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, and architectural photographers and planners all well known in the metropolitan area and all residents of the Birmingham area.

The CDC began the work 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 zone and stop the outward encroachment of business upon residential areas.
3. To make the central area a body, interesting and appealing place to visit at all times.

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

A view of the Birmingham of tomorrow outlines the pedestrian route or "ring road." The development of this road is cited as of vital importance in the future planning of not only the downtown area but also of the rest of the city. 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 west at the Civic Center. The Korea parking lot would be removed and trees planted along the north side of the Civic Center. The west side of the Municipal Building would be used as the main entrance to the building.

Birmingham's civic center looking north shows the Civic Center Building on Martin. The area could be used as a recreation area for concerts or civic ceremonies. A wall would be built around the Civic Center Building and the ground levelled off, adding to the street-level of the building.

Methods and Means

1. Provide space and incentives to make the central business district 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 activity.
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. Urbanize constructed street right-of-way for new structures.
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 civic heart, 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 need for neighborhood, identification, 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 lost and what is merely used, what must be kept and what should be discarded.
To preserve and beautify our civic vistas that now exist.
To stimulate greater citizen participation in public affairs.