

Concepts For Planning Birmingham's Future

The photographs on this page portray the results of an eight-month study of the Civic Design Committee (CDC), a subcommittee of the Birmingham Citizens Action Committee.

The CDC was created to develop ideas and concepts for the future development of the city's civic center and downtown business district.

It was made up of local architects, landscape architects, artists, an architectural photographer and planners all well known in the metropolitan area and all residents of the Birmingham area.

The CDC's plan was the successor to a previous plan initiated by a merchant group's study of parking problems in the downtown area. The plan is a merger of the two concepts.

The CDC had three major objectives in mind in the preparation of the plan:

(1) To develop downtown Birmingham as the heart of the whole city rather than just the heart of the commercial activity.

(2) To provide for future growth and more intensive land use within the peripheral route and stop the outward encroachment of business upon residential areas.

3. To make the central area lively, interesting and appealing place to visit at all times.



Methods and Means

1. Provide space and incentives to make the cultural institutions an integral part of the central area.
2. Maintain health and vitality of the business community.
3. Stimulate additional residential development within the central area as a complement to commercial activities.
4. Encourage spontaneous social contacts through cafes and restaurants, outdoor meeting places, festivals and street events, window shopping and religious activities.
5. Provide a visual experience of sufficient strength and appeal to be an attraction of itself.
6. Utilize un-needed street right-of-way for new structures of civic importance.
7. Finance capital expenditures with tax revenue realized from new enterprises and upgrading of existing properties.

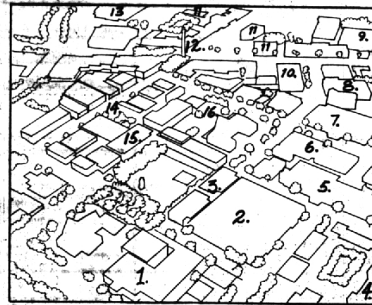
Objects and Aims

- To define what Birmingham is.
- To define what Birmingham will be.
- To recognize that our downtown is for people.
- To recognize that the core of Birmingham must service the larger area.
- To bring excellence and beauty to the core first, then let these qualities ripple.
- To inspire absentee and new ownership to new responsibility.
- To stimulate appreciation of architectural excellence.
- To beautify the core through landscape design.
- To bring art in all media to the core.
- To recognize the human needs for neighborliness, visitation, and to mix the generations.
- To recognize we cannot run away, but rather we must treasure and improve what we have.
- To define what is loved and what is merely used; what must be kept and what should be discarded.
- To preserve and beautify our scenic vistas that now exist.
- To stimulate greater citizen participation in public affairs.



Legend

1. Expanded Community House and Civic Auditorium
2. Office Space
3. Shops and Parking Structure
4. Town Houses
5. Commercial
6. Commercial
7. Parking
8. Commercial
9. Parking
10. Commercial
11. Commercial
12. Clock Tower
13. Parking
14. Pedestrian Mall
15. Commercial
16. Civic Plaza
17. Village Inn



A top view of the Birmingham of tomorrow outlines the peripheral route or "ring road." The development of this road is cited as of vital importance to the future planning of not only the downtown area but also of the rest of the community. All through traffic would be kept out of the downtown area. Pedestrians would be able to walk throughout the business district on malls and along tree-shaded streets.

Looking east at the Civic Center. The Kresge parking lot would be removed and trees planted along the northerly edge of Shain Park. Pedestrians would be able to reach the Municipal Building from the park by means of a tunnel under the village inn.

Birmingham's civic center looking south shows Merrill Street closed and planted with trees. Parking Lot No. 7 would be decked and the front ground floor of the structure would be occupied by retail stores. The front upper floors could be used for offices by the Birmingham Board of Education and administration.

A westerly view depicts a civic plaza in front of the Municipal Building on Martin. The plaza could seat 1,000 persons for concerts or civic ceremonies. A wall would be built around the Municipal Building and the ground leveled off, adding to the structure's visual importance.

A northerly view of the civic center. Henrietta would be closed at Martin and a structure such as an inn could be built in the street right-of-way. Bates Street between the Baldwin Library and Shain Park would be converted into a parkway with trees in the middle of the boulevard.

