>th</sup> building of its 1.0M SF Bioengineering Campus. This on-campus quad will be adjacent to the new 240,000 SF Nanotechnology Center Research Building and the Electrical Engineering and Computing Center. As Georgia Tech’s research activities tend to cross traditional disciplinary research borders on this quad, the adjacencies and accessibilities between disciplines becomes critical. These research clusters *within* the campus provide resources to emerging and established technology companies *outside* the campus, housed at Centergy and affiliated with units at Technology Square, such that the “space of knowledge production and dissemination” now resides in a mixed location both on campus and proximate to it (in Midtown). Participants in the process suggest that to view this as simply a new model of land development would miss the point. The blend and proximity of on-campus lab and teaching sites with off-campus product development and market dissemination sites constitutes new nodes of knowledge or “creative hubs” that purposefully blur the edge between the academic campus and evolving business innovation community that seeks physical and strategic connections to the GT campus.

Finally, the real estate development of Midtown has certainly been advanced by Georgia Tech’s and other anchor institution development. Since the completion of Technology Square in 2003, private developers in Midtown have added 2,500 dwelling units, 2,000,000 SF of office space and 250,000 SF of institutional expansion space in the District. Planning approvals have been granted for an additional 3,000 dwelling units and 1,000,000 SF of office space. Additionally, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra is raising funds for a new \$300M facility designed by Santiago Calatrava on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the Georgia Department of Transportation has begun implementation of a 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge replacement project including a park spanning the connector and a replacement of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street bridge and major street infrastructure improvements to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.



## **A Note on the Midtown Deals**

To accomplish all this, Georgia Tech first asked the GT Foundation to purchase the land in Midtown and GTF hired Jones Lang LaSalle as a fee developer to manage the development process. Georgia Tech assembled a team and augmented its staff to provide client oversight to the development team. GTF agreed to finance the acquisition and development costs if the Georgia Tech Board of Regents would execute a 30 year lease for the academic portion of the project and would provide a portion of the equity required to finance the hotel and conference center. A GTF general guarantee for the bonds sold to fund the project helped lower the financing cost. The total cost of the Technology Square project was \$186,000,000 and was completed in 2003. Land for the project that was purchased for an average of \$50/SF in 2000 is currently worth \$125-\$150 per SF, owing in large part to the success of the Tech Square project and private development spin-offs.

Since the release of the first *Blueprint Midtown* guidelines in 2001, the collaboration among the business community, institutions (especially the corporate anchors, BellSouth, the Federal Reserve and Georgia Tech) and City of Atlanta have successfully implemented 1/3 of the total development potential for this District. Unfortunately, Georgia Tech, which contributed to the early development of Midtown through its presence in the Technology Square project, no longer possesses the additional discretionary funds to purchase adjacent parcels that were available when Technology Square was being developed. Tech Square has produced extraordinary appreciation in land values proximate to the development and many parcels have already been redeveloped privately. Georgia Tech, an early anchor institution in the regional development process, has essentially been priced out of the development process , somewhat “eaten-by-its own success.”

### **B. Conclusions:**

Regardless of the stated mission of an academic institution, particularly an urban public institution, it is no longer sufficient or prudent to focus inward on the obvious teaching and research agenda. In seeking to be ‘the technology university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,’ Georgia Tech aspires to blur the boundary between the academic precinct and the business and residential communities. The Georgia Tech Technology Square-Centergy project in Midtown shows, quite dramatically, how a university can serve as a significant generator of economic opportunity and health for a changing economy, particularly in cities, like Atlanta, that are transitioning to a service and innovation base. The most recent GT campus plan endorses the notion that the universities that will be successful going forward will be located in culturally and intellectually rich clusters that extend into their host communities merging academic, research, commercial, business and residential activities around the academic core. It argues that administration, faculty and staff must

acknowledge the cost and value generated by investing scarce University resources in investments that are indirectly related to successful teaching and research and stimulate areas like Midtown are important to the university's future.

In the case of Midtown, this entrepreneurial-cum academic strategy, at some point became problematic, in that Georgia Tech did not have additional discretionary funds to purchase adjacent parcels that were available when Technology Square was being developed. Tech Square has produced extraordinary appreciation in land values proximate to the development and many parcels have already been redeveloped privately. Georgia Tech has become something of a victim of its own success and must now identify new frontiers for development. It has been priced and developmentally maneuvered out of the Midtown market it helped create with the development of Technology Square. GT now seeks opportunities to the west and south of its campus in joint venture with private developers. New acquisition strategies will require contribution of GT capital and credit leases into joint venture deals to lock-in some future control around campus and provide potential campus expansion opportunities in privately developed projects but with less overall control of the outcome. Ultimately, GT would trade-off current development control, as it did in the Centergy project, for long term ownership of the land after the private development partner has retired debt, paid development and asset management fees and provided market return to its equity investors. This allows GT's relatively small investments to be leveraged over larger development capacity than it could implement independently.

Even with this aggressive entrepreneurial strategy, Tech, in its most recent Campus Master Plan, takes a different tact when it comes to its immediate residential neighborhoods, purposefully excluding from its "Areas of Interest" the predominantly single family communities of Home Park and English Avenue that abut the campus. Like Morehouse College, the university has sought to partner with these neighborhoods on community and commercial development projects that enhance the community and institutional goals for maintaining the viability and vitality of those adjacent neighborhoods to provide close-in residential options for existing residents and the GT community. GT seeks to enhance the stability of these neighborhoods adjacent to its campus, seeing a mixture of urban environments as the preferred scenario of the future.

## **VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY--360 DEGREES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **A, The University is an Urban Institution**

The role of the university in the city of Atlanta has become increasingly important at all levels of urban development—community development, economic development and planning. In each of the cases we reviewed here we discovered that the success of university land practices required and/or contributed to broader urban development practice. For example the implementation of Georgia State's 1994 master plan became, in essence the first successful 24/7 Downtown master plan. The competitive recalibration of the research infrastructure of Georgia Tech anchored the economic revitalization of the

Midtown. And the developmental efforts of Morehouse College to overcome the limitations of its landlocked status obtained purchase in an engaged new university-level participation in the city's model of community development. As such the campus development goals of the universities in Atlanta became elements of the broader goals of community, planning and urban economy. One key lesson here is that good university development has become, perforce, useful urban development—with all the political, economic and social issues therein.

#### B. Leadership Matters.

In each of the cases in this paper, the increasing institutional value of the university to the city was, in part, the product of *strong leadership* at the highest level. The case of each university in this paper started with a new president, each one of which saw the future of their institution attached to stronger university-community relations at the level of mission and as a foundation for university-based land development. As a result each of the cases is, in some ways, the story of an institution recasting its role in the city and community—assuming, in its real estate development activities, a more pronounced and proactive relationship with the city,

#### C. Planning Matters—Both Campus and City Plans

All three academic institutions re-wrote their *campus master plans* in ways that integrated their land policies into the *public plans* of the neighborhood, in the Neighborhood Planning Units of Westside (Morehouse College) and Midtown (Georgia Institute of Technology) and the city master plan for Downtown (Georgia State University). And, in each case, the land and development policies of the universities were influenced by and otherwise advanced the city's planning efforts.

#### D. Partnership Matters

Each university also conceived of its urban development function as one of partnership. Morehouse College is an example of a university that chose community membership and collaboration over top down institutional control as it joined its area CDC to undertake community-based housing development. At Georgia State, the President of the university actually served as the head of the local area development organization, Atlanta Progress, thereby melding the objectives of downtown revitalization and campus expansion.

#### E. Success Breeds Obstacles

In all three cases, universities faced something of a paradox—where the success of their land development practices actually set in motion increases in the value of the surrounding land markets that became obstacles to future development by university neighbors or by the university itself. Each of universities appeared, at some levels, to be “victims” of their own success and each of them offered less than innovative ways of solving the obstacles of booming land costs and gentrification that they, in part, brought to their sector of the city.

#### F. The University as an Economic Driver

In at least the particulars found in two of the cases, the Georgia Tech and Georgia State examples, universities were shown to be true “engines” of economic development—

stimulating a more vibrant 24/7 environment in the moribund Downtown area and serving as a permanent anchor institution, along with other governmental and public utilities, in the corporate and commercial revitalization of the once derelict and vacant land areas of Midtown.

#### G. The University as an “Anchor” Institution

Finally, it might not be that the cases here offer any clear cut structural proof that the universities of Atlanta are *THE* “engines” of urban development, but it is evident that universities, at the very least, are sources of increasingly “mixed use” development - blurring the edge, the structure and in some cases the very meaning of “campus” and “city.” As such, as universities embed themselves ever more fully in the land economy of the city and its neighborhoods, they become more visibly important, perhaps even foundational or “anchor” urban institutions.

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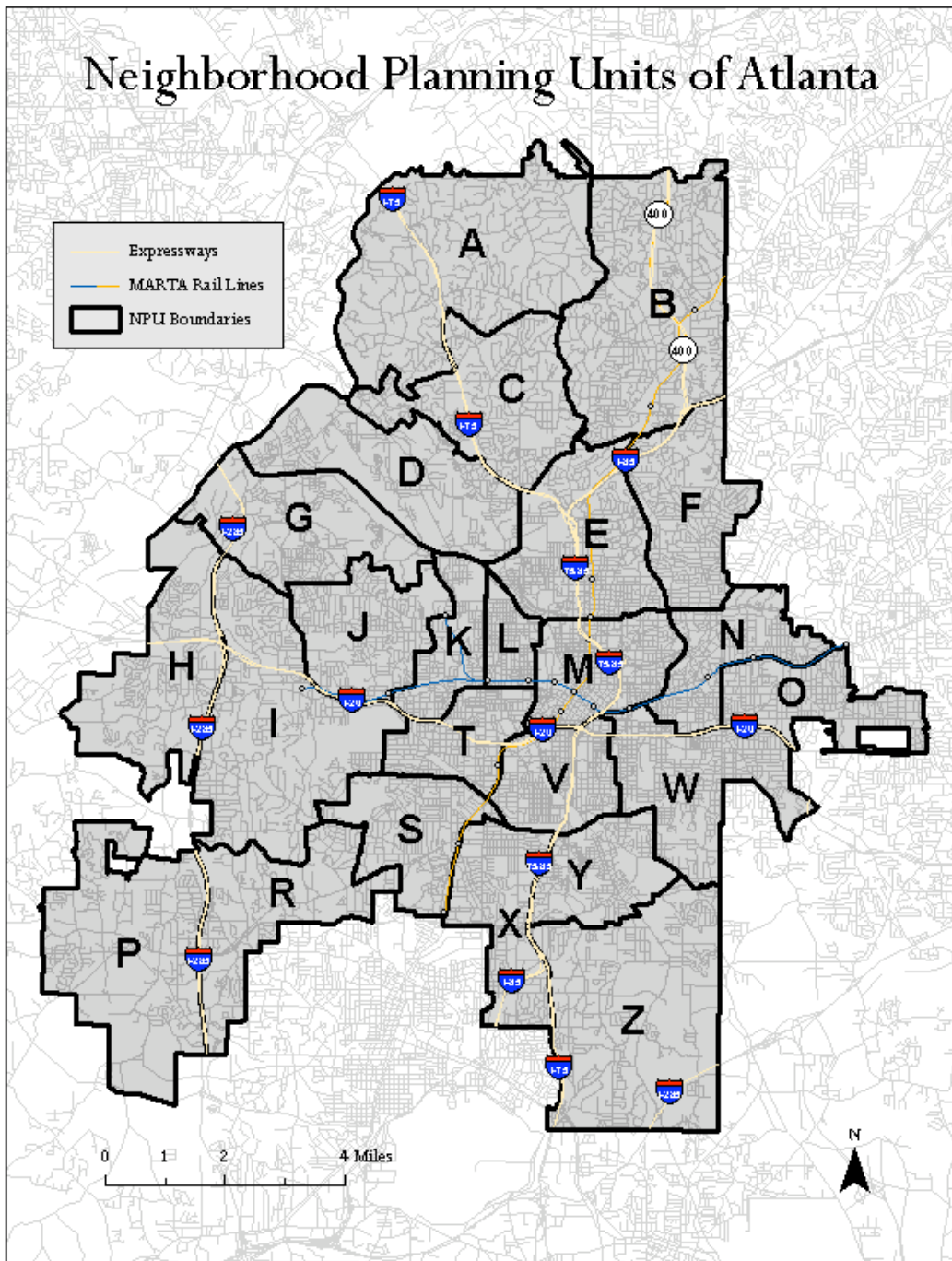
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## APPENDIX A

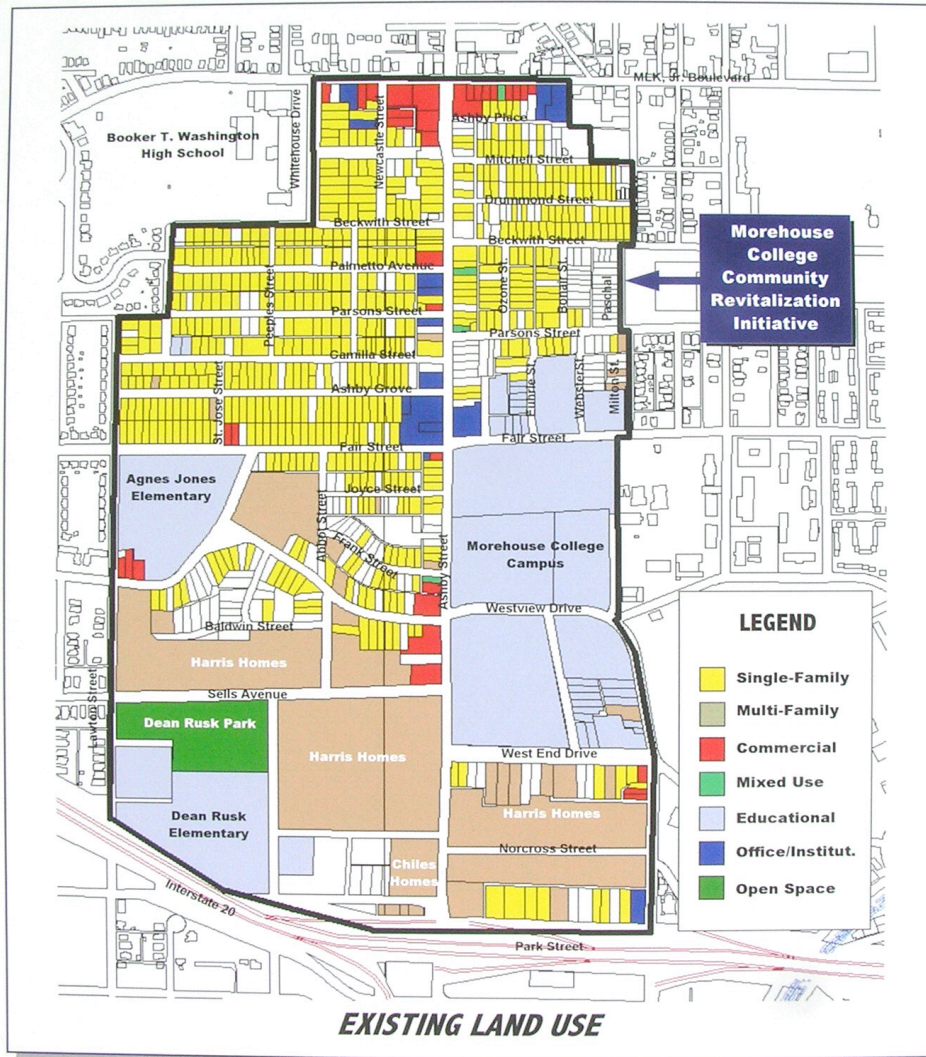
Unit T -- Westside and Morehouse College Area

Unit E -- Midtown and Georgia Institute of Technology Area

Unit M-- Downtown and Georgia State University Area

## APPENDIX B

### Westside neighborhoods around Morehouse College



## Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative