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Atlanta and the Olympics

A One-Year Retrospective

Steven P. French and Mike E. Disher

The 1996 Olympics provided a number of unique opportunities for the City of Atlanta. Although most cities will not have an opportunity to host the Olympics, the Atlanta experience can provide important lessons for any city considering similar large-scale events. Clearly, the Olympics stimulated the local economy in the years leading up to the Games; they also were quite successful in promoting tourism and attracting business to the region. The city acquired a new stadium and other sports facilities. The Games also were an incentive to make a number of improvements in urban design and infrastructure improvements. However, the redevelopment of inner city neighborhoods that had originally been anticipated was never achieved. Reliance on private funding and a fragmented organizational structure were key factors that limited Atlanta's ability to use the Olympics as a vehicle for redevelopment.

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Since Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition, planners and other civic leaders have dreamed of World's Fairs and similar large-scale events to use as vehicles for economic growth and urban redevelopment. The Exposition's "White City" not only set the architectural style for monumental buildings in the United States, but also permanently shaped the development of Chicago's lakefront. In 1895 Atlanta hosted the Cotton States International Exposition to introduce the world to the "New South." Years later, Robert Moses used the 1964 World's Fair as a focal point for the construction of transportation and sporting facilities. The 1967 Montreal Expo produced the Habitat project and other improvements intended to revive the city's riverfront.

More recently, as World's Fairs have lost their cachet, the Olympics have come to be viewed as events to spur promotion and development. The 1992 Barcelona Olympics were the catalyst for \$8.1 billion of investment in infrastructure and housing that significantly revitalized the city's Mediterranean seafont.

Promoters generally cite four types of benefits that can result from large-scale events like the Olympics. The first is the legacy of sports facilities and associated amenities built for the event. The second is the short-term economic stimulus from new construction before the event and visitor spending during the event. The third is a highly visible marketing opportunity, to recruit business and promote tourism. The fourth benefit, but the most difficult to achieve, is significant urban redevelopment.

There are significant questions, however, about the extent of such benefits and their distribution among different groups within the host community. The Osaka, New York, and Montreal World's Fairs all lost money (Shlay and Giloth 1987). The worst case was the 1976 Montreal Olympics, which left the city with a \$1 billion debt. Since that event, corporate sponsors have become increasingly important, and so has control of the event by private and quasi-private agencies (Malouchos 1996). The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were the first to be funded from private sources, but that city needed relatively few new facilities to host the Olympics (Hayes 1995). Even when all the direct costs are covered by

private funds, there can be significant public costs for security, access, and infrastructure improvements.

Misgivings about public costs and the visitor and revenue projections were instrumental in Chicago's decision not to host the 1992 World's Fair (Mier, 1995). The fair was considered a financial risk that would not benefit many of Chicago's residents. A vocal activist group, the "Bread Not Circuses Coalition," made the same argument in opposing Toronto's bid for the 1996 Olympics.

The story of Atlanta and the 1996 Olympic games has important lessons for other cities that might be considering Olympic bids or similar large-scale events to promote themselves, to stimulate their local economy, or to encourage redevelopment. This article highlights the types of purposes that a city can reasonably expect to achieve in association with a large-scale event. The article also points out the types of redevelopment goals that are very difficult to accomplish through such events.

To call the Olympics a large-scale event does not fully capture its magnitude. The Atlanta Games drew more than 10,000 athletes from 197 countries. More than two million visitors attended the Games and another 2.5 billion watched them on television. Pre-Olympics projections estimated that the Atlanta Games would create 77,026 jobs and pump \$5.14 billion into the state economy in the period from 1991 through 1996 (Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games 1994). Post-Olympics analysis, however, indicates that the economic benefits fell more than a billion dollars below these initial projections, largely because local spending was shifted away from entertainment activities to the Olympics, other revenue-generating activities were displaced near the Olympic time period, and visitor spending on food and lodging was less than expected (Ratajczak 1996). The Games did generate a small fiscal surplus and produce several types of measurable benefits.

Atlanta: The City and its Region

Atlanta, a city of 394,000, sits at the center of a ten-county metropolitan region of more than three million residents (figure 1). The population of the metropolitan area has increased 33 percent since 1980. As is the case with many American metropolitan areas, the City of Atlanta has been losing population relative to surrounding areas since 1970. Due to restrictive annexation policies and political barriers, the city currently accounts for only 14 percent of the metropolitan area's population. The Atlanta suburbs are home to several edge cities, each of which rivals the traditional downtown in employment, and retail and office development.

The suburban and exurban growth, however, has not come without a price to Atlanta. From 1980 to 1990, the population of the City of Atlanta declined by 31,000 (7.3 percent). This migration, composed chiefly of middle- to upper-class whites, left the city with a larger proportion of lower-income and predominantly African American residents. From 1970 to 1990, the African American population of the central city increased from 52 to 67 percent, while the white population declined by 11 percent.

The Atlanta region has been quite successful in attracting the headquarters of major corporations, such as UPS, CARE, and The National Cancer Society. These newcomers, along with the local contingent that includes Coca-Cola, CNN, Home Depot, and Delta Airlines, make the Atlanta region home to more Fortune 500 corporations than are found in any but three other metropolitan areas in the United States. However, the downtown has also been losing businesses, even while the region has had exceptionally strong growth. By 1994, the downtown share of the regional office market had shrunk to only 19 percent. The northern suburbs had captured most of the new employment and in 1990 accounted for 52 percent of the jobs in the region (Research Atlanta Inc. 1993).

Stone (1989) and others have documented the exceptionally strong role the business community has played in guiding the development of Atlanta over the past 50 years. Atlanta politics have been characterized by a partnership between the mayor and the downtown business leadership; for the last 25 years, this has meant a biracial partnership, between African American political leaders and white business elites. The business community played a leading role in supporting the 1996 Games and were their prime beneficiaries.

Winning the Games

Atlanta has long aspired to recognition beyond the southeastern United States. Since just after the Civil War, local leaders have spent considerable time and energy promoting Atlanta as a center of racial justice and economic prosperity (McMath 1990). Atlanta's contemporary leaders saw the Olympics as an opportunity to attain national and international recognition and to achieve their goal of becoming the "next great international city."

Ironically, many local business and political leaders initially met the idea of hosting the Olympics with skepticism. The fact that Atlanta submitted a bid at all was mostly due to the efforts of one man—William Porter "Billy" Payne, a local attorney and former college athlete. It was largely through Payne's persever-

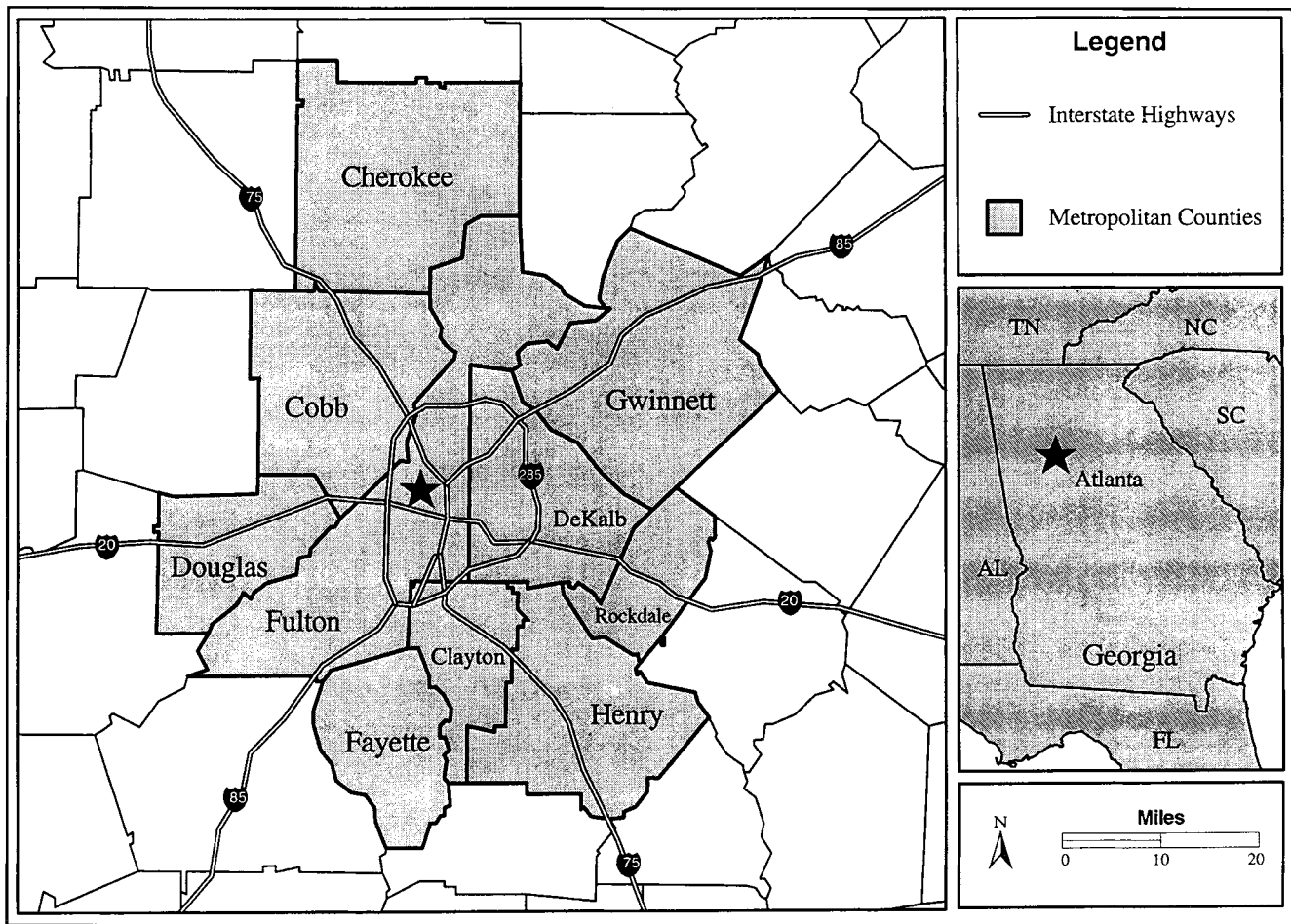


FIGURE 1. Atlanta metropolitan region

ance and determination and the support he gained from several local leaders, most notably former Mayor Andrew Young, that Atlanta was able to field an eligible bid to host the Centennial Olympic Games.

On the morning of September 18, 1990, thousands of people gathered in downtown Atlanta to await the announcement by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) of the city selected to host the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. When the IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, announced that the winner was "The City of Atlanta," the assembled crowd cheered wildly, and a sense of euphoria swept through the city. Atlanta had scored a surprising victory over the sentimental favorite, Athens, which had been the site in 1896 of the first modern Olympic competition. The Atlanta Organizing Committee's (AOC's) bid was successful because the city had many of the required sports facilities, excellent hotel accommodations, and excellent air connections to the whole world. The Atlanta bid was aided by a sophisticated multimedia presentation that carried IOC members

through Olympic venues that had not yet been constructed. Atlanta defeated Athens on the fifth ballot.

Atlanta offered a proposal that concentrated most of the events in a small geographic area known as the Olympic Ring. As shown in figure 2, most Olympic activities, including the Olympic Village, would be located within two miles of downtown. Events requiring more space, such as rowing and the equestrian events, would be clustered in several sites outside of downtown, such as Stone Mountain Park. This compact design was quite appealing, particularly when compared to such geographically dispersed events as the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics or the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Assurances of private funding for all Olympic development were important in generating and maintaining public support for the Games. Early on, Olympic organizers took a "no new taxes" pledge. The Atlanta Games were to be entirely self-supporting and would require no taxpayer subsidy. As shown in table 1, fees for television rights, corporate sponsorships, and ticket sales were the primary sources of revenue.

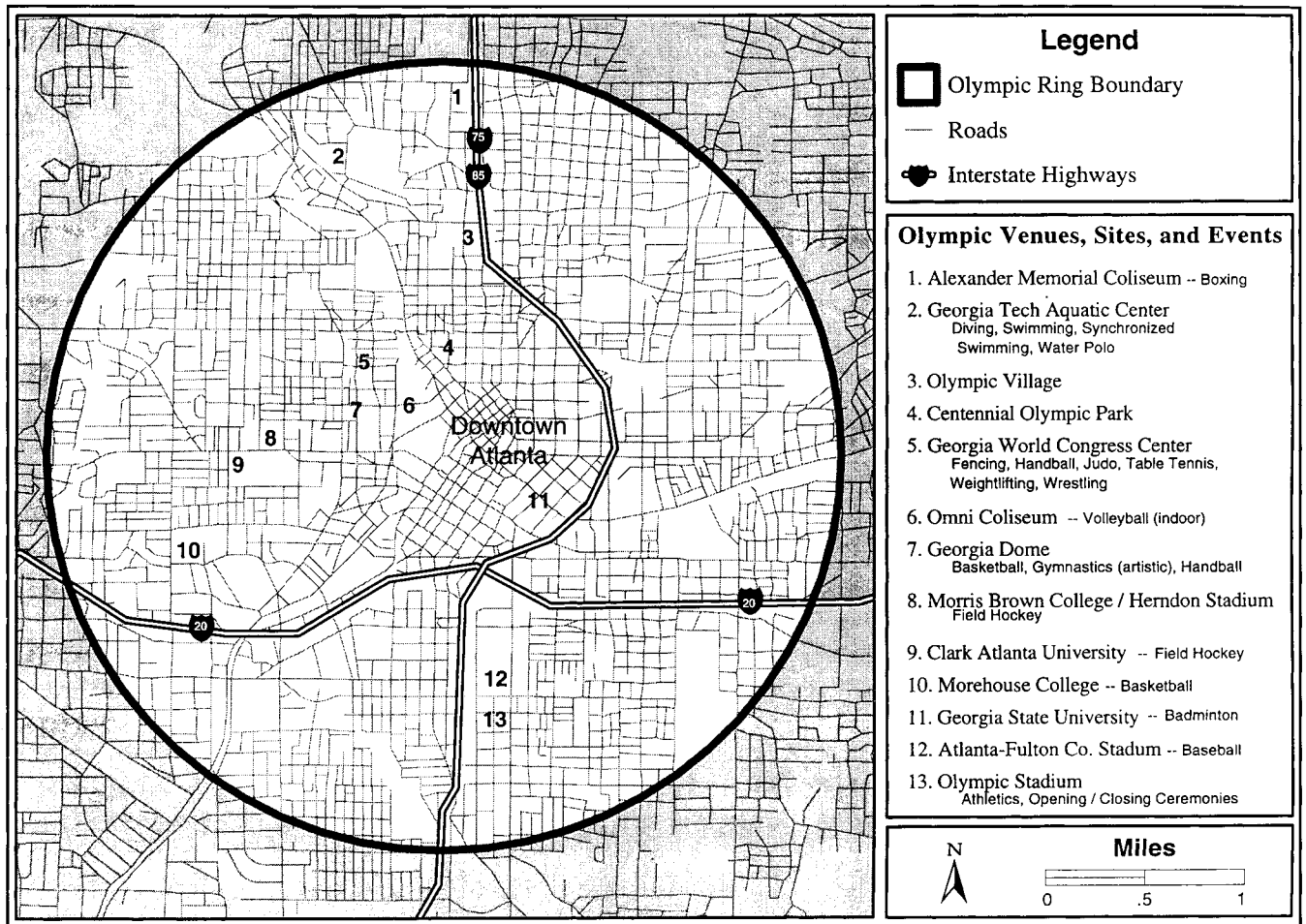


FIGURE 2. Atlanta Olympic Ring

While the Games ostensibly were privately funded, significant public funds were required to prepare the city and carry out the Games. Most of the security costs were paid by state and federal agencies. Approximately 75 percent of the housing costs were borne by the university system, which would then convert Olympic housing to permanent use as dormitories. There was, however, no direct public funding of Olympic sports facilities or operating expenses.

Preparing the City

After Atlanta's selection, two separate agencies, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) and the Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority (MAOGA), were created to manage the Games. Billy Payne continued to be the single most important and visible figure in planning the Games, in his new role as President and CEO of ACOG. Figure 3 summarizes the major organizations and their roles in the planning and execution of the 1996 Olympics.

Planning and management of the overall effort was envisioned as a tripartite structure. ACOG was to build venues and the Olympic Village with MAOGA's financial oversight. ACOG would have complete operational responsibility for staging the Games. ACOG would also control the major revenue sources: corporate sponsorships, television rights, and ticket sales. The City of Atlanta would be responsible for making necessary infrastructure repairs to its bridges and its water and sewer systems. A new public nonprofit corporation, the Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA), was created to handle neighborhood redevelopment and urban design enhancements to streets and other public spaces. This division of responsibility was to prove important in determining which development projects received top priority. The fragmentation of authority among these agencies limited the possible degree of coordination. Most importantly, the financial structure also left the public sector agencies in a subordinate role, resulting in their projects being given lower priority.

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TABLE 1. ACOG Olympics budget

Revenue Source	Amount (in millions of dollars)
TV Broadcast Rights	\$559.50
Joint Venture (ACOG & USOC)	\$462.50
—National Sponsorships	
—Licensing	
—Olympic Coin Sales	
International Sponsorships	\$77.60
Ticket Sales	\$422.00
Other Revenue	\$151.60
—Interest Income	
—Ticket Service Charges	
—Accommodation Fees (commissions, concessions)	
—Olympic License Tags	
—Olympic Brick Program	
Merchandise	\$32.00
Expenditures	
Administration	\$196.37
Construction	\$532.73
—Venues	
—Village	
—Centennial Park	
Operations	\$946.10
Contingency/Net Funds Flow	\$30.00
Total	\$1,705.20

Source: Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games

Building the Sporting Facilities

Even though a key part of Atlanta's appeal to the IOC was the quality of its existing sporting facilities, major new facilities were constructed for the 1996 Olympics. Table 2 lists the major new construction and renovation projects. ACOG handled the design and construction of the new facilities and the refurbishing of existing facilities. Although some of this new construction was temporary, a substantial legacy of world-class sporting facilities remained after the Games.

Existing facilities inside the Olympic Ring included the 50,000-seat Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, built in 1964 as part of the city's efforts to lure the Braves from Milwaukee. This facility was not large enough to house the track and field events or the opening and closing ceremonies. It was used for Olympic baseball, and it served as a staging area for events in the new Olympic Stadium. This 32-year-old stadium was torn down after the Games.

The Omni Coliseum, the 16,000-seat home of the

NBA Atlanta Hawks, had been opened in 1972. It hosted men's and women's volleyball. Adjacent to this facility is the city's primary convention facility, the Georgia World Congress Center. It hosted a series of smaller events: fencing, wrestling, weightlifting, table tennis, and judo. In 1991, the Georgia World Congress Center Authority had added the Georgia Dome, a 71,500-seat, indoor stadium designed for professional football, to the Center complex. This \$200 million facility, which had been planned and constructed before the city was selected for the Olympics, was leased to ACOG as the main venue for basketball, handball, and gymnastics. These three facilities are the most concentrated complex of sports and convention facilities in the country, and they are served by a single transit station.

The largest new facility built for the Games was the 83,100-seat Olympic stadium, built in a parking lot directly adjacent to the existing Atlanta-Fulton County stadium. The opening and closing ceremonies as well as the track and field events were held in the new stadium. The unique design of the \$209 million facility allowed part of the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium to be torn down after the Games, leaving a 50,000-seat, baseball-only stadium, comparable to the new Camden Yards Park in Baltimore. After the Olympics, ACOG donated the stadium to the city. It was renamed Turner Field and became the home of the Atlanta Braves at the beginning of the 1997 baseball season.

The other new sports facility built within the Olympic Ring was the \$24 million Georgia Tech Aquatic Center. This natatorium was the site of the swimming, diving, and water polo events. After the Olympics the water polo pool and much of the spectator seating were removed. The facility is now used for student recreation and collegiate swim meets.

As table 2 shows, a number of other existing facilities, principally in the Atlanta University Center, were significantly renovated to host Olympic events. Several new facilities were constructed outside of the Olympic Ring as well, including the Georgia International Horse Park, the Wolf Creek Shooting Complex, and the temporary cycling velodrome in Stone Mountain Park. Yachting facilities were built on Waassaw Sound near Savannah, and whitewater canoe and kayak facilities were constructed on the Ocoee River in Tennessee.

The total cost of the new and renovated facilities was over \$400 million. The Olympics significantly improved Atlanta's already considerable inventory of sports facilities. There was some local opposition to the partial demolition of the still serviceable Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, and there were questions

Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG): The private, nonprofit corporation charged with staging the Games. Responsibilities included building the sports venues and the Olympic Village, as well as selling sponsorships and tickets and negotiating media contracts.

City of Atlanta: Local municipal government with major responsibility for necessary infrastructure improvements around venue and visitor sites.

Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA): Nonprofit corporation created by the City of Atlanta and the business community to plan and implement redevelopment projects.

Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA): Owner of the major convention and entertainment complex of facilities, including the Georgia Dome, World Congress Center, and the Omni Coliseum, where a number of Olympic events took place.

International Olympic Committee (IOC): The international committee responsible for selecting the host cities and approving the venues for individual sporting events.

Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority (MAOGA): State authority created to oversee ACOG's finances and approve all ACOG contracts to ensure legality and long-term financial viability.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA): State authority created to provide rapid rail and bus service in Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

FIGURE 3. Key organizations in the 1996 Olympics

TABLE 2. Legacy of sports facilities (investments in millions of dollars*)

Facility	ACOG Investment	Total Amount
Olympic Stadium	\$189	\$209
Georgia International Horse Park	\$28	\$90
Wolf Creek Shooting Complex	\$17	\$17
Stone Mountain Tennis Center	\$18	\$18
Lake Lanier Rowing Center	\$10	\$10
Georgia Tech University		
Dormitories	\$47	\$194
Natatorium	\$21	\$24
Alexander Memorial Coliseum	\$1.5	\$1.5
Atlanta University Center		
Stadiums—Morris Brown/Clark Atlanta University	\$37	\$37
Basketball Arena—Morehouse College	\$11	\$11
Tennis Facility—Spelman College	\$1	\$1
Drug Testing Center—Morehouse School of Medicine	\$1	\$1
Interdenominational Theological Center	\$.8	\$.8
Georgia State University		
Gymnasium Renovation	\$2	\$2
Clayton County International Park	\$0	\$3
Total	\$384.3	\$619.3

Source: Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games

*Values shown include only the portion of the project budget dedicated to construction/renovation of permanent facilities.

about the efficiency of using so many temporary facilities that were to be destroyed after the Games. However, the opportunity cost of the investment in sports facilities was never publicly debated, because the funding mechanisms were private.

The Olympic Village

The Olympic Village that housed the athletes during the Games was created by using the Georgia Tech campus. Before the Games, Georgia Tech had a dormitory capacity of 6,951 students. The Olympic Village

required additional housing. Olympic construction added dormitory facilities on the Georgia Tech campus for another 2,442 students. In addition, a 2,000-student high-rise dormitory complex was built adjacent to the Georgia Tech campus to house students from nearby Georgia State University.

The total cost of the new housing constructed for the Olympics was \$241 million. Of that total, \$47 million, or about 17 percent, was provided by ACOG. The remaining \$194 million was financed by the University System of Georgia, with bonds. The bonds are repaid with revenues generated by student housing fees. Thus, although ACOG's funding provided significant leverage, the majority of the housing costs were borne by the university system.

In recent years the city has attempted to stimulate downtown housing to create a "24-hour downtown." The addition of residences for nearly 5,000 students was seen as part of this repopulating of downtown (Hill 1994). It should be noted, however, that this student housing is located in the midtown area, nearly two miles from the center of downtown; that area was already acquiring significant new residential development. Because of the size and location of the Olympic Village housing, its influence on downtown has been relatively limited.

Repairing the City's Infrastructure

Like many central cities, Atlanta has an aging infrastructure beset with problems resulting from decades of deferred maintenance. Atlanta's infrastructure problems were emphasized in 1995 when an 80-year-old storm sewer collapsed, creating a 100-foot-wide sinkhole under a motel parking lot and killing two motel employees who were in the lot at the time (Blackmon 1995).

Since downtown Atlanta was originally developed in a gulch, it has an abundance of bridges and viaducts. A number of these were in such poor condition that they required temporary supports and even hydraulic jacks. Several had been closed to truck and bus traffic because they could not support that weight. One of the city's worst nightmares was to have the world see a bridge collapse under a busload of Olympic athletes.

The sewer system was another major infrastructure problem. The storm and sewer systems are connected in such a way that during heavy rains the combined sewage flow frequently overwhelms the capacity of the sewage treatment plants. As a result, the city plants often release raw sewage into the Chattahoochee River. Although the state fines the city more than \$20,000 per day for this and related water quality

violations, the city has not been able to design and finance an adequate solution. Since the Olympics the sewer problems have only gotten worse. In 1997 the city will pay another \$7.2 million in water quality fines. The city has imposed a sewer connection moratorium in some areas, and the mayor has suggested a sewer rate increase to generate the \$780 million required to fix the system. The city has also initiated a study of privatizing its water and sewer systems.

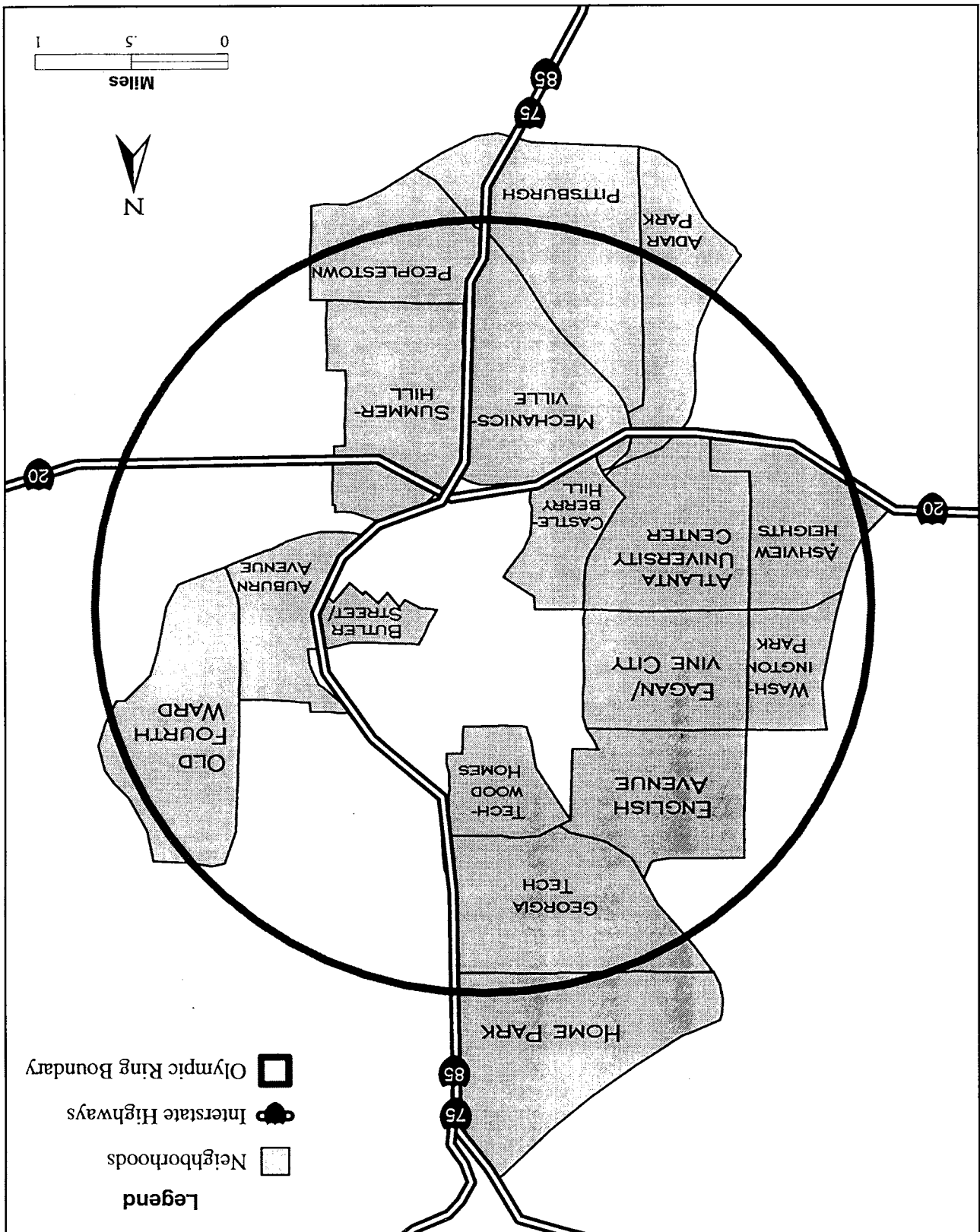
Obviously, these infrastructure problems had to be fixed regardless of the Olympics, but the possibility of a significant failure while Atlanta was on the world stage added a sense of urgency to the city's repair efforts. To manage the infrastructure problems, Atlanta voters approved a \$150 million infrastructure bond issue in July 1994. The local business community had voiced strong support, which was instrumental in passing the bond issue. In this case, the Olympics provided a clear deadline that stimulated action on a chronic problem. Though the bond issue raised significant funds for infrastructure improvements, many of the proposed projects have yet to be completed a year after the Games have come and gone.

Neighborhood Redevelopment

The most difficult task the city faced was to use the Olympics as a catalyst for redevelopment of some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. In 1993, the city and the business community formed the Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA), a nonprofit corporation, to undertake redevelopment projects and urban design improvements. The nonprofit corporation was created because it would have more flexibility and could solicit private funding for redevelopment opportunities. CODA's mission was to spread the benefits from the Olympics to poor neighborhoods, but also to create a physical legacy of urban design improvements that would permanently improve the downtown. CODA thus divided its efforts into two sets of projects: (1) neighborhood redevelopment and (2) pedestrian improvements to key streetscapes between MARTA transit stations and Olympic venues.

CODA identified sixteen Olympic Ring neighborhoods as the focus of its redevelopment efforts. As shown in figure 4, these inner-city neighborhoods surround downtown Atlanta and the Olympic venues; they are some of the poorest in the metropolitan area. Seventy-nine percent of the households have annual incomes less than \$20,000, and 36 percent have incomes less than \$5,000 (CODA 1993). Figure 5 shows the median household income of the block groups in these neighborhoods. Ninety-two percent of their to-

FIGURE 4. Olympic Ring neighborhoods



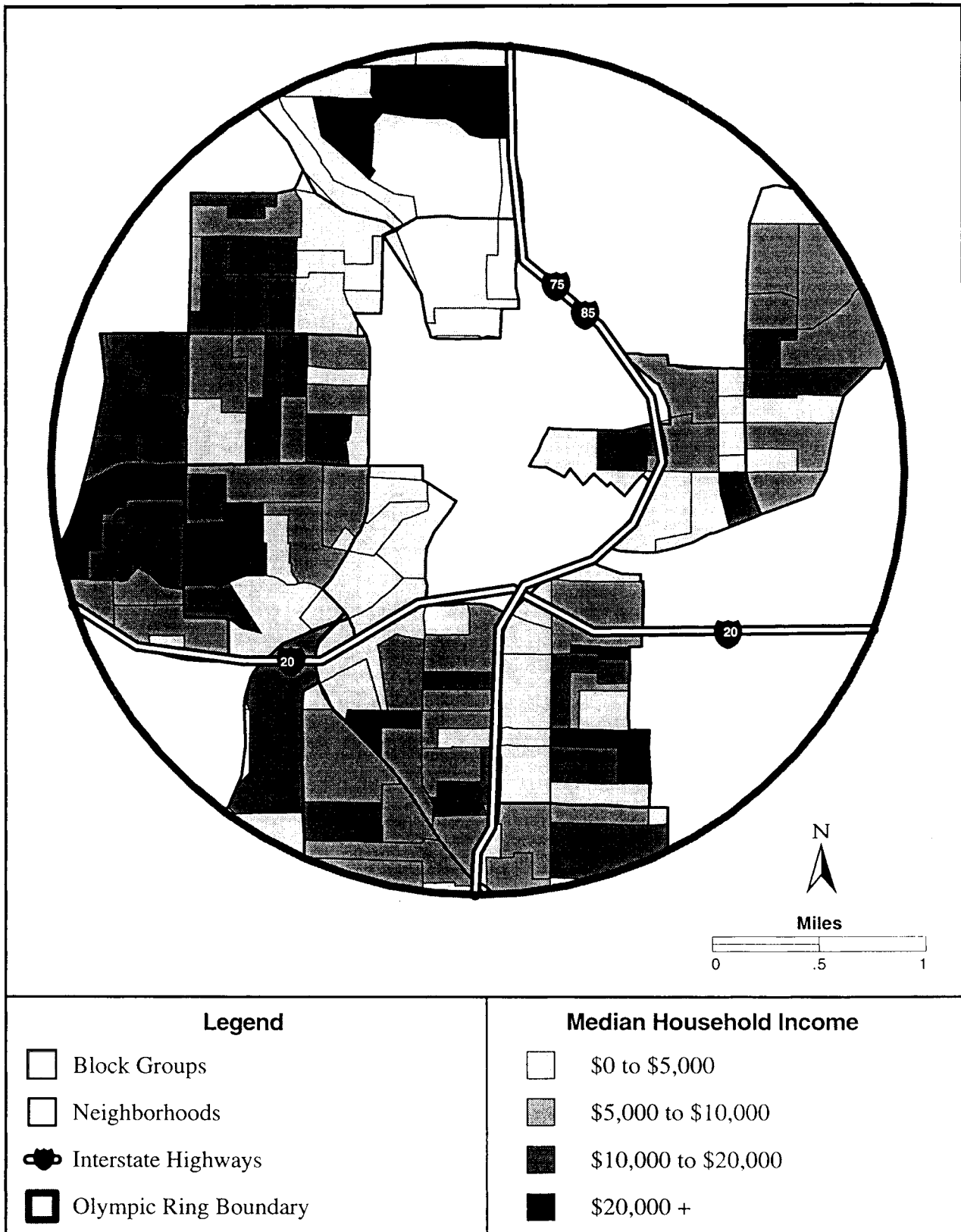


FIGURE 5. Central Atlanta 1990 median household income by block group within CODA neighborhoods

tal 1990 population (52,067) is African-American. They are poorly served, with limited retail opportunities. These areas had much to gain from any redevelopment stimulated by the Olympics.

In the summer of 1993, CODA conducted a detailed survey of housing conditions in the area and created a GIS database to support planning for neighborhood redevelopment. Much of the housing stock was found to be dilapidated or abandoned, and there was an exceptionally large number of vacant lots (CODA 1993). Using this information, the CODA staff prepared neighborhood redevelopment plans and forwarded them to the city council for adoption. The neighborhood redevelopment plans included physical improvements as well as financial and regulatory incentives to encourage neighborhood revitalization. By the end of 1996, plans for five neighborhoods—Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Butler Street/Auburn Avenue, Peoplestown, and the Old Fourth Ward—had been completed and adopted by the city council. There was little funding available, however, to implement the plans.

Because of their high visibility and proximity to Olympic events, two neighborhoods received particular attention. The Summerhill community abuts Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium and the new Olympic Stadium. This neighborhood was well organized before CODA was formed and was thus able to move quickly in capturing support for its redevelopment projects. The most visible of these is the Greenlea Commons housing development, a mixed-income development of 76 new townhouses. Other developments in this neighborhood include 73 new single-family homes in Summerhill South, the renovation of 10 storefronts along Georgia Avenue, and land acquisition for future retail and recreation development. These projects provided new housing for some neighborhood residents, attracted new middle-income residents to the area, and added needed retail development to an underserved area.

Techwood/Clark Howell Homes, the nation's first public housing project, was directly adjacent to the Olympic Village. It was quite dilapidated and contained many abandoned units. Planning for the redevelopment of the Techwood/Clark Howell Homes began in 1991. Because of a series of political and financial problems, actual reconstruction did not begin until the early months of 1996. In a ground-breaking ceremony led by HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, \$42 million in federal funds were dedicated to the project. The entire 60-year-old public housing project was demolished to make way for a new mixed-income development of 900 townhouse and apartment units.

TABLE 3. CODA expenditures for neighborhood improvement

Neighborhood	Amount (in millions of dollars)
Summerhill	\$1.90
Mechanicsville	\$1.10
Vine City/Ashby	\$.93
Butler Street/Auburn Avenue	\$.64
Peoplestown	\$.57
English Avenue	\$.53
Atlanta University	\$.47
Pittsburgh	\$.44
Home Park	\$.28
Old Fourth Ward	\$.22
Castleberry Hill	\$.20
Adair Park	\$.19
Ashview Heights	\$.18
Washington Park	\$.05
Total	\$8.17

Source: Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta

Demand has been strong for the 181 apartment units, which were completed in January 1997. The second phase is now under construction.

Redevelopment was successful in the highly visible Summerhill neighborhood and also in the Techwood/Clark Howell public housing project, which received a large amount of federal funding. CODA had much less success with redevelopment projects in other neighborhoods (Hill 1996). Part of the problem was the separation of CODA from the city's planning and housing departments, so that despite cross-communication and some staff sharing, CODA often found itself beginning its planning from scratch. This was a particularly acute problem because the window of opportunity for investment and redevelopment was extremely narrow and short-lived; once the Games ended, the short-term motivation for decisive action largely evaporated.

CODA found it extremely difficult to secure funding for the large-scale redevelopment efforts originally envisioned. It was a formidable task to find the private funding needed (Harvey 1994); crime and poor schools were perceived as major deterrents to luring the middle-income families who were expected to live in the new developments. These obstacles as well as a history of failed attempts at urban renewal limited CODA's redevelopment funding. Table 3 shows the modest level of expenditures that CODA was able to make on neighborhood improvements.

CODA ceased operation in December 1996. Its re-

TABLE 4. CODA urban design projects (in thousands of dollars)

Project	City Funds	Federal Funds	Private and Other Funds	Total Budget
Peachtree Street Corridor	\$6,098	\$6,500	\$1,077	\$13,675
Auburn Avenue Corridor	\$3,169	\$2,600	\$100	\$5,869
Auburn Market/Dobbs Plaza	\$1,948	\$1,200	\$74	\$3,222
Atlanta University Center/Westside/MLK Corridor	\$4,867	\$3,140	\$3,619	\$11,626
Capitol Avenue Corridor	\$1,840	\$4,000	\$270	\$6,110
International Blvd. Corridor	\$4,703	\$3,200	\$459	\$8,362
Ralph David Abernathy Corridor and Square	\$1,813	\$2,130	\$265	\$4,208
Georgia Avenue Corridor	\$63	\$1,230	\$70	\$1,363
Tenth Street Corridor	\$27	\$0	\$965	\$992
Woodruff Park	\$48	\$0	\$5,887	\$5,935
Marietta Corridor and Parks	\$2	\$0	\$150	\$152
Ga. Tech-Freedom Park Bikeway	\$75	\$240	\$40	\$355
Freedom Park	\$50	\$0	\$730	\$780
Founders' Park/Summerhill Street Extensions	\$325	\$510	\$29	\$864
Local Neighborhood Streets	\$7,167	\$0	\$0	\$7,167
Design, Development, Other Projects/Contingency	\$493	\$0	\$3,785	\$4,278
Total	\$32,688	\$24,750	\$17,520	\$74,958

Source: Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta

development mission passed to a newly created Atlanta Public Development Authority (APDA). This housing and economic development "superagency" consolidated the city programs with bonding authority, including the Downtown Development Authority, the Urban Residential Financing Authority, and the Urban Residential Development Corporation. The APDA has organized the city programs intended to attract private sector investments (including CODA) into the Atlanta Economic Renaissance Corporation (*Atlanta Business Chronicle* 1997).

Obviously, CODA did not represent the entire redevelopment in Atlanta during the Olympic period. Other efforts not related to the Olympics, particularly Habitat for Humanity and The Atlanta Project of the Carter Center, have been active in housing and social service issues in the Olympic Ring neighborhoods. On December 21, 1994, the Department of Housing and Urban Development chose Atlanta as one of six cities to receive a federal Empowerment Zone designation, which is intended to promote redevelopment and to create new jobs for residents within its boundaries. The designation brings \$100 million in redevelopment funding and another \$150 million in potential tax breaks. The Atlanta Empowerment Zone includes all but one of CODA's Olympic Ring neighborhoods. With its significant funding and more focused mis-

sion, the Empowerment Zone may be more successful than CODA was in neighborhood redevelopment. It is unclear to what extent, if any, it will use the plans prepared by CODA. In short, although the Olympics did much for the city, the benefits to the inner city neighborhoods that surround downtown were relatively small.

Urban Design Improvements

CODA had more success with its urban design projects. Pedestrian plazas, trees, street furniture, and open space were designed to enhance the image of the city for Olympic visitors and to improve pedestrian access from MARTA transit stations to the Olympic venues. Table 4 lists CODA's major urban design projects and their funding sources. These amenities were in place for the Olympics and have now become permanent, enhancing the downtown area. CODA raised nearly \$75 million dollars for these projects from a variety of sources, including the city, federal programs, and private foundations. Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds and the 1994 infrastructure bond issue were two particularly important funding sources (Young 1994). It is important to recognize that CODA was able to raise significantly more funding for urban design projects than for neighborhood redevelopment.

Centennial Olympic Park

In the fall of 1993, there was a major reshuffling of the missions among the three main Olympic organizations. ACOG President Billy Payne unveiled a plan for a new public park between the downtown hotel district and the Georgia World Congress Center. The park project markedly expanded ACOG's role beyond developing the athletic venues and staging the Games. It now undertook significant redevelopment. The \$150 million Centennial Olympic Park was neither planned nor implemented by the City of Atlanta or CODA. In fact, prominent city officials remained unaware of the park proposal until the day before it was unveiled in the local newspaper.

The park served as a festival meeting place for visitors and residents during the Games. A number of major corporations built temporary pavilions to market themselves and provide entertainment. Centennial Park was the only Olympic facility that was not subject to tight security controls. The park received international attention when a pipe bomb exploded in the early morning hours of July 21, killing two people and injuring over a hundred more. To date, those responsible for the bombing have not been identified.

After the Games, a permanent 21-acre park remained. A nonprofit corporation, the Centennial Olympic Park Area, Inc. (COPA), was created to market the remaining acreage for housing, office, and entertainment uses. A number of developers have expressed interest, especially in building housing and entertainment facilities, but no development has begun.

Atlanta's business community enthusiastically supported Centennial Olympic Park. In fact, the Chamber of Commerce took the lead in raising money for it. Unfortunately, financing the park largely with corporate contributions severely reduced CODA's already limited ability to obtain financing from the private sector for neighborhood redevelopment. Centennial Park, the largest in-town park to be created in the past 25 years, clearly is a valuable amenity that will benefit downtown office workers, conventioners, and tourists. It appears likely to attract new in-town housing and entertainment, although to what extent is as yet unclear.

Lessons from Atlanta

The 1996 Olympics were very successful in creating three of the four types of benefits that can come from such an event: short-term economic stimulus, a legacy of sports facilities and urban design amenities, and marketing tourism and business relocation. Unfortunately, however, only minimal redevelopment in low-income areas resulted.

Make no mistake: the Atlanta economy did benefit from the construction stimulus in the years leading up to the Games. During the Games, however, visitor spending was well below initial estimates and was highly concentrated in areas immediately adjacent to the venues and to Centennial Olympic Park. In other parts of town, many hotels and restaurants reported significantly lower than normal sales volume during the Games. Street vendors not located immediately adjacent to the major venues did very little business. Even shops and resorts in areas up to 150 miles away reported slower than normal business during the summer of 1996, due to customers' fears of price gouging and congestion. As a result, the overall economic stimulus was somewhat less than initially projected, especially for a larger area like the entire state of Georgia.

The Olympics resulted in more than a billion dollars being invested in new and refurbished sports facilities and improved infrastructure. It is likely that the city would have had to build a new baseball stadium at some point. While other cities are struggling with bond issues to fund the new stadiums required to keep big league sports franchises, the Olympics have allowed Atlanta to acquire a state-of-the-art ballpark for little direct city investment. Professional sports facilities are important in competing for conventions, and they bring suburban residents to visit downtown.

The new pedestrian plazas and the Centennial Olympic Park are important urban design amenities that make downtown more attractive to visit. The Olympics also were an incentive to begin to deal with Atlanta's chronic infrastructure problems. The most glaring problems were addressed; many remain.

The new dormitory housing increases the 24-hour population near the downtown, and post-Olympic residential development around Centennial Olympic Park may add middle-class residents to the downtown area. Attracting both visitors and residents to downtown is important for maintaining its viability. The Olympics provided a start in this regard, but the magnitude of the effect remains to be seen.

The Olympics brought a marketing spotlight to Atlanta that was second to none. Even with the oft-cited early glitches in some of the operational aspects of the Games and despite the tragic bombing, Atlanta benefited from weeks of exposure on national and international television. For most of the United States, the Olympics created a more favorable impression of Atlanta (Mitchell 1997). They also provided an important international identity; the fact that, before the Games, many international business people routinely confused Atlanta with Atlantic City highlights the need for this exposure (*Financial Times* 1994). Georgia Power's Project Legacy, which used the Olympics

to recruit new businesses, has attracted two dozen new firms or significant expansions, representing an investment of \$177 million and 3,400 new jobs (Quinn 1997). However, many of these firms have chosen to locate in suburban areas or in other parts of the state. Thus, at this point it does not appear that the Olympics attracted a significant number of businesses to the downtown.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment in the legacy of the Games was to the hope, held by many, that the Olympics would motivate Atlanta to begin solving some of the social problems of its inner-city neighborhoods (Holsendolph 1995). Approximately \$100 million was allocated to neighborhood redevelopment. The Summerhill neighborhood received significant benefits, and the Techwood/Clark Howell project probably would not have been undertaken without the Games. But the other low-income neighborhoods received little direct benefit from the 1996 Olympics. The conditions present there before the Games are still there today. Perhaps it was unrealistic to expect that an event like the Olympics would motivate people to tackle deeply embedded social ills. The initial expectations of how the Olympics would benefit the city, and particularly its low-income residents, may have been too high.

Although these were the "Atlanta Olympics," the city government played a limited role. The "no new taxes" pledge limited the city's influence on most of the major decisions, from the location of the venues to the creation of Centennial Olympic Park. The city probably would have given a higher priority to projects to benefit the neighborhoods, but had no means to fund them; and the business community raised funds for the projects it considered important. The lack of public funds also meant that public participation in planning for the Olympics was limited. Since most of the funds, sponsors, and development organizations were in the private sector, there was little impetus for a truly open, public process in preparing plans and projects.

Another difficulty that became apparent in Atlanta's Olympic planning was the fractured pattern of authority, which precluded comprehensive planning. Many individual projects were undertaken. However, there was no comprehensive plan that linked the individual projects into a cohesive whole. Huntoon and Wilson (1994) suggest that the benefits of large-scale events are greatest when the development associated with them is carefully integrated with the existing plans for a city. In Atlanta, there was little synergy, because a coordinated strategy was never developed.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from Atlanta's experience is that large-scale events provide only limited op-

portunities to remake a city. It is true that the Columbian World Exposition gave permanent shape to the urban form of Chicago, but more recent events have left more modest legacies. The Atlanta Olympics were undoubtedly good for the local economy and created a valuable physical legacy. But because it was not integrated with a more comprehensive planning effort, that legacy did little to reshape the existing patterns of development.

The Olympics and other large-scale events can generate large new financial resources, but it is difficult to direct those resources toward the most pressing urban problems. One can only wonder what the long-term revitalization would have been if a billion dollars had been directed toward improving the police and the public schools instead of building and renovating sports facilities. When contemplating such events, planners and elected officials must remember that the Olympics, or any other large-scale events, are not "magic bullets" for curing the range of problems that confront our cities.

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