

Excavating Atlanta, Episode 4- Transportation

Below the producer has curated some materials that serve to supplement some of the concepts introduced in the discussion. There are time stamps to help you navigate which part of the discussion the materials pertain to.

3:00 Research on the Effects of Bussing

Dr. Wyzcalkowski talks about a project that he co-authored that studies the effects of transit systems and the spatial distribution of poverty. It can be found [here](#).

5:00 Old Maps of Atlanta

You can observe in the below sequence of maps how Atlanta's geography evolved around the central railroad lines:

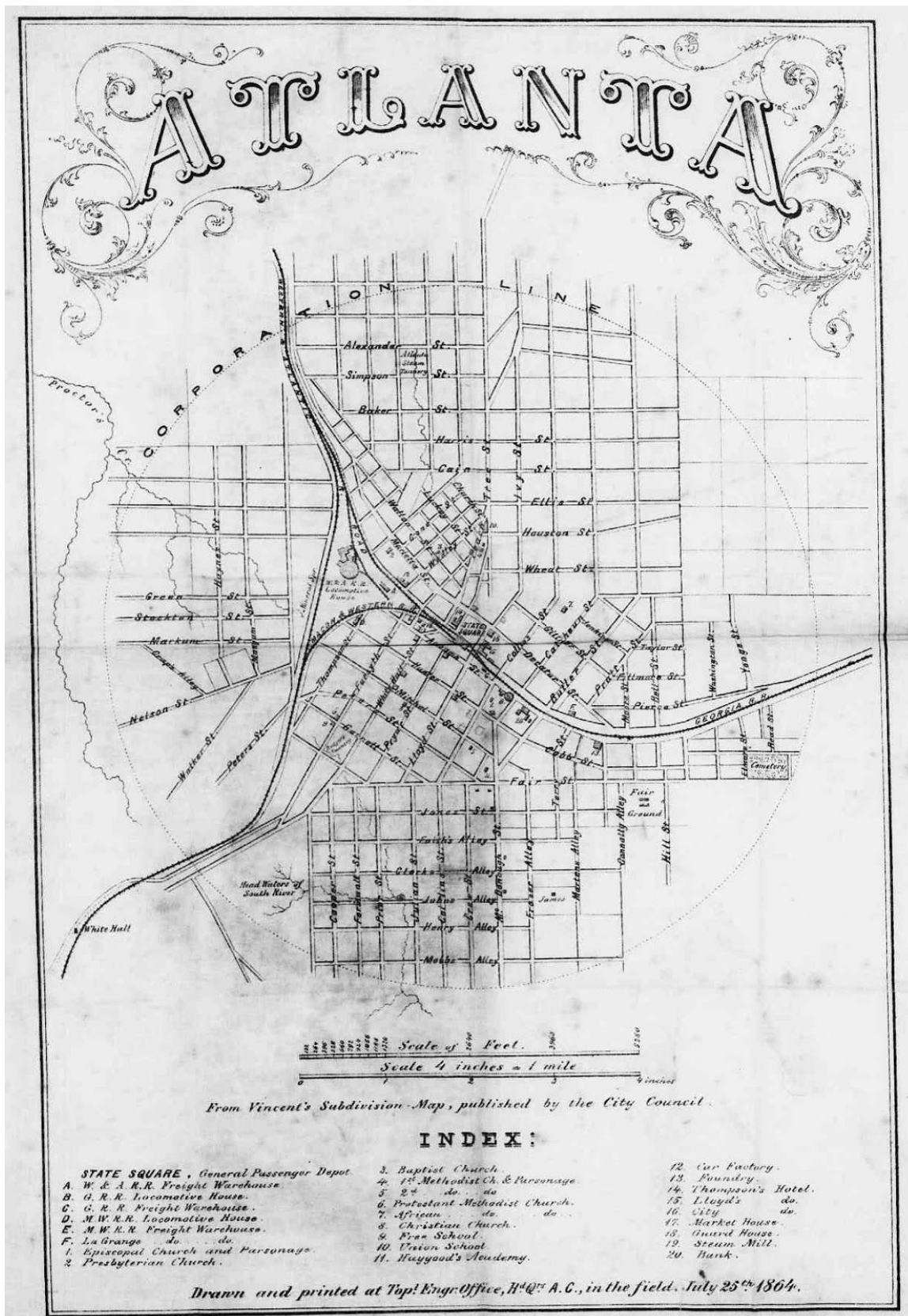


EDWARD A. VINCENTS
OLD MAP
ATLANTA
SCALE, 800 FEET TO ONE INCH.

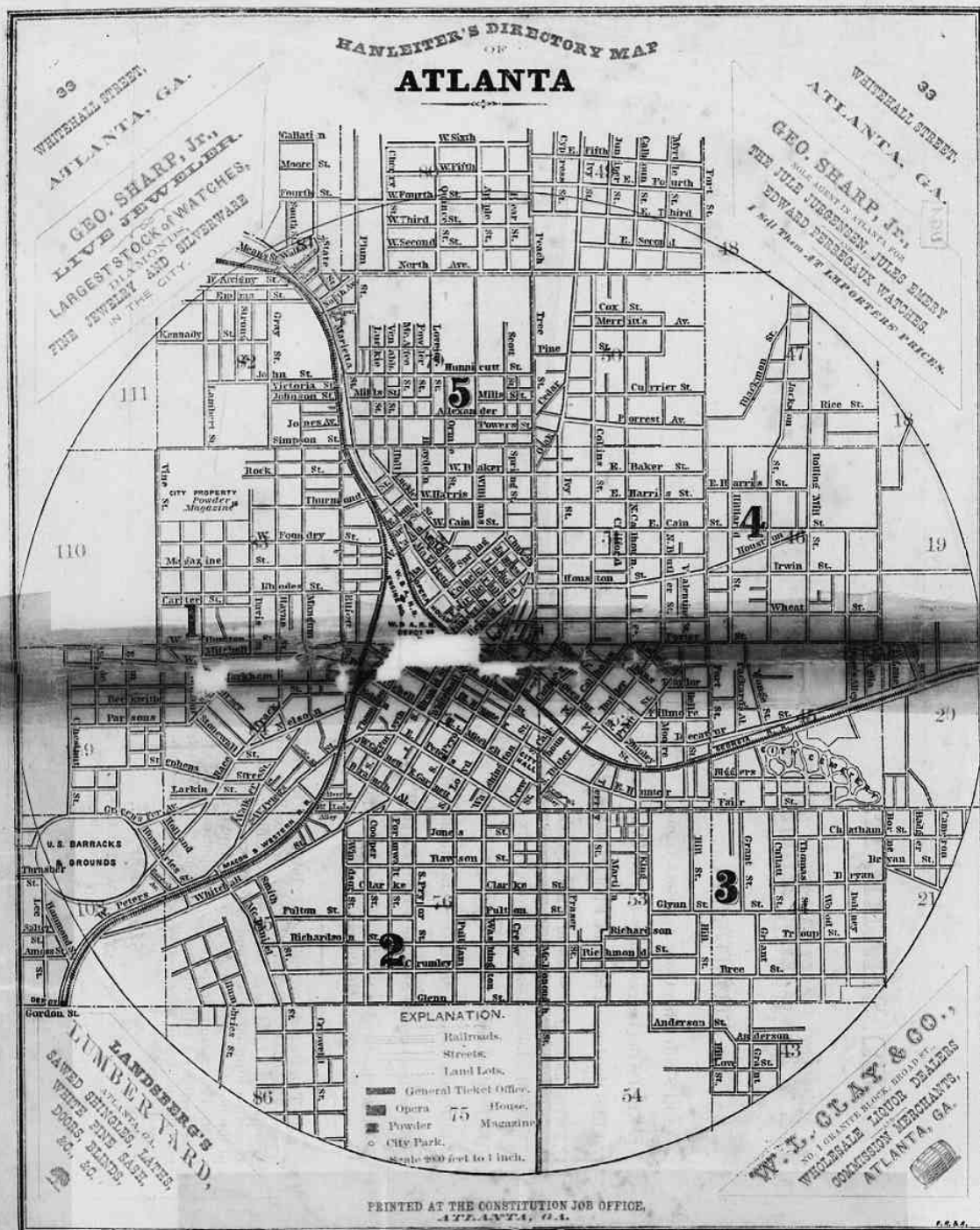
Note:
These Numbers are City
Numbers, and Deeds refer to them
..... Whether sub-divisions or not.

N.B.
The City Line has been extended.

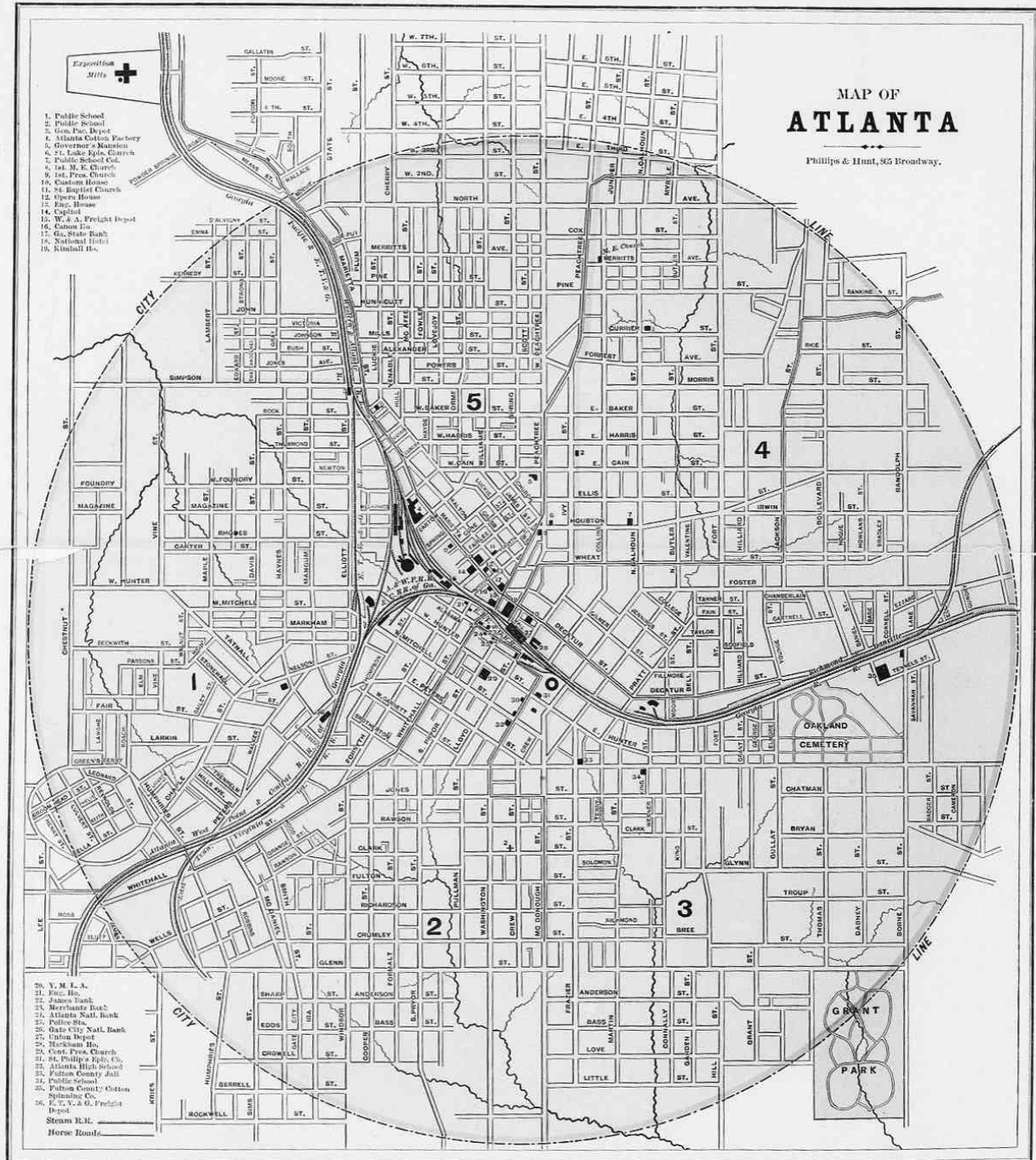
Atlanta ca. 1864



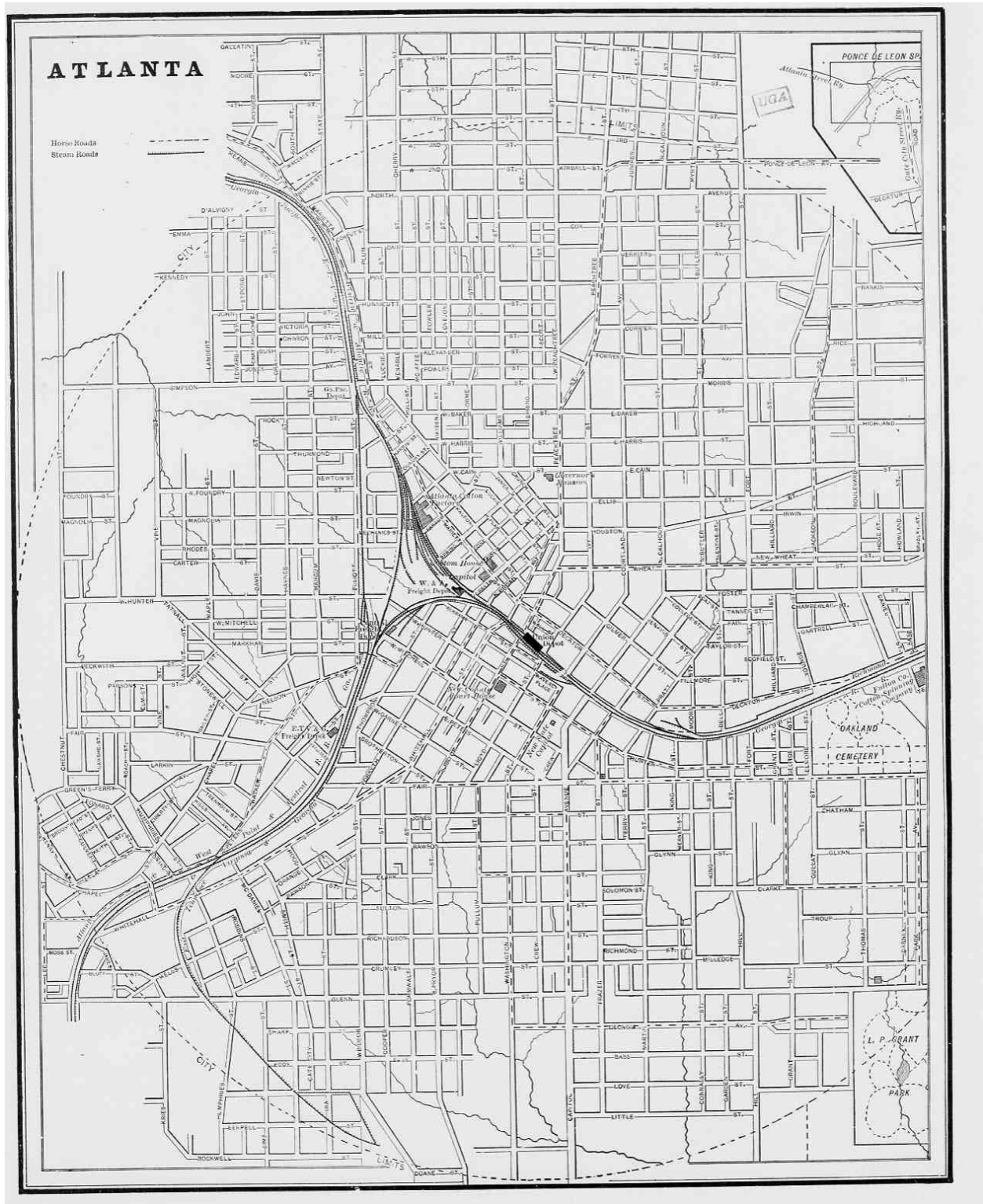
Atlanta ca. 1870



Atlanta ca. 1886



Atlanta ca. 1894

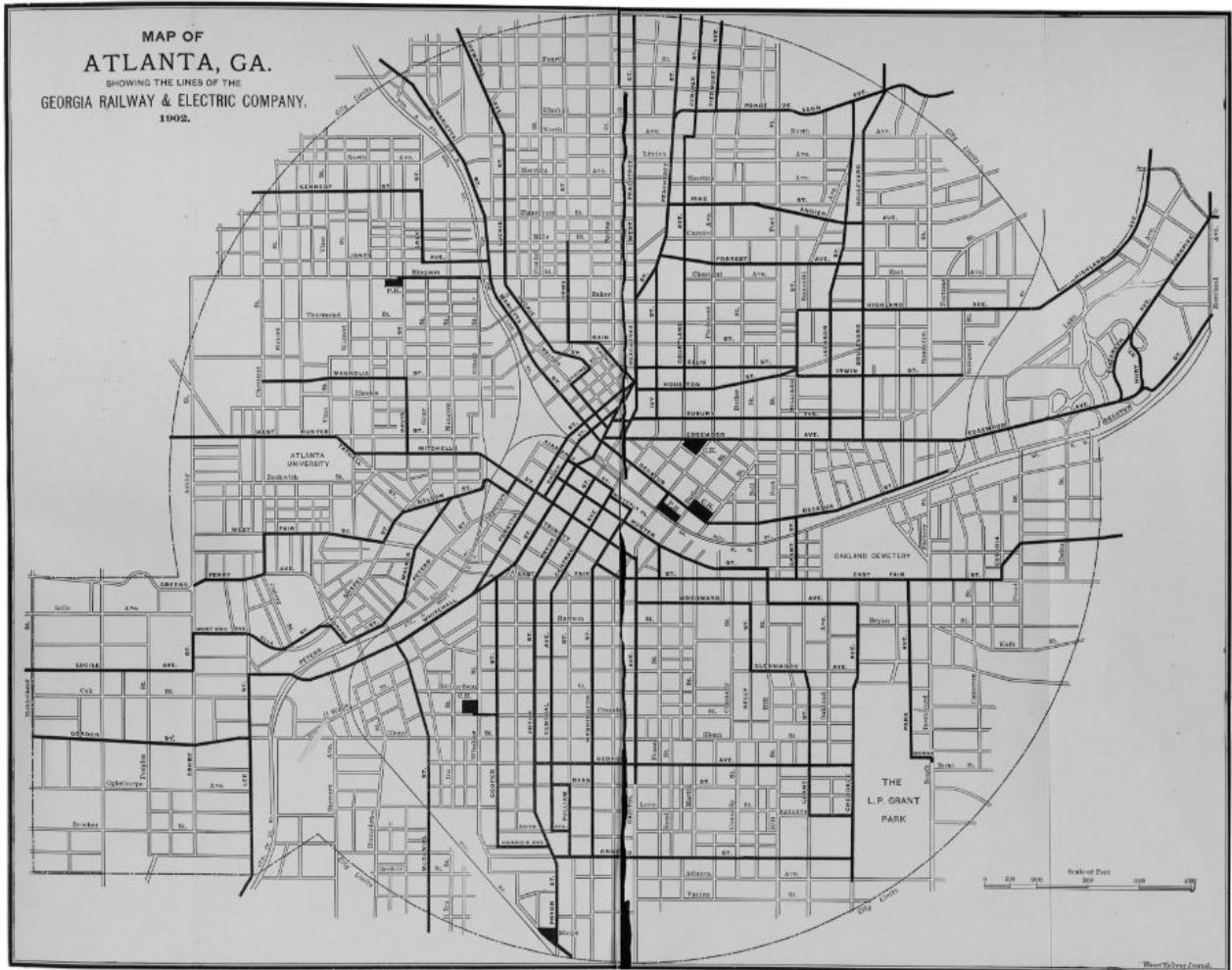


Atlanta ca. 1919

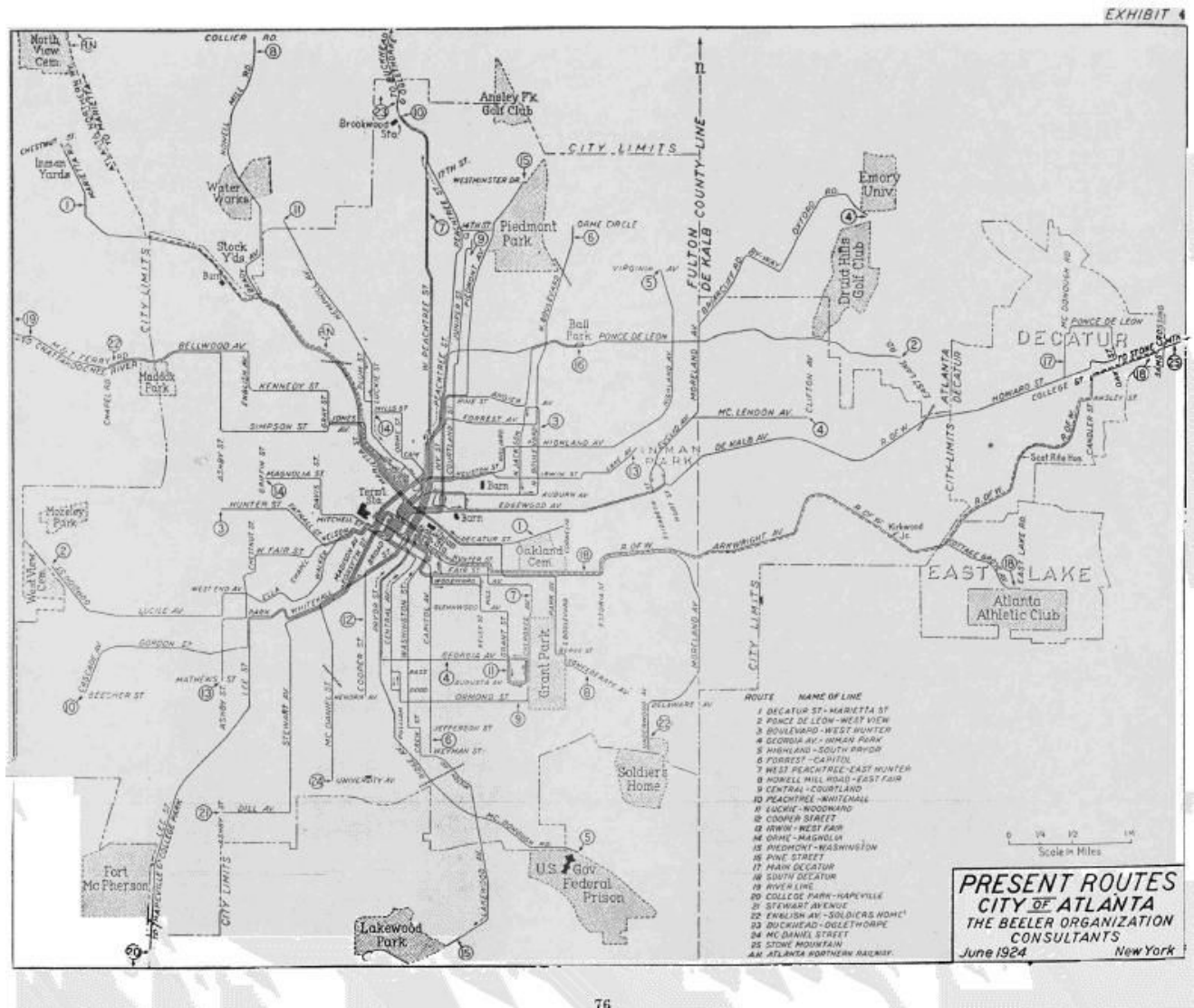


6:40 Atlanta's Earliest Electric Streetcars

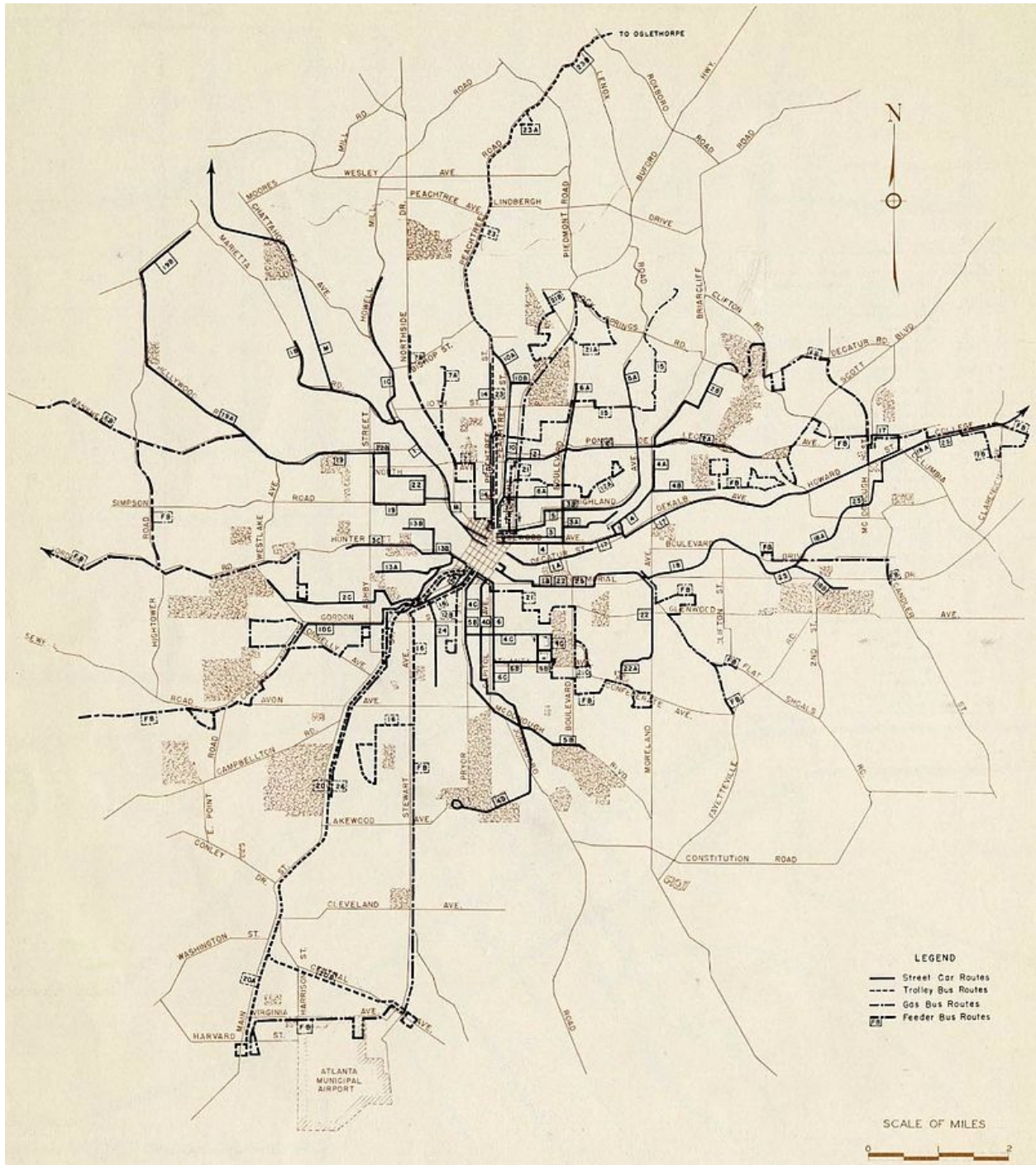
Map ca. 1902 of the Electric Streetcar grid when all of the different street railways were consolidated under the Georgia Railway and Electric Company



Streetcar grid ca. 1924



Streetcar grid ca. 1946



9:25 Population of Metro Atlanta

According to the U.S. Census, the metro region's populations grew by 128% between 1970 and 2000. During the same three decades, the population of the City of Atlanta decreased by about 16%. Not only did the metro region become more sprawling as a whole, but patterns of regional inequity were pervasive in the late 20th century. Eighty-six percent of the regions population growth in the 1980s occurred in Cobb, Gwinnett, and northern Fulton counties. (p. 16)

[Opportunity Deferred](#), Partnership for Southern Equity

It should also be noted that other factors that contributed to white flight during this period was the urban design standards that favored suburban development and the integration of public schools (see *Excavating Atlanta*, episodes 2 and 3).

12:00 Highway Construction and Slum Clearance

In the previous episode guide of *Excavating Atlanta*, you can read about how Federal Highway Construction was tailored to remove “urban blight,” which were low-income neighborhoods that the business elite of Atlanta sought to remove using the development of interstates.

The Sweet Auburn district, a pre-dominantly African-American business district was severed from the downtown business community and part of the historic neighborhoods of [Summerhill](#) and Grant Park were also razed to make room for the highways.

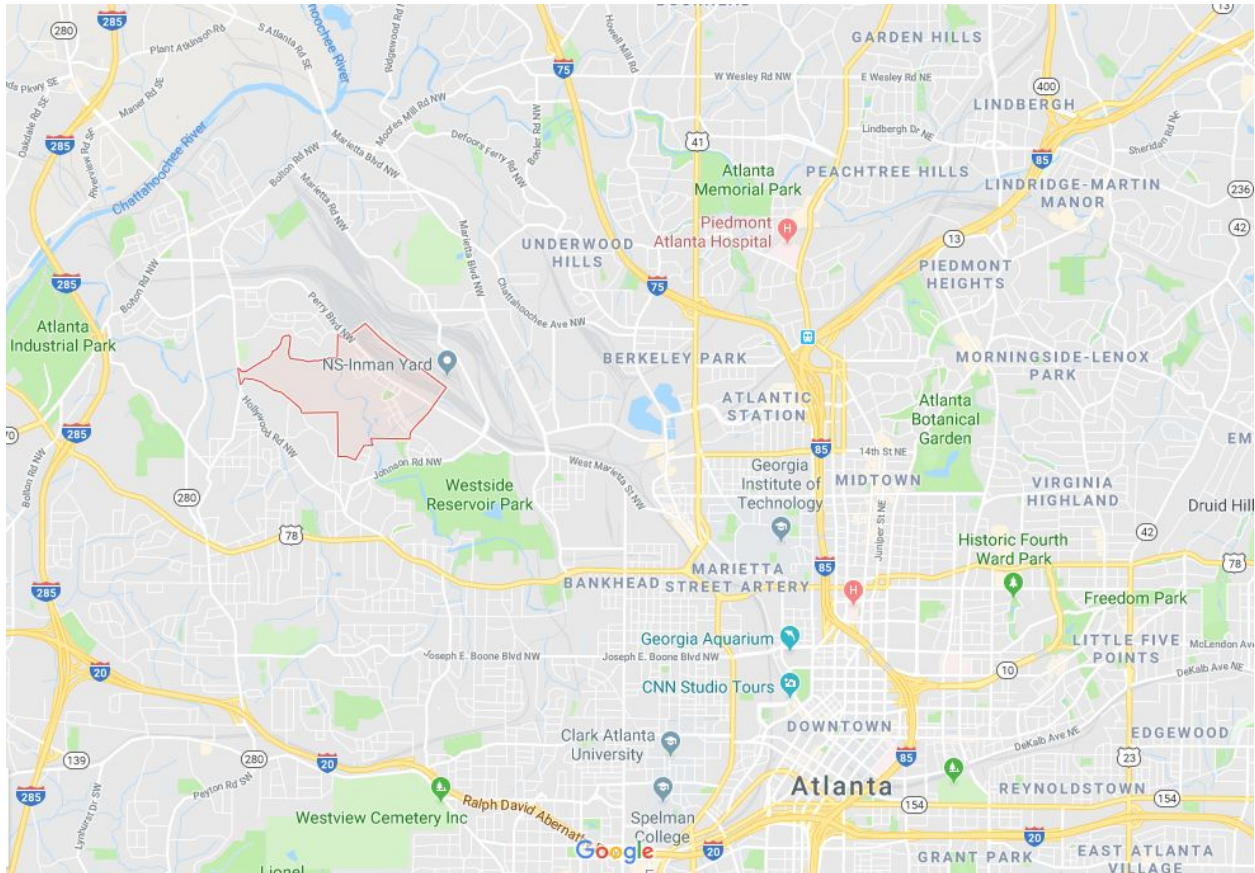
Read more about the history of Summerhill and preservation efforts: <https://www.summerhillatl.com/>

13:20 Density in Atlanta

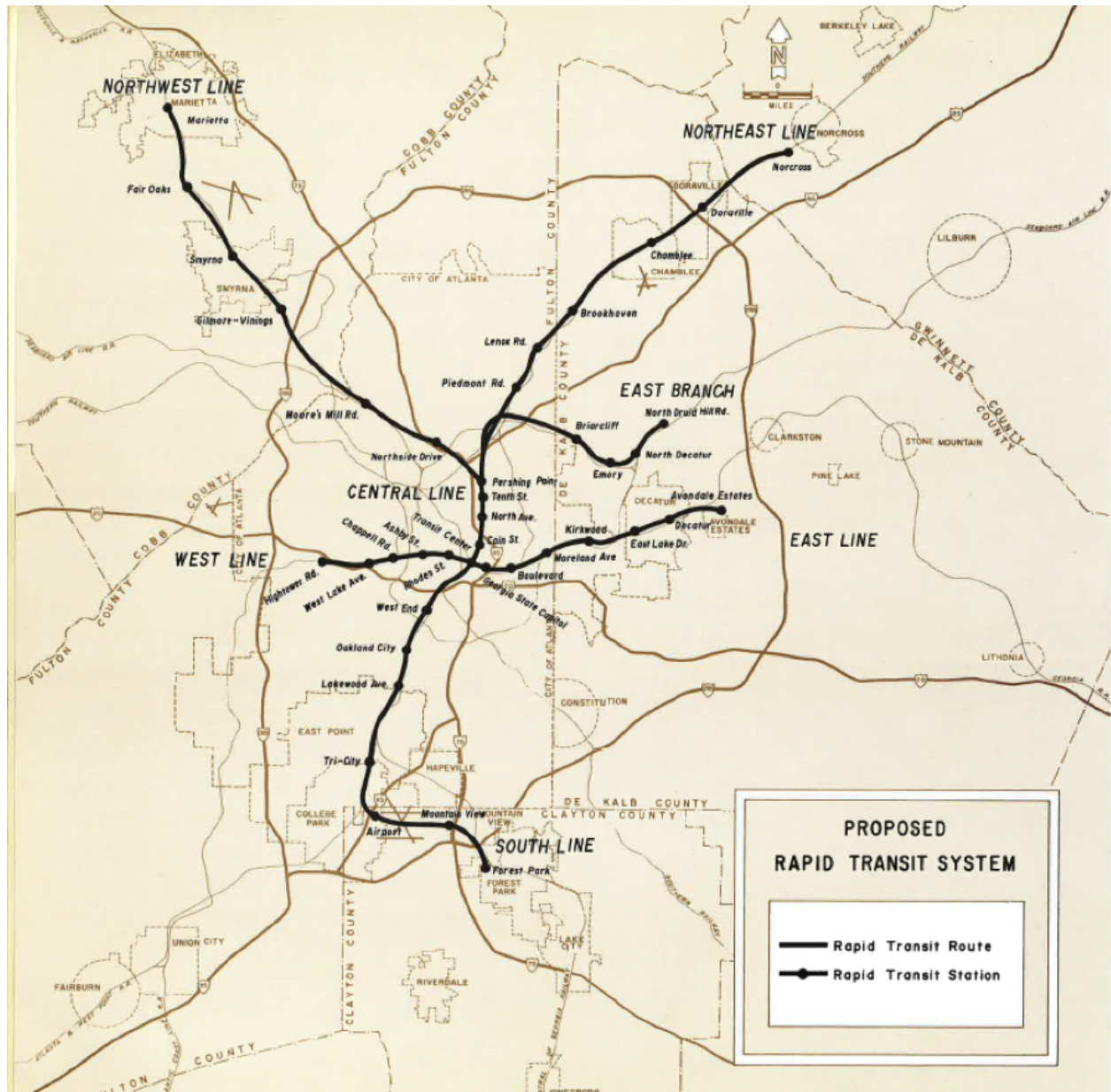
In 2016, Joseph Hurley published an [article](#) on Atlanta's historic lack of density on the Atlanta Studies blog. Urban design standards in the early twentieth century discouraged developers from building mixed-use developments, which allow people to live near where they shop, eat, and work. Instead, single-use development and single-family homes in suburban layouts like cul-de-sacs, were seen as more desirable, and were subsidized. You can still see the effects of these policies reflected in Atlanta's density [today](#). The population density of Atlanta continues to affect the practicality of rail versus busses as the most effective/efficient public transit options.

15:00 Proposed MARTA Plan and Perry Homes

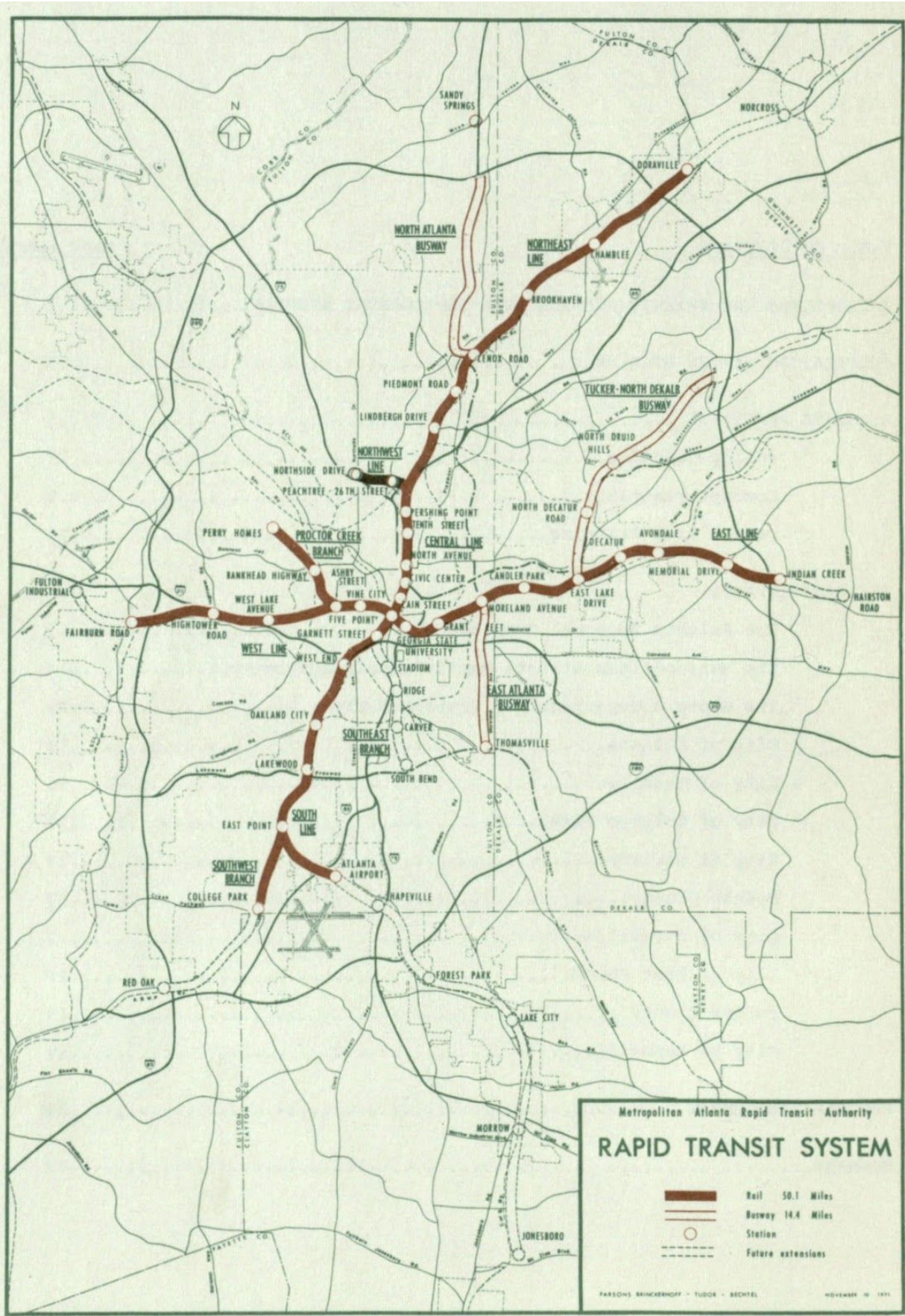
Perry Homes was a public housing complex with over 1,000 units that was eventually torn down in 1999. Today it is replaced by West Highlands.



Below is a map of the original proposed plan for MARTA in 1967. You can see that the proposed NW line misses Perry homes and has many more proposed lines that serve the Northern, primarily white, suburbs. This map came despite the fact that an independent contracted consulting firm, Vorhees, verified that rapid rail did not make sense for Atlanta based on its population density. They advocated for an extensive bus system with rapid rail only through the Peachtree corridor.



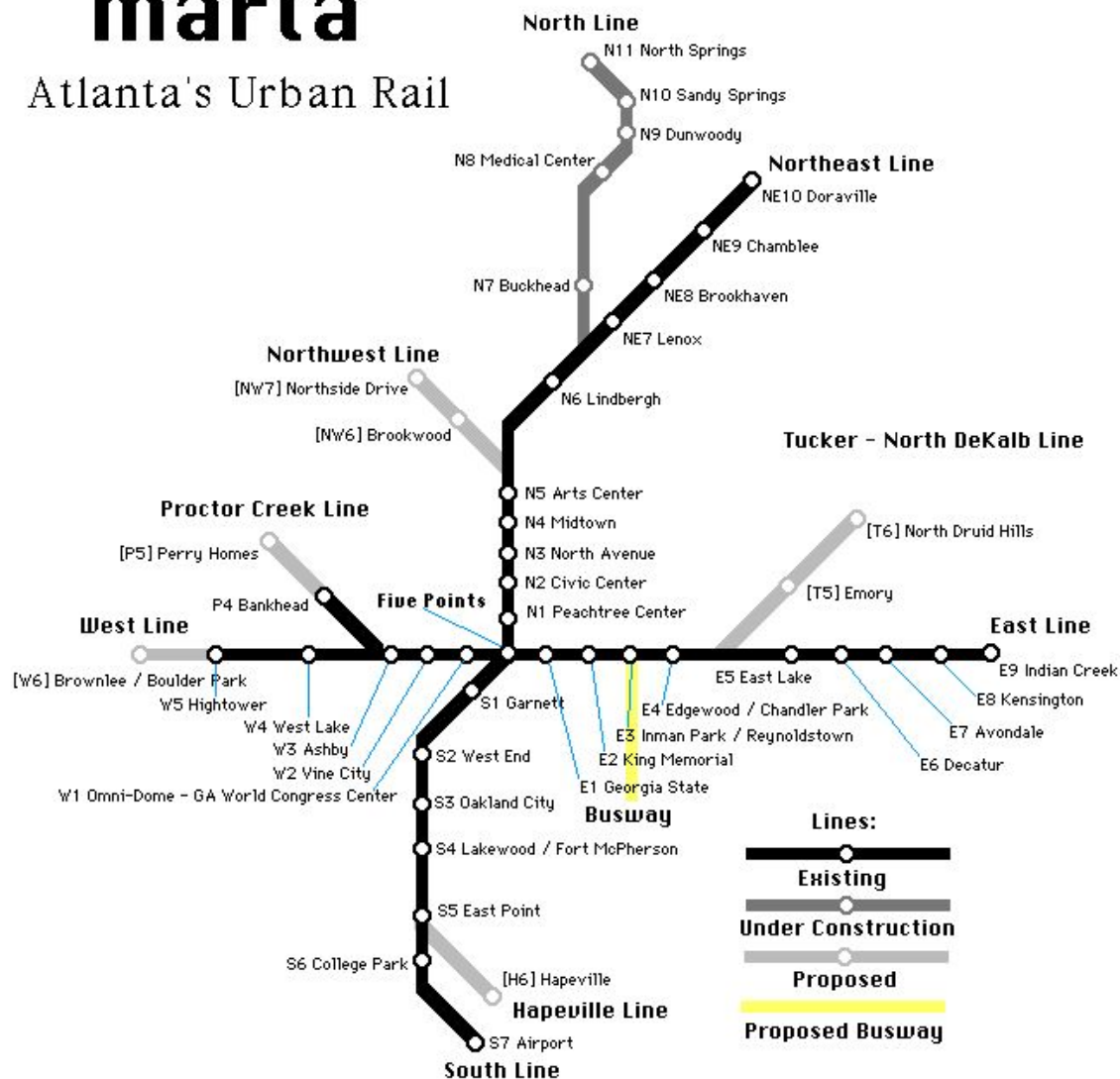
Ultimately, voters in Gwinnett and Clayton counties did not approve of this plan. The map of MARTA that was approved by voters in the 1971 referendum is below.



In 1986, MARTA announced that it would build the northline, under pressure by the business community. African American leaders protested, noting that the promise to extend to Perry Homes, one of the most densely populated public housing area, with real need for MARTA, still had not been fulfilled.

marta

Atlanta's Urban Rail



© Loren Petrich

26:10 Atlanta Parking, And Lots Of It

Starting on page 26 of the Final Report titled, [Parking Today: Downtown Atlanta Parking Assessment Existing Conditions](#) you can see the abundance of parking available downtown, which is almost never fully occupied.

27:30 MARTA Expansion, Not About Race?

Clarence Stone (*Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion*) notes that Clayton and Gwinnett counties' (and Cobb's) opposition to MARTA was partly racial. Cobb, Clayton, and Gwinnett today have very different racial composition than they did when MARTA was being constructed:

The suburban resistance to MARTA typifies a larger trend observed in many American metropolitan regions during the later decades of the 20th century, especially in Atlanta. In his book of the same name, Author Kevin M. Kruse describes "white flight," as a racialized severing of ties with older urban areas, enabled and encouraged by the federal and local government decisions described above. In the homogenous suburbs, a "rhetoric of rights and responsibilities" thrived and whites used segregationist phrases such as "freedom of choice" to support their lack of concern with problems in the metro's urban core and opposition to metro-wide initiatives like annexation by the City and MARTA expansion. A Georgia state legislator said in 1971, "the suburbanite says to himself, 'The reason I worked for so many years was to get away from pollution, bad schools and crime, and I'll be damned if I'll see it all follow me.'" In MARTA opposition, the attitude was exemplified by episodes such as a Cobb County commissioner's promise to "stock the Chattahoochee with piranha" to keep MARTA away or 1987 bumper stickers that read, "Share Atlanta Crime – Support MARTA.(pp. 16)

-Partnership for Southern Equity, [Opportunity Deferred](#)

48:00 Transit as a Means to Segregate

Ultimately, the ability to have a car is not as accessible to the poorest of Atlanta's population. Therefore, many who ride MARTA are transit-dependent. These people are increasingly being displaced to areas that do not have as much MARTA service, or any public transit. For example, in 2010, 85% of Atlanta's poor lived in suburbs (p.17, [Opportunity Deferred](#))