

## Atlanta's Development

The aim of my writing sample is to show my research, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analytical, and writing skills through an analysis of Atlanta's development. Atlanta was one of the fastest growing large cities in the United States in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). I analyzed Atlanta's recent infrastructure development through a multi-step process. I first georeferenced a 1956 street map of Atlanta (Shell Oil Company) in ESRI ArcGIS. I then contrasted the 1956 street map with the 2018 ESRI street map basemap of Atlanta to investigate Atlanta's development in the last sixty years. My comparison revealed that Atlanta's development has included numerous infrastructure developments that are clustered without easy transit access. The following outlines the history of Atlanta's development, my geospatial analysis of the city's development and a discussion on possible outcomes of Atlanta's development.

Atlanta started to grow with the creation of interstates. Two interstates, I-75/85 and I-20, border downtown Atlanta. Construction for these interstates began with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (Georgia Department of Transportation: GDOT, 2007). A proposed I-75 route is outlined as a red dashed line in the 1956 Atlanta map (appendix A). Atlanta's interstate construction spanned the 1950s-1970s (GDOT, 2007).

Commuters also can access downtown Atlanta via the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), a commuter rail (and bus) system consisting of four rail lines servicing 38 rail stations. Construction of MARTA lines spanned the 1970s-1990s (MARTA).

The Georgia World Congress Center Authority's (GWCCA) campus serves as the hub for Atlanta's entertainment and hospitality district. The GWCCA campus includes the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, State Farm Arena, and 21-acre Centennial Olympic Park (GWCCA).

The GWCCA campus houses two professional sports complexes, the Mercedes-Benz Stadium and the State Farm Arena. The Mercedes-Benz Stadium opened in 2017 and is home to the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons and the Major League Soccer's Atlanta United Football Club. Stadium construction spanned 2014-2017 (AJC Sports, 2017). The stadium replaced the Georgia Dome. The Georgia Dome, adjacent to the current Mercedes-Benz Stadium, operated from 1992 until its implosion in 2017. Construction on the dome spanned 1989-1992 (Lewis, 2017).

The State Farm Arena, previously Philips Arena, opened in 1999 and is home to the National Basketball Association's Atlanta Hawks and Women's National Basketball Association's Atlanta Dream (Green, 2018b). Construction of the State Farm Arena occurred from 1997-1999 on the site of the demolished Omni Coliseum. The Omni Coliseum was constructed in the 1970s and demolished in 1999 (Kahn, 2015a).

Downtown Atlanta has developed other attractions, including Centennial Olympic Park and the Georgia Aquarium. Atlanta began Centennial Olympic Park development in 1994 ahead of the 1996 Olympic games. The park served as a place for public gathering during the 1996 Olympic games and serves as a public park, today (Kahn, 2015b). The Georgia Aquarium, financed by Home Depot, opened in Atlanta in 2005 (Georgia Historical Society, 2005).

The Cable News Network (CNN) headquarters has stood between the State Farm Arena and Centennial Olympic Park since 1986. The CNN complex originally operated as the Omni International Complex. The Omni International Complex opened in 1976 as a multi-use facility containing a hotel, shops, restaurants, office towers, indoor amusement park and ice-skating rink (CNN).

My comparison of the 1956 and 2018 street maps of Atlanta (Appendix A) revealed that much of Atlanta's commercial development has occurred in the last sixty years and is clustered on the west side of downtown on or near the GWCCA campus without easy access to interstates or train lines. The following discussion poses if such development could have led to the disconnection of neighborhoods, increase in area traffic, and the displacement of residents.

Clustered development could make Atlanta's neighborhoods disconnected. Jacobs (1961) posited that cities flourish when neighborhoods are interconnected. Urban interconnection encourages social and economic interaction of cities' neighborhoods. The clustered development of Atlanta on or near the GWCCA campus may limit the economic and social interaction of this area with the rest of Atlanta.

Clustered development with limited transit access also may increase area traffic. Atlanta's traffic ranked fourth worst in the United States in 2017, according to an INRIX report (Green, 2018a). The clustering of commercial businesses together away from interstate and transit lines may contribute to Atlanta's gridlock.

The development of Atlanta may have resulted in the displacement of residents. Appendix A shows that the GWCCA campus was built over numerous city streets. A 2008 study of similar development in Dublin, Ireland (Moore) revealed that such development resulted in the ostracizing of local community members, as Dublin prioritized economic development. Further research can determine if similar resident displacement occurred in Atlanta.

I wrote this description and analysis of Atlanta's infrastructure development to show my research, GIS analytical, and writing skills. I reveal some of my urban planning knowledge through my discussion on Atlanta's development that I could apply to in the GIS position.

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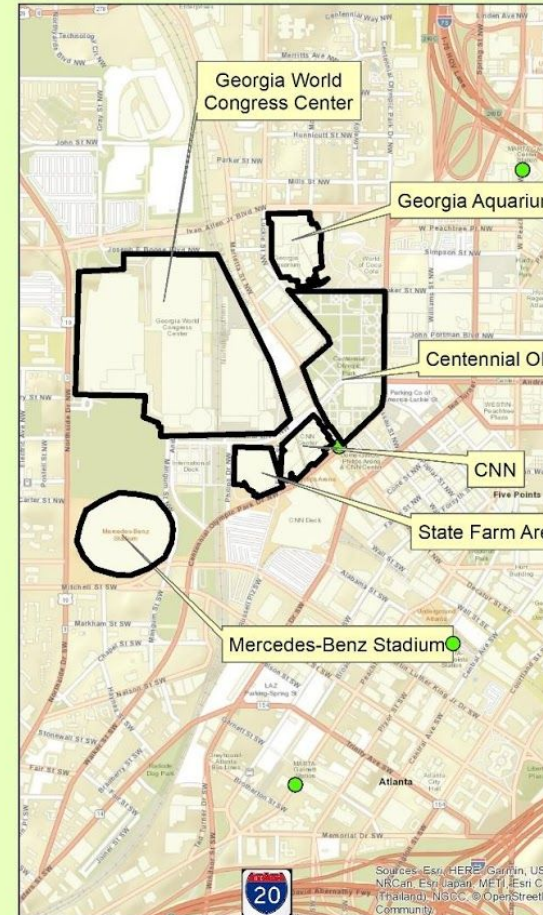
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## Appendix A.

## Atlanta's Development, 1956-2018



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