
DOWNTOWNS, PLAZAS, AND VOIDS



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in collaboration with *ETH Studio Basel*

Summer Semester 2011

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DOWNTOWNS, PLAZAS, AND VOIDS

DELINEATING TERRITORY

Orlando: Amalgamation of Urban Cores

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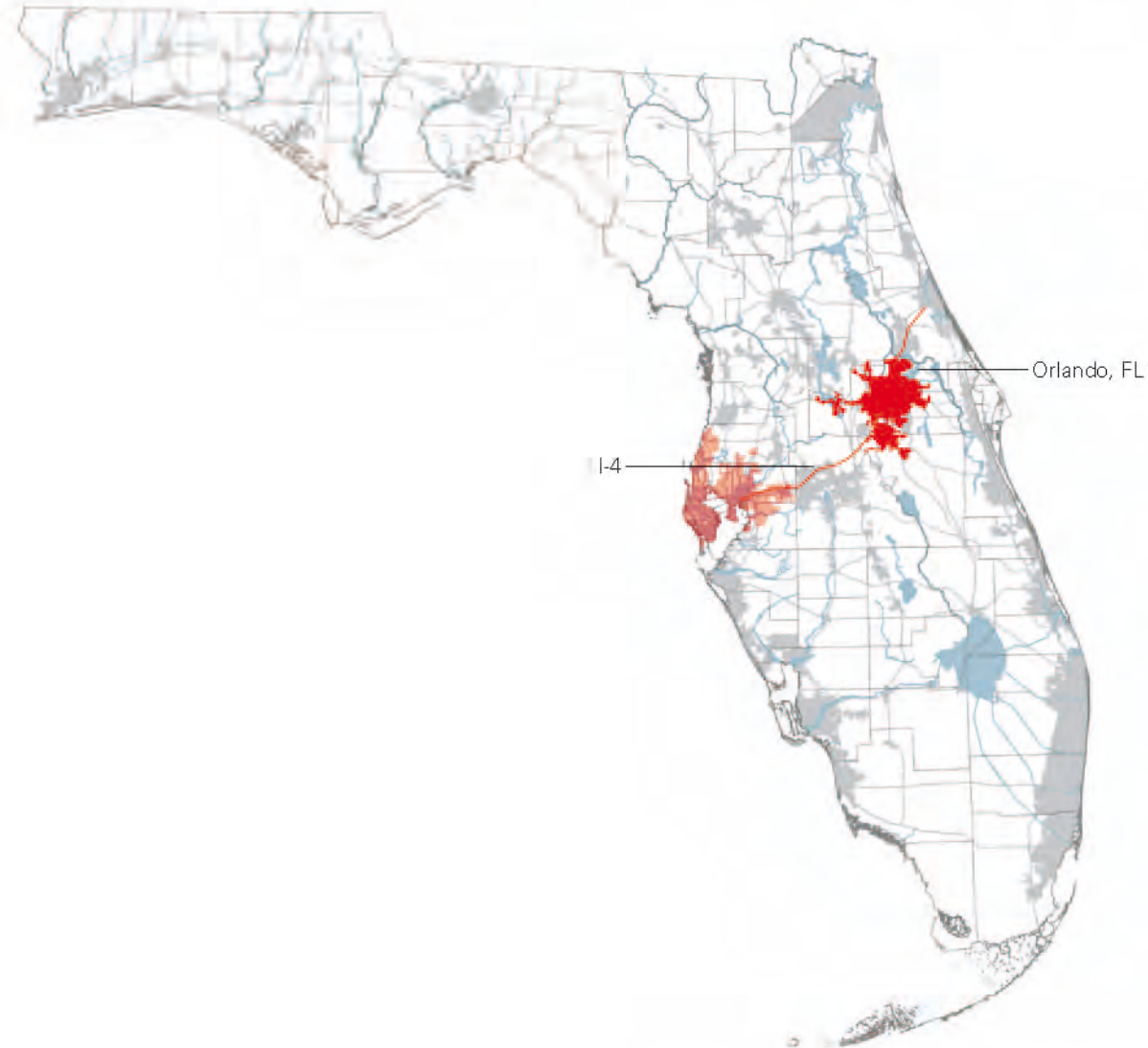


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DELINEATING TERRITORY

Orlando, FL and Tampa, FL are two epicenters within the Central Florida region. Their territories are synonymous with the evolution of the citrus and phosphate industries, Tampa's ports, and Disney World. Linked by Interstate 4 these two centers form territorial end caps to a rapidly growing megalopolis of interconnected suburbs.

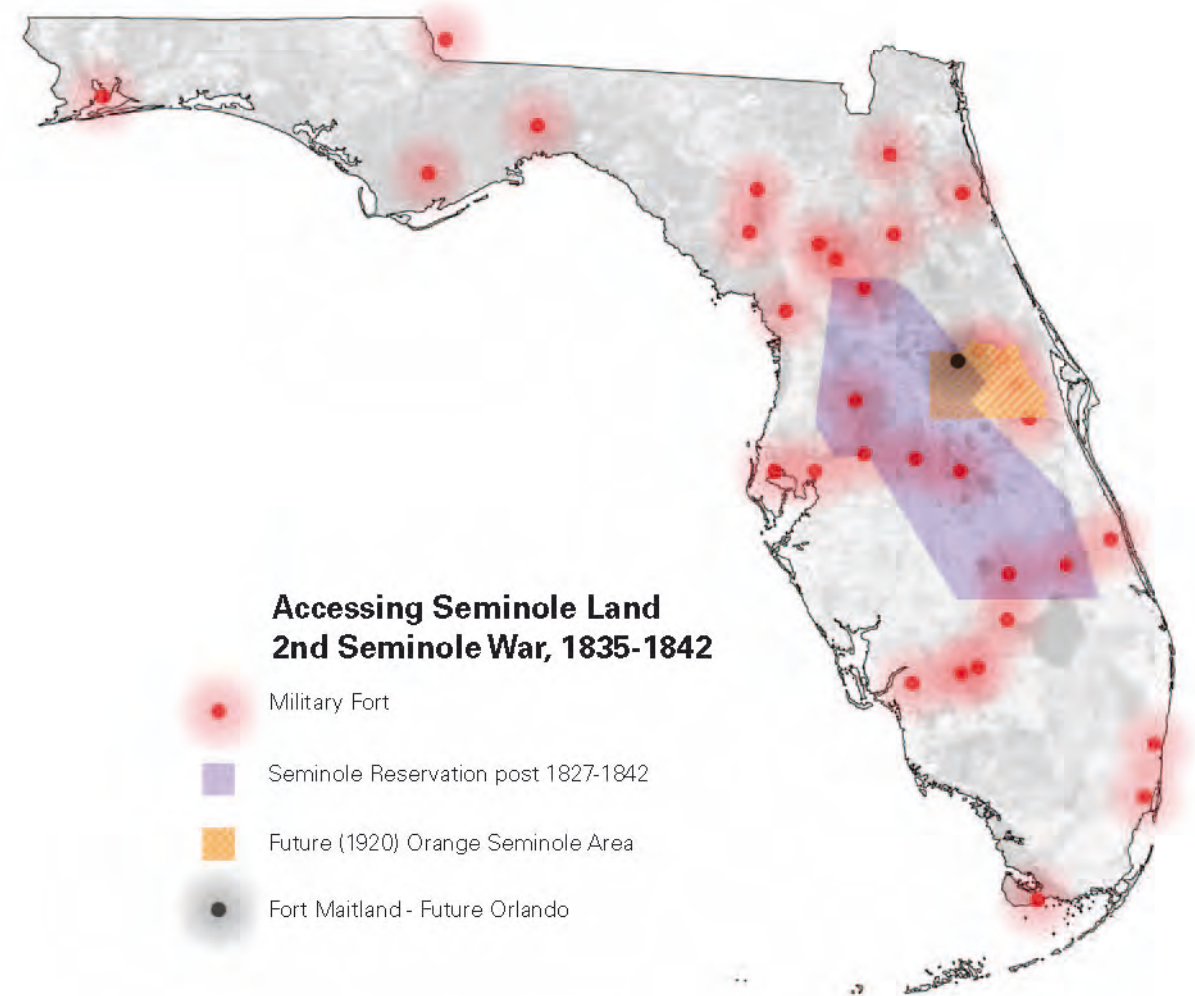
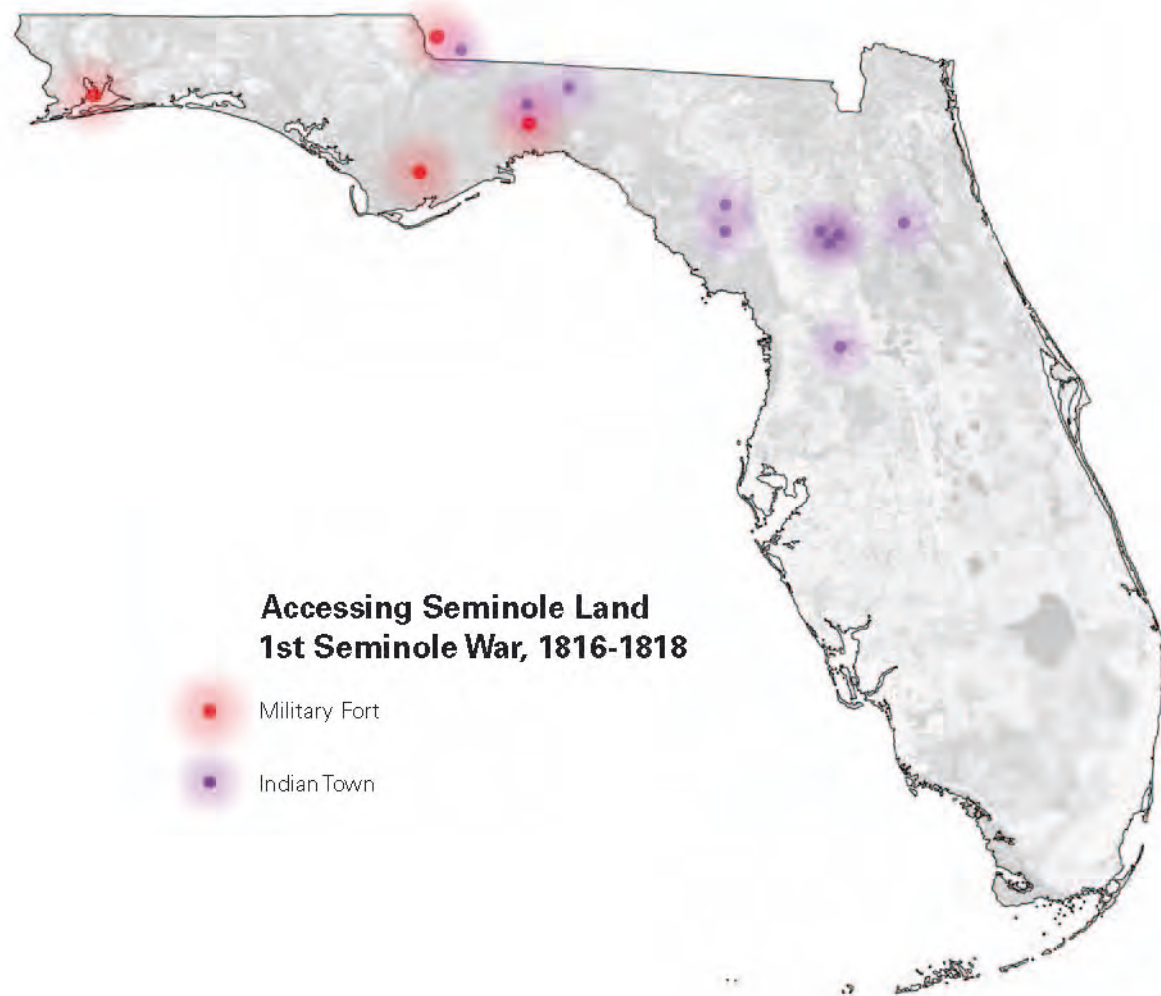


Orlando: Amalgamation of Urban Cores

The Orlando Metro area is the hub city of the Orlando-Kissimmee area. This territory includes portions of Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Lake Counties with an estimated population of 20,032,496. The evolution of this metropolis was not a centrally concentric growth but rather an amalgamation of multiple towns and city centers. This multiplicity of cores was established in the pioneer era and amplified through the Citrus Boom, culminating at complete integration during the Disney and suburban movements of the past 50 years.



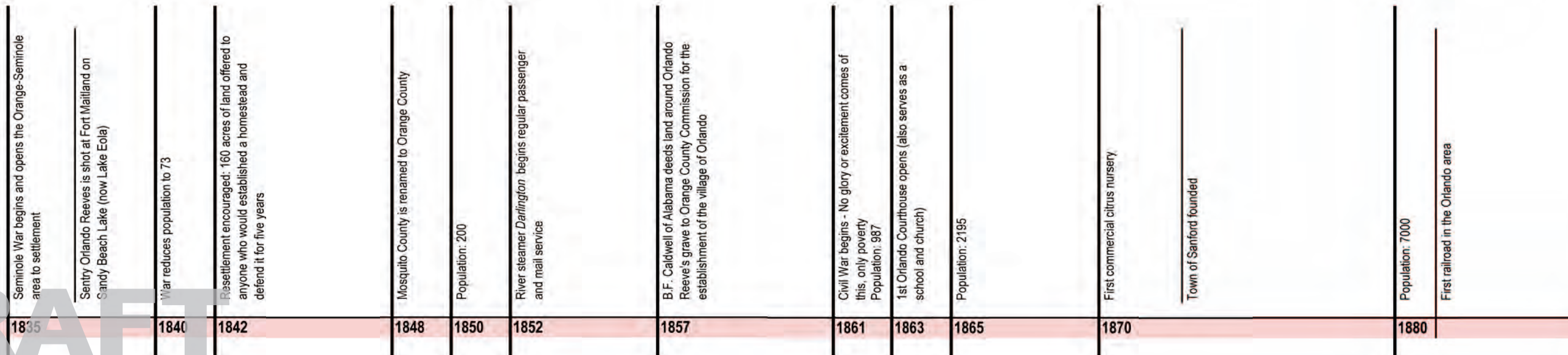
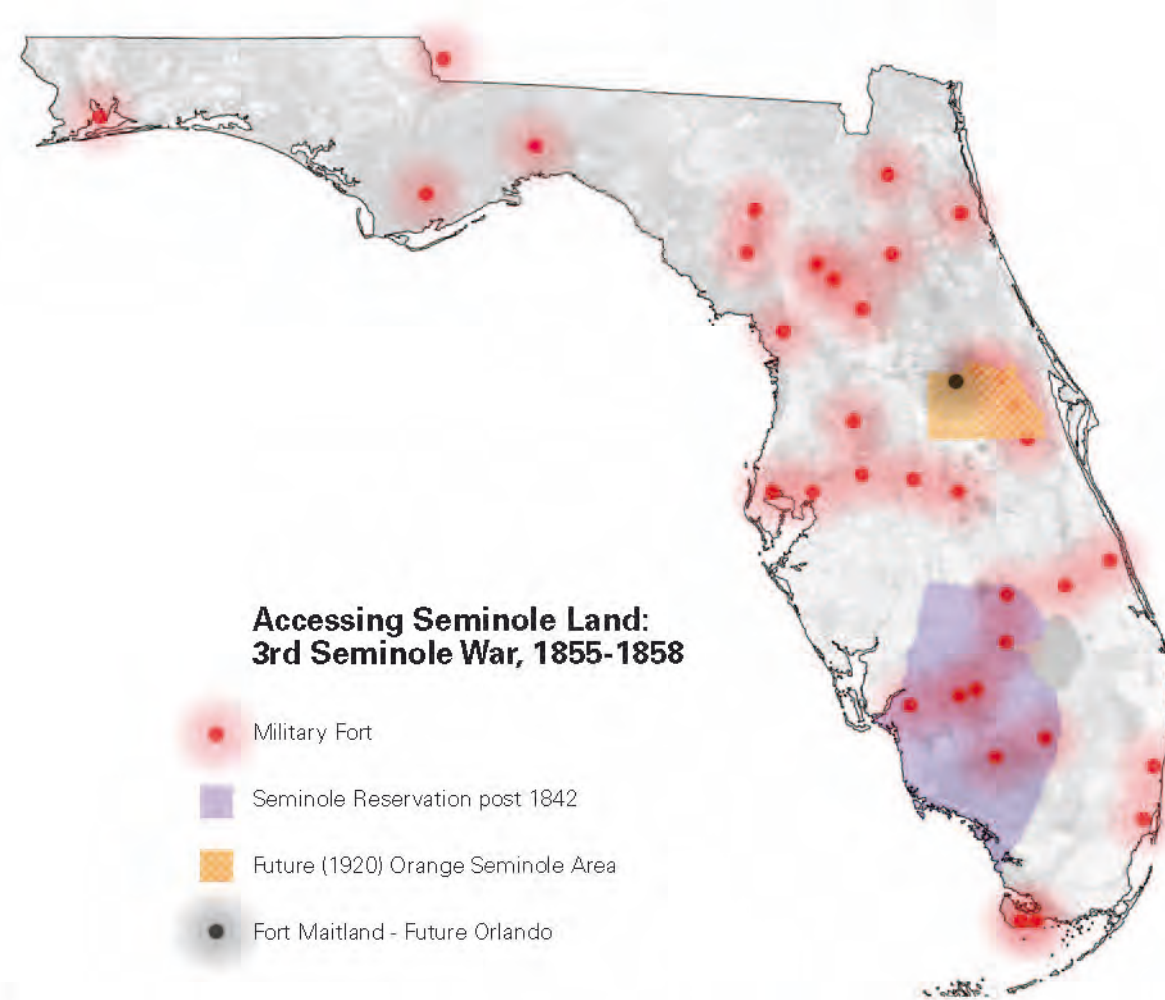
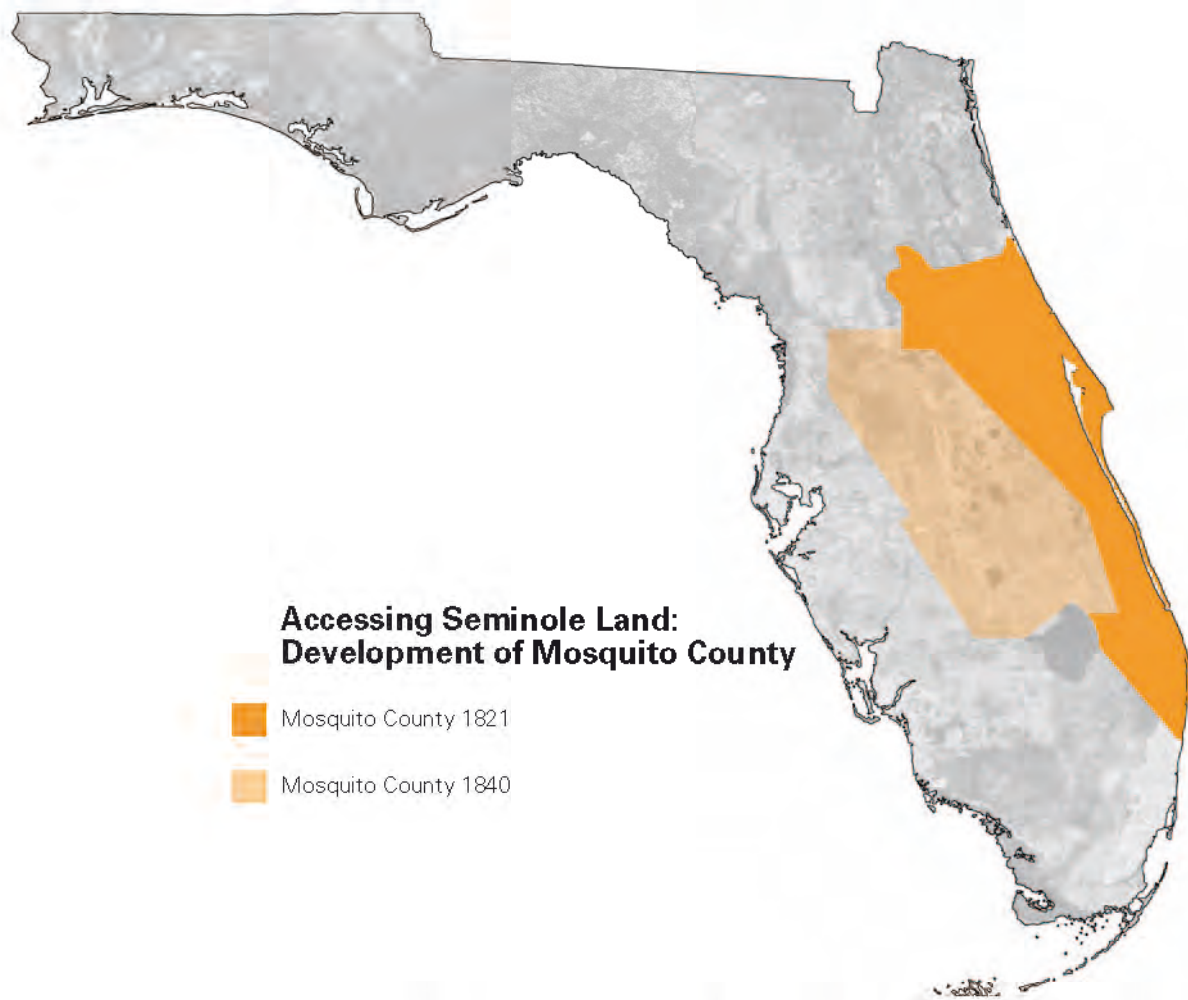
Orlando Metro Area, FL 2011



Accessing Seminole Land

Although the territory of Florida was sold to the United States in 1819, the urbanization of Central Florida did not begin until 1835. The second Seminole war pushed the Seminole Reservation south, allowing for the vast expansion of Mosquito County in 1840 and laying the foundation for the Citrus Industry to follow. This scattering of multiple forts across the Central Florida belt also set the framework for the evolution of abundant city cores in close proximity.





1881	First railroad station
1882	Charleston House Hotel moves business away from Main Street to Orange Avenue
1883	Winter Park founded by Loring A. Chase and O.E. Chapman Bank was founded, sidewalks laid, and Jacob Summerland gives his private racetrack to the city (Now Eola Park)
1884	Henry Plant buys the South Florida Railroad and begins expansions to Jacksonville and Tampa January 12: Fire breaks out in a grocery store destroying Main Street. Thereafter Orange Avenue becomes the new main street
1885	Orlando's first resorts, San Juan de Ulloa and the Seminole Hotel were opened
1890	Railroad continues to expand to other citrus centers such as Apopka Population: 3000
1894	Orlando grows into a sophisticated city that is referred to as the <i>Phenomenal City</i>



Downtown Orlando, FL 1895. Intersection of Pine and Court Street, facing south. Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection.



Main Street, Orlando, FL 1890. Green House and Summerlin Hotel. Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection.

Transit Hub Foundations

Orlando's first railroad station was built in 1881. From then, the rapidly-expanding railroad provided a means for the exportation of citrus to the north as well as access to goods from other portions of the county. Orlando's central location made it the gateway to the south. This transit hub sentiment would later be reinforced in the mid 1900's with the rapidly-expanding highway system.

Temporal Downtowns

The notion of downtown is commonly defined by a Main Street. Typically such places are comprised of four components: government, businesses, places of commerce, and places of leisure. When Orlando's Main Street was destroyed by fire in 1885 the concentration of these components relocated to Orange Avenue, bringing them all closer to the railroad and providing direct access to Central Florida from the north. The transient attitude of these components is inherent in the development of these areas today.



1886 - Open market at Lake Eola Park. Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection.



1886 - Orlando's first agricultural and livestock fair. Courtesy of the Joe Wallace Dickenson.



2010 - Open market at Lake Eola Park

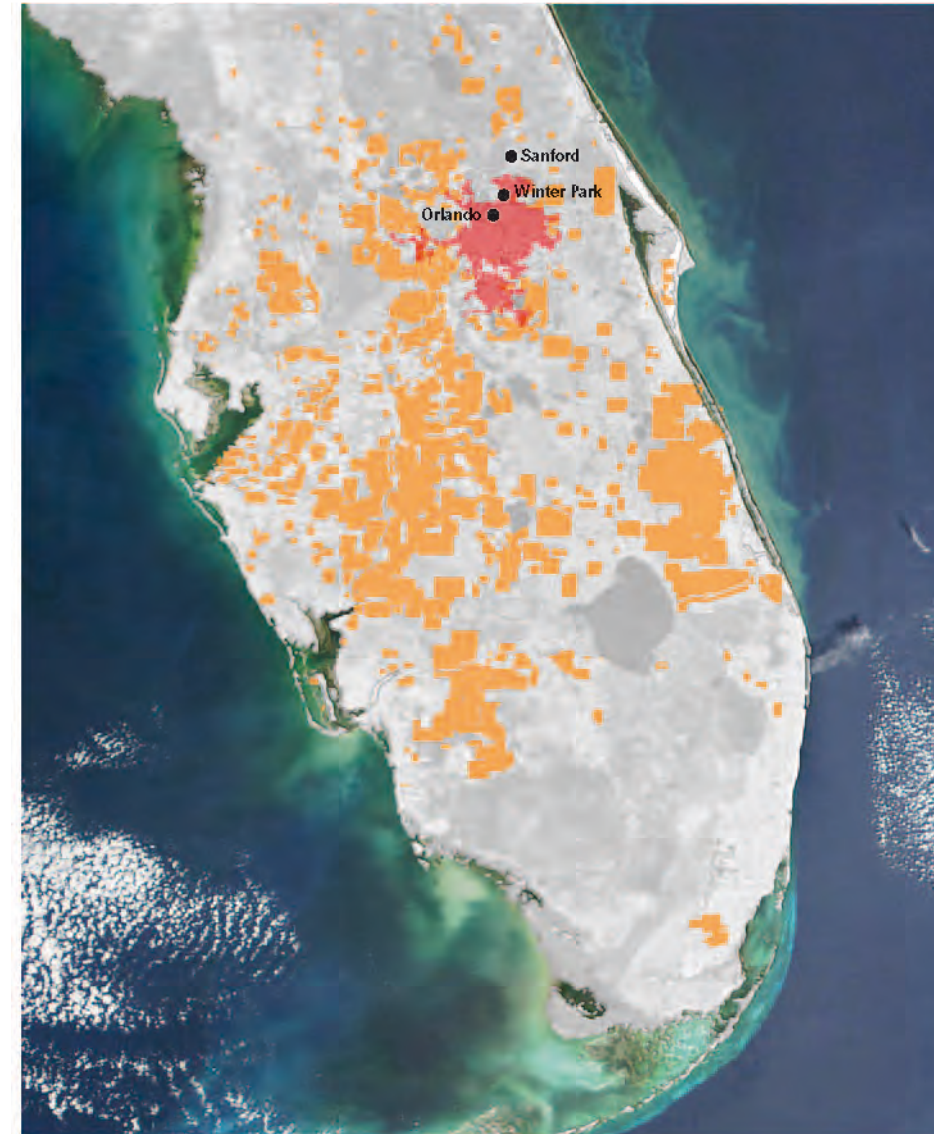


2011 - Lake Eola Park

Leisure and Commerce

Although the railroad provided a means of exportation of citrus to the north, it also provided access to goods from other portions of the county. These goods were commonly sold and traded in open-air markets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. An intimate relationship between these commerce centers and places of leisure

has been historically present at the core of Pioneer Era territories. Such places as Fort Maitland (now known as Lake Eola) were transformed into parks for leisure, but were also places of commerce. Today a pale shadow of this remains where the Sunday market has primarily become a leisure event rather than a necessary commerce market.



■ Citrus Groves 2011
■ Orlando Metro Area 2011

Citrus and a Triad of City Centers

Today the concentration of the citrus industry is located southwest of Orlando. However, this was not always the case. During the Citrus Boom in the late nineteenth century Sanford, Winter Park, and Orlando were significant producers of citrus. This industry was the primary economy until the mid-twentieth century. With the success of the citrus industry a triad of downtown supply centers emerged and evolved in integrated and significantly different ways. The economic relationships between these three centers would eventually merge to form the northern portion of the greater Orlando area.



Orlando, FL 2011



The Great Freeze and slow recovery, 1895-1920



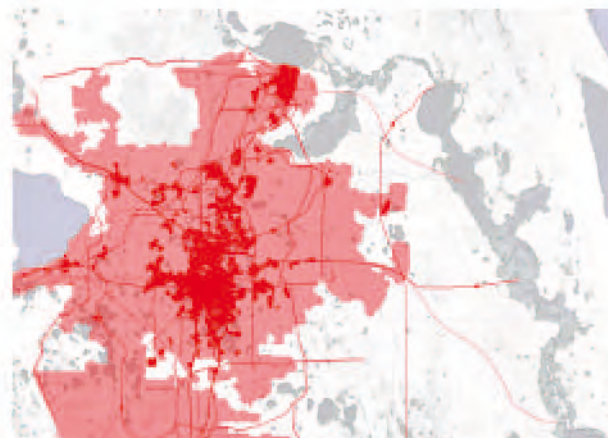
The Great Florida Land Boom, 1920-1930



The Depression and war years, 1930-1950



The Space Boom, 1950-1965



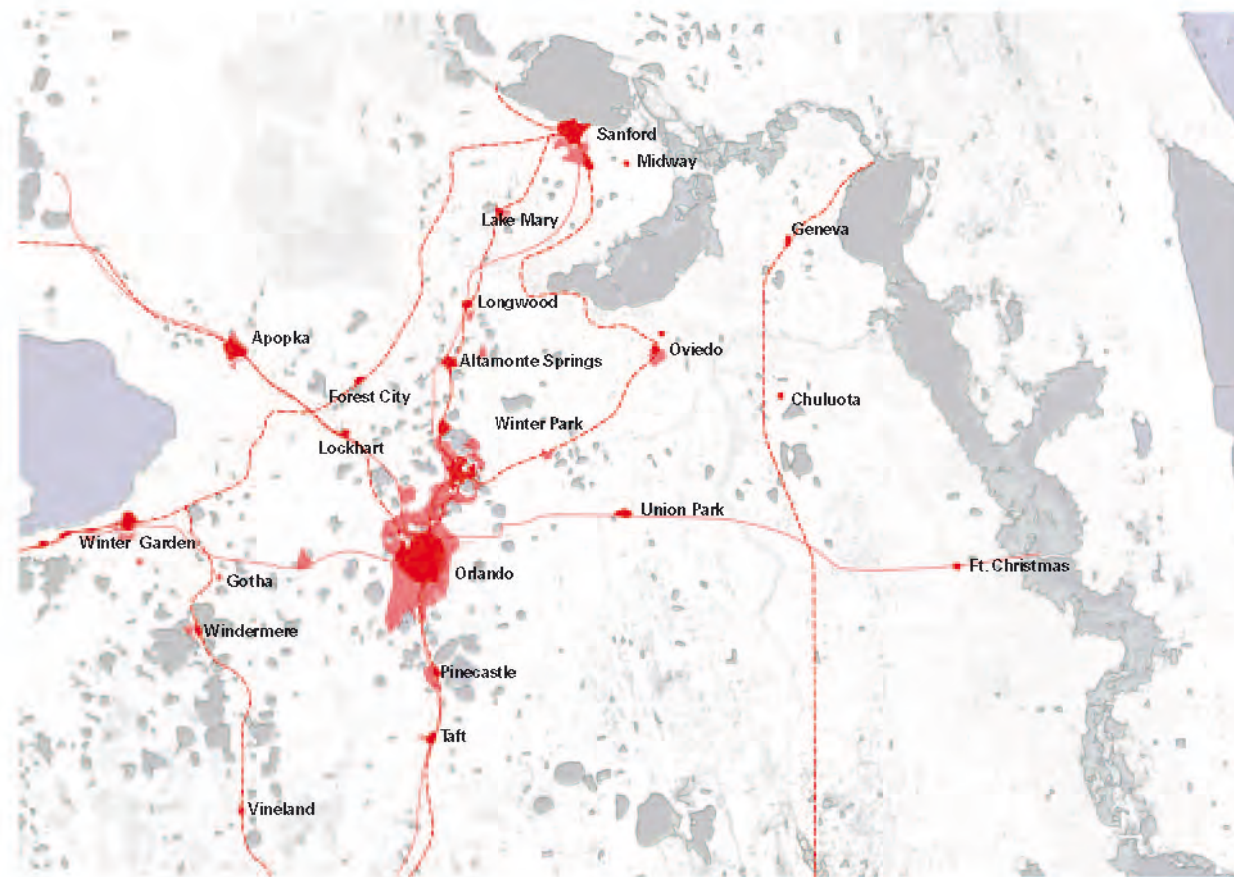
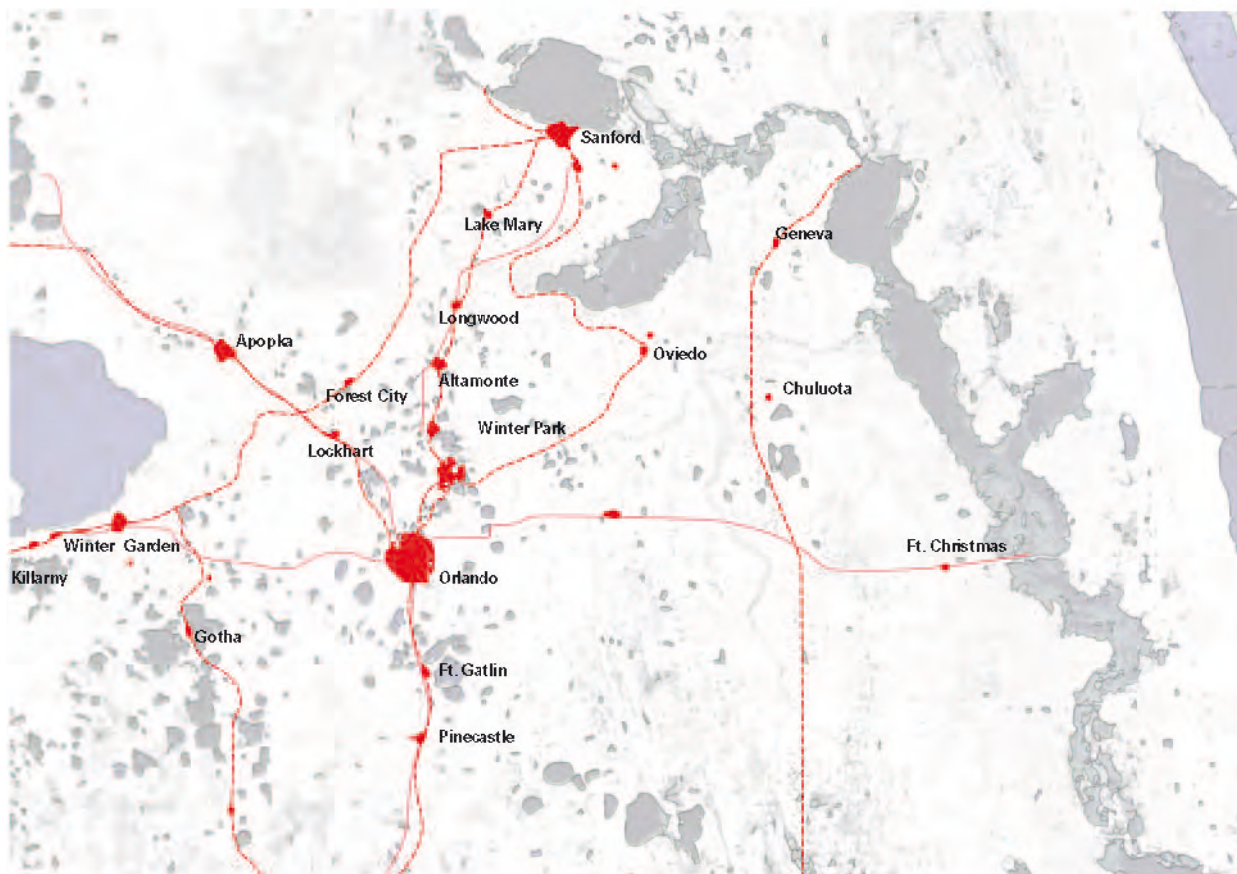
Suburbanization and Disneyfication, 1965-2011



Suburbanization and Disneyfication, 1965-2010.

Amalgamation of Urban Cores

Sanford, Winter Park and Orlando each developed their own distinct downtowns. However, as each entity grew a series of smaller-scaled commerce centers and leisure spaces followed the housing developments which sprawled between each of these city cores. This expansion has been so extensive in the Orlando, Winter Park, and Sanford area that the three cities have now merged into a larger urban format only separated by government defined boundaries.



■ Existing Development
 ■ New Development

The Great Florida Land Boom

1920-1930

Population of Orange County: 30'876-68'427

During the Great Florida Land Boom, Central Florida felt general national prosperity post-WWI. However, Orlando experienced its economic growth primarily from the automobile and expanding highway systems. At the time Florida was a largely untapped tourist frontier. Land was advertised to northerners who were drawn to Florida by its climate. Developers bought the land cheap and sold it at inflated prices. Although Central Florida did not see the same level of growth as Miami, Tampa, and Palm Beach, it was enough to push Orlando beyond its rural market town appearance. The steady growth at this time hints at the merging of Orlando and Winter Park to come.



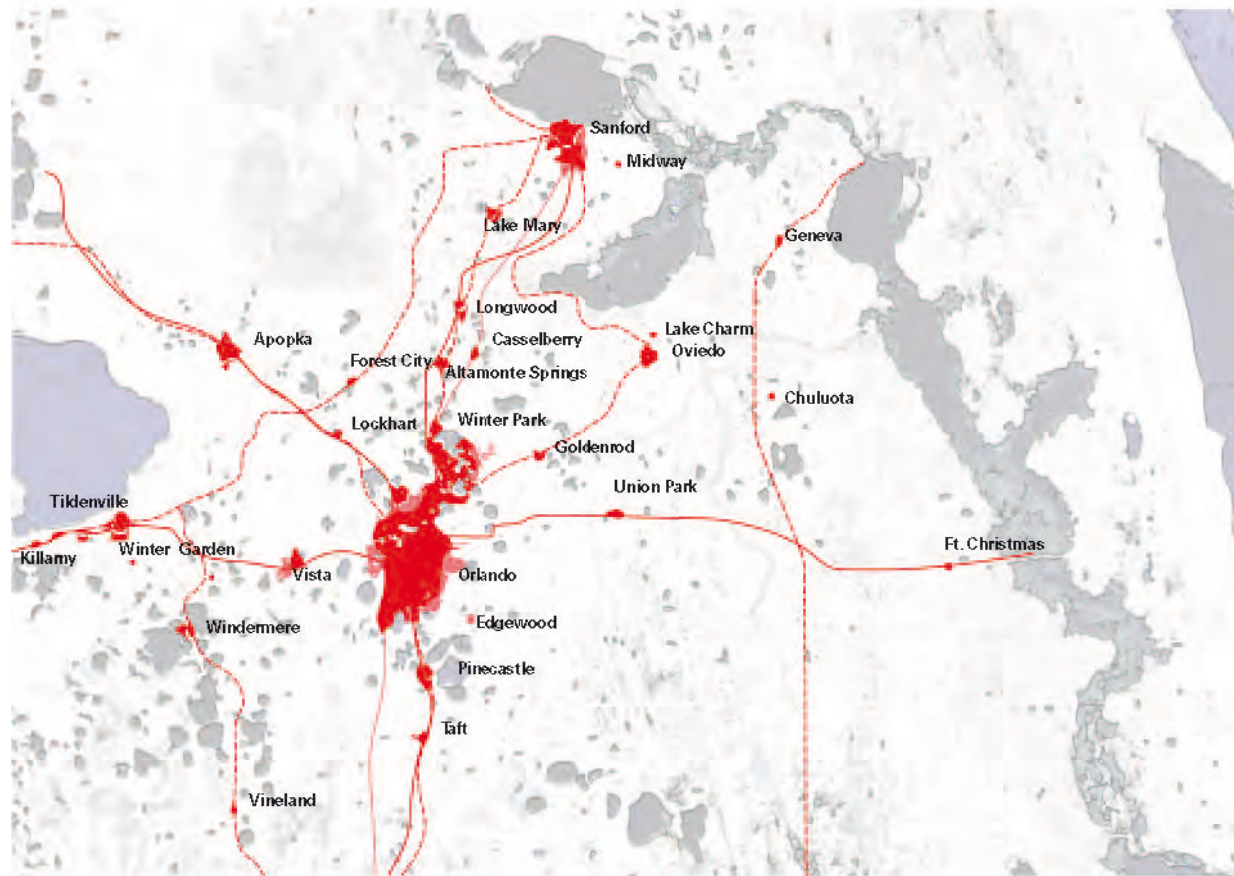
Aerial view of Downtown Orlando 1923. Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection

The Great Freeze and slow recovery

1895-1920

Population of Orange County: 12'000-30'876

Consecutive temperature drops in December of 1894 and February 1895 caused the citrus industry to vanish from north Florida and resulted in a population reduction in the city of Orlando. However the citrus based economy was not destroyed. Near Sanford other crops such as celery and lettuce replaced the former citrus groves. The period that followed was one of steady growth and development.



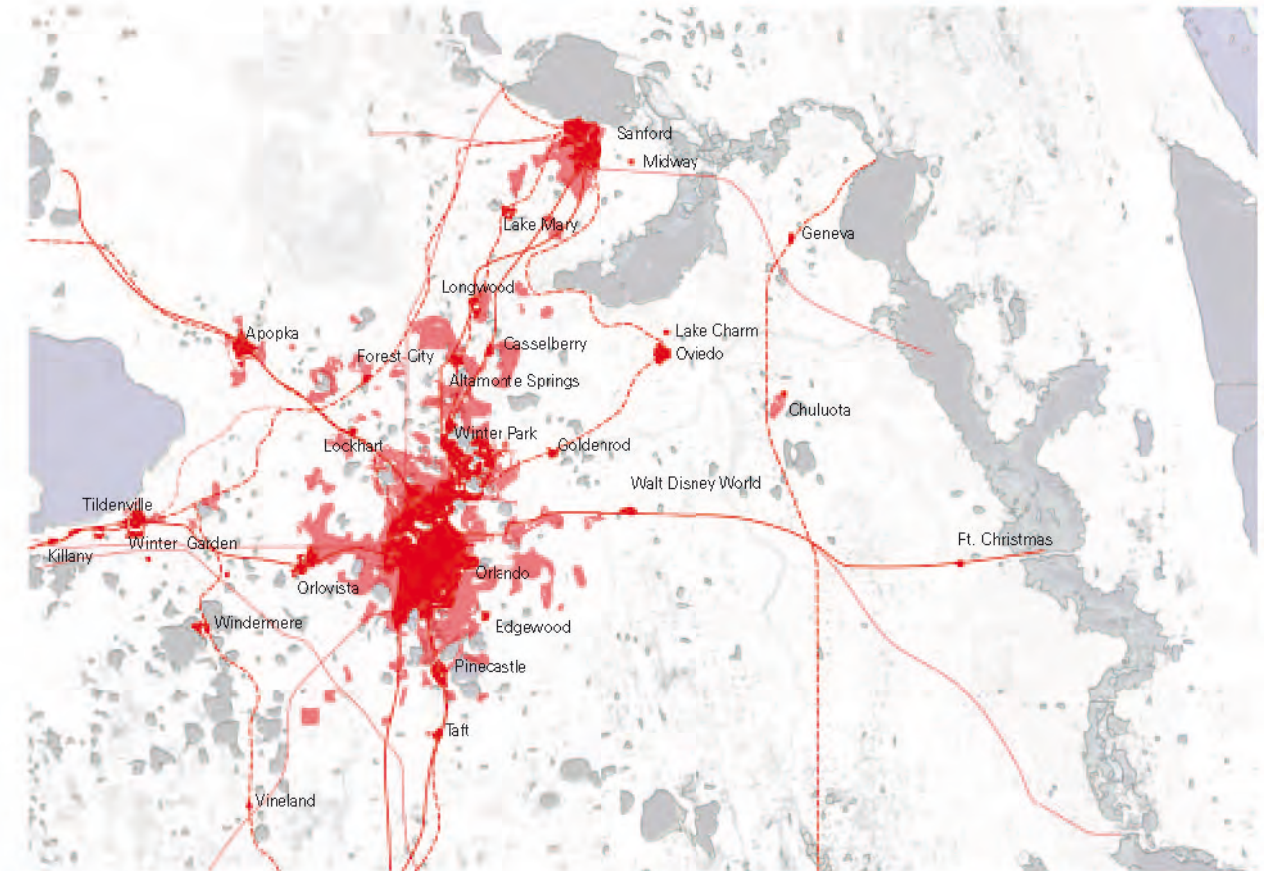
■ Existing Development
 ■ New Development

The Depression and war years

1930-1950
 Population of Orange County: 68'427-141'833
 Population of Orlando: 27'330-36'738
 During the depression Orlando still grew due to its role as a highway hub, the capital of the eastern half of the Florida citrus belt, and the shopping center for everyone between Ocala and Vero Beach. Additionally, WWII brought an Army Air Base to Orlando, creating a center of military activity. Significant developments in the highways created more direct paths than their predecessors. Most importantly, the merging of Orlando and Winter Park into a single urban core was clearly evident at the end of the 40's.



Rollins College at the end of Park Avenue 1932.



■ Existing Development
 ■ New Development

The Space Boom

1950-1965
 Population of Orange County: 141'833-388'940
 Population of Orlando: 36'738-52'367
 Much of Florida's growth during the Space Boom was due to improvements in transportation. Orlando evolved as the financial, retail, and transport center for all of Central Florida. This was an age of increasing air travel and Orlando became the air traffic center for about a third of the peninsula. Much of this rapid growth manifested in suburban developments outside of the city proper.



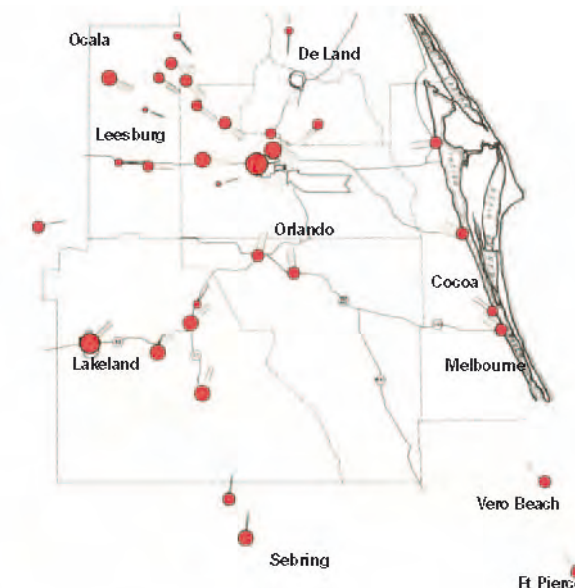
Orlando International Airport.



The Space Boom and Transportation

Improvements in transportation greatly reduced travel time to Orlando, increasing its accessibility to the rest of the nation. However, the rapid growth of the highway system also isolated and divided the city core. Below is Interstate 4 under construction in 1964. Cutting directly through the core of the city, the interstate provided direct vehicular access to the downtown, but simultaneously formed a pedestrian barrier.

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Airports



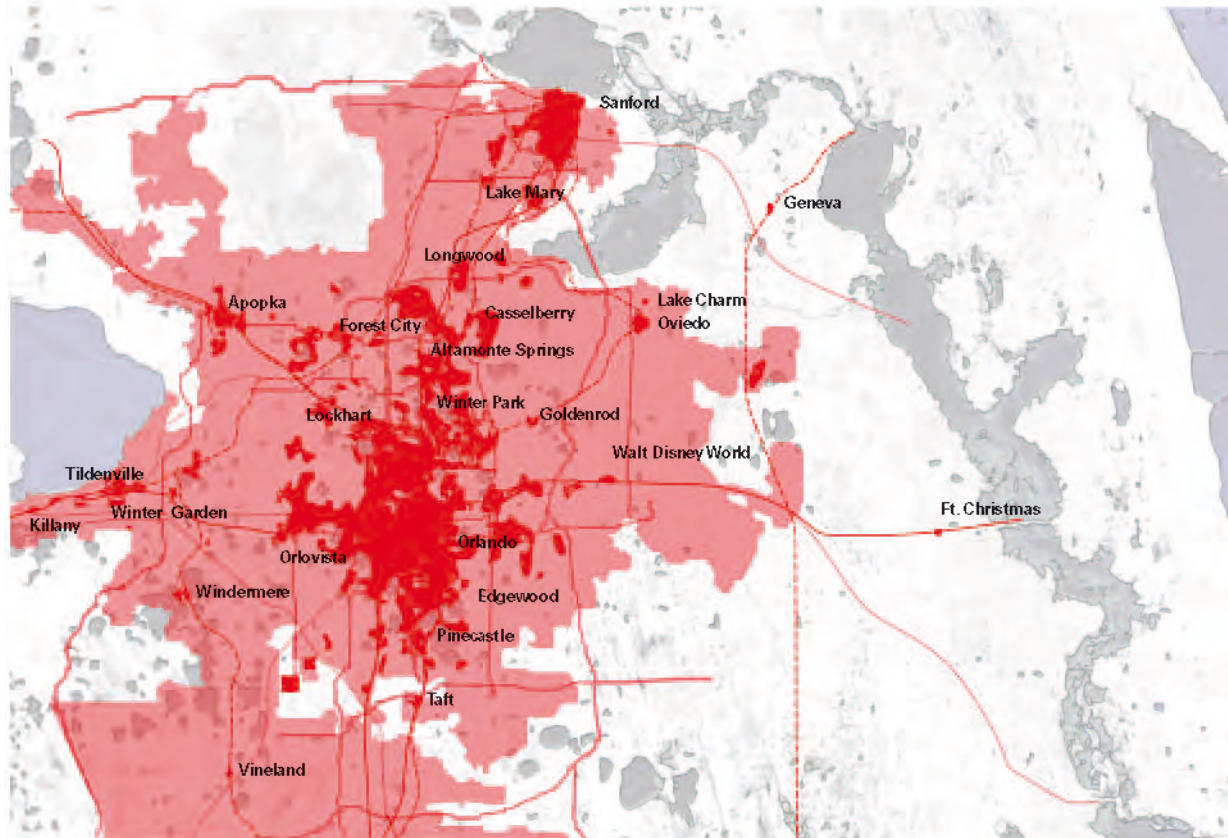
Flying Time



Rail Road Freight Time



Motor Freight Time



■ Existing Development
 ■ New Development

Suburbanization and Disneyfication

1965 - 2010

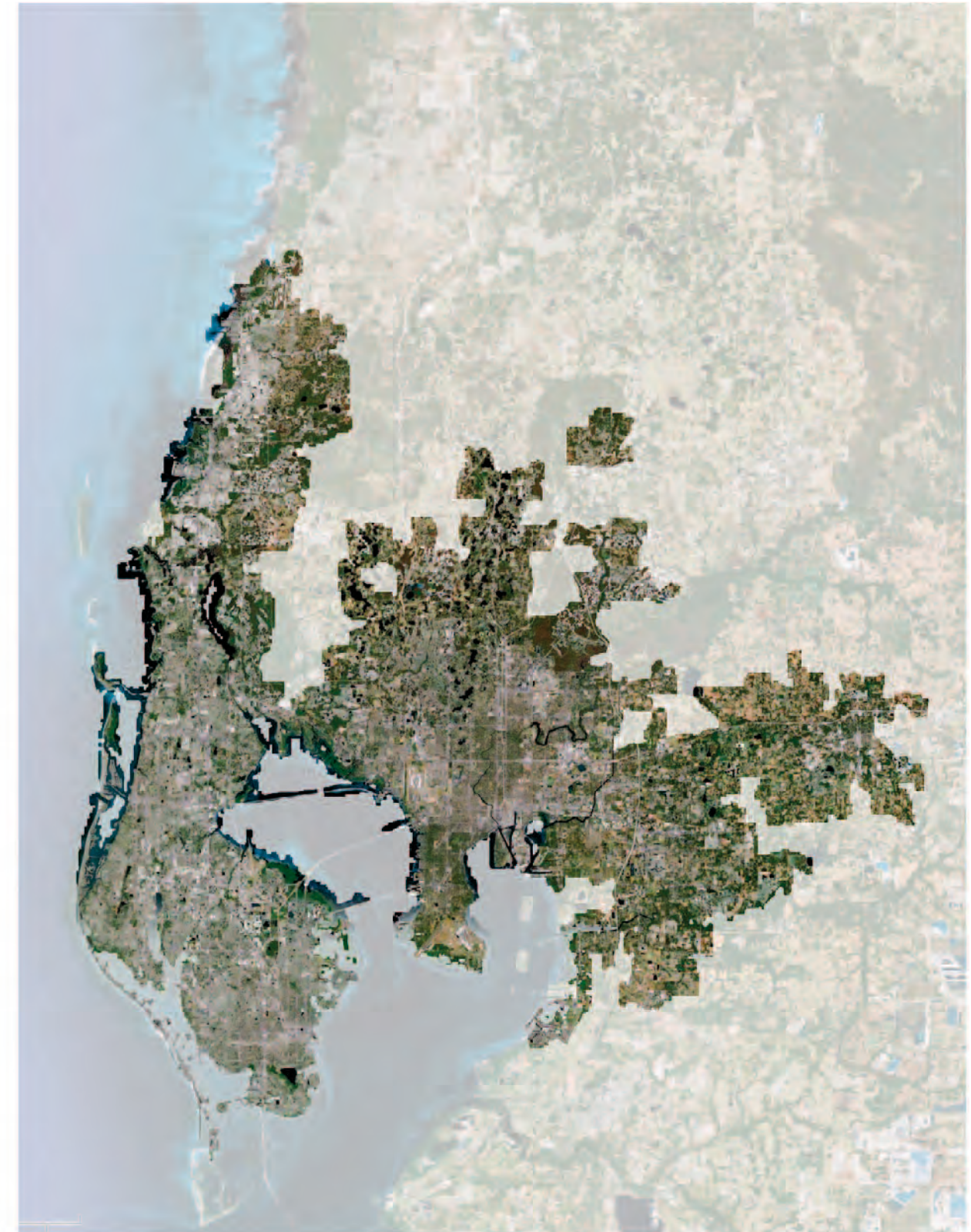
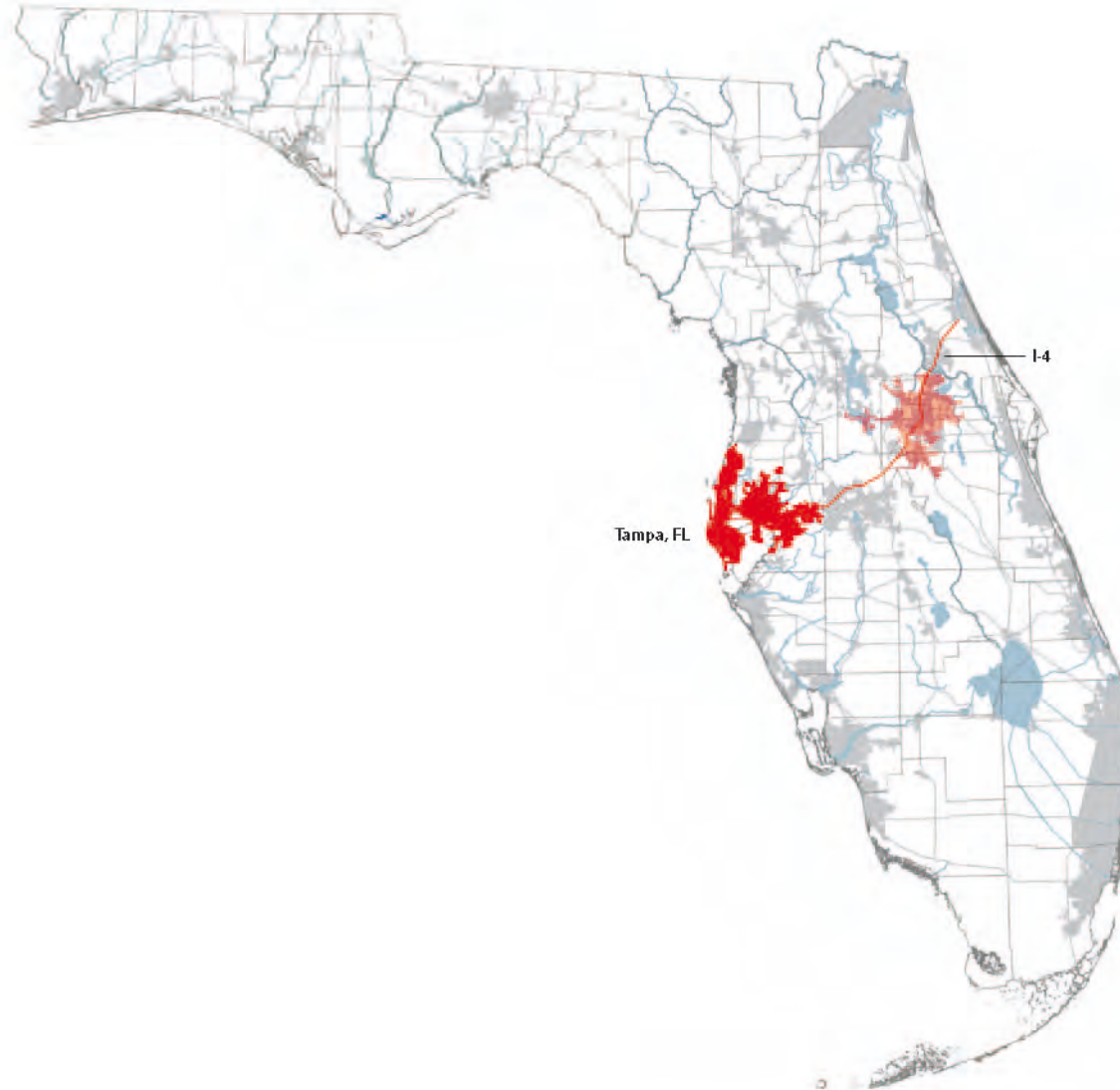
Population of Orange County: 388'940 - 1'145'956

Population of Orlando: 52'367 - 238'300

Population Orlando Metro Area: 2'082'628

Orlando's most significant development period came after the construction of Disney World in 1965. The sudden increase in tourism and subsequent employment and population amplified suburban development. Although Disney World was economically linked with Metro-Orlando, it was socially and physically an isolated environment connected by roadways.

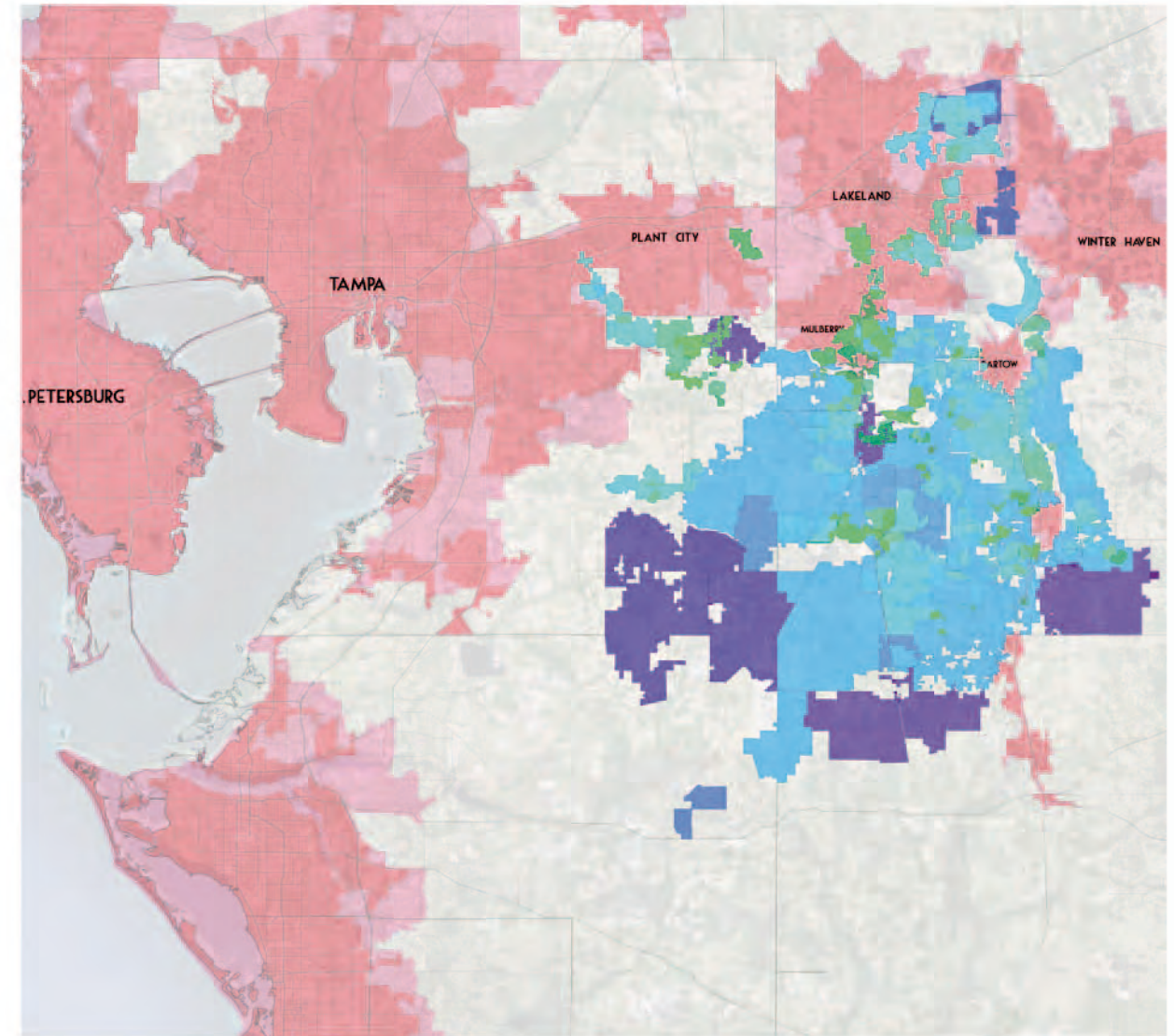




Tampa Metro Area, FL 2011

Tampa: Excavation and Exportation

Tampa, Florida is the 54th largest city in the country, located on the western coast of Florida. Tampa is the largest city within Hillsborough County, with a population 300,000 residents. Tampa was established because of the development of the shipping port, cigar manufacturing of Ybor City, and the coming of the railroad. Since Tampa has had a long history of moving and producing goods, the development of transportation has shaped the city. Two major highways intersect in the city of Tampa, I-4 and I-275, and connect the city to the rest of the state of Florida.

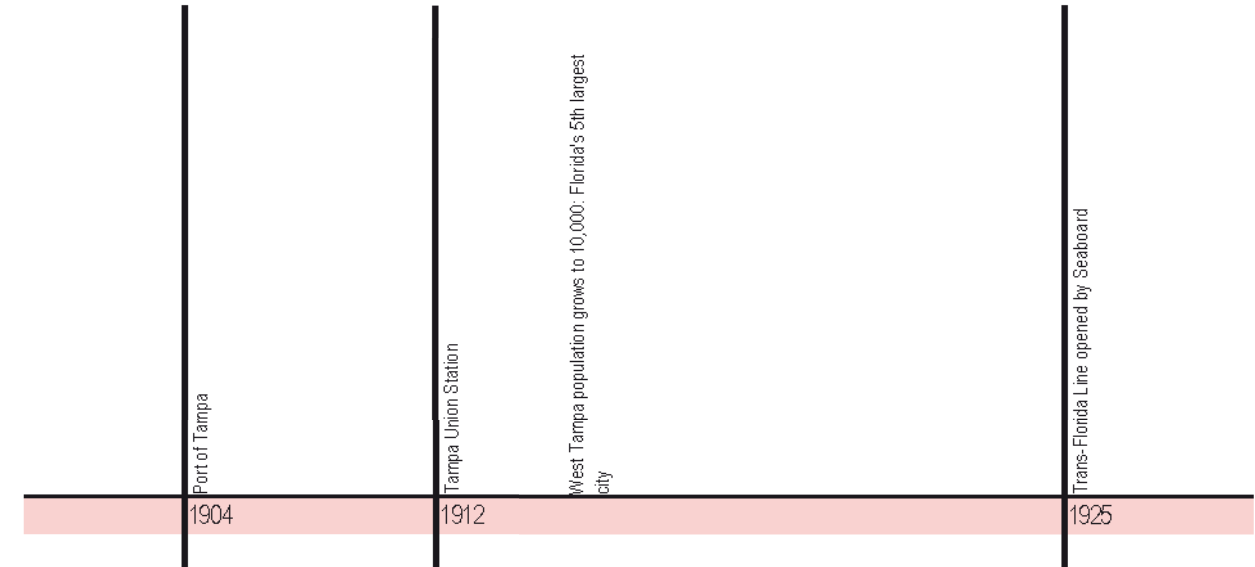
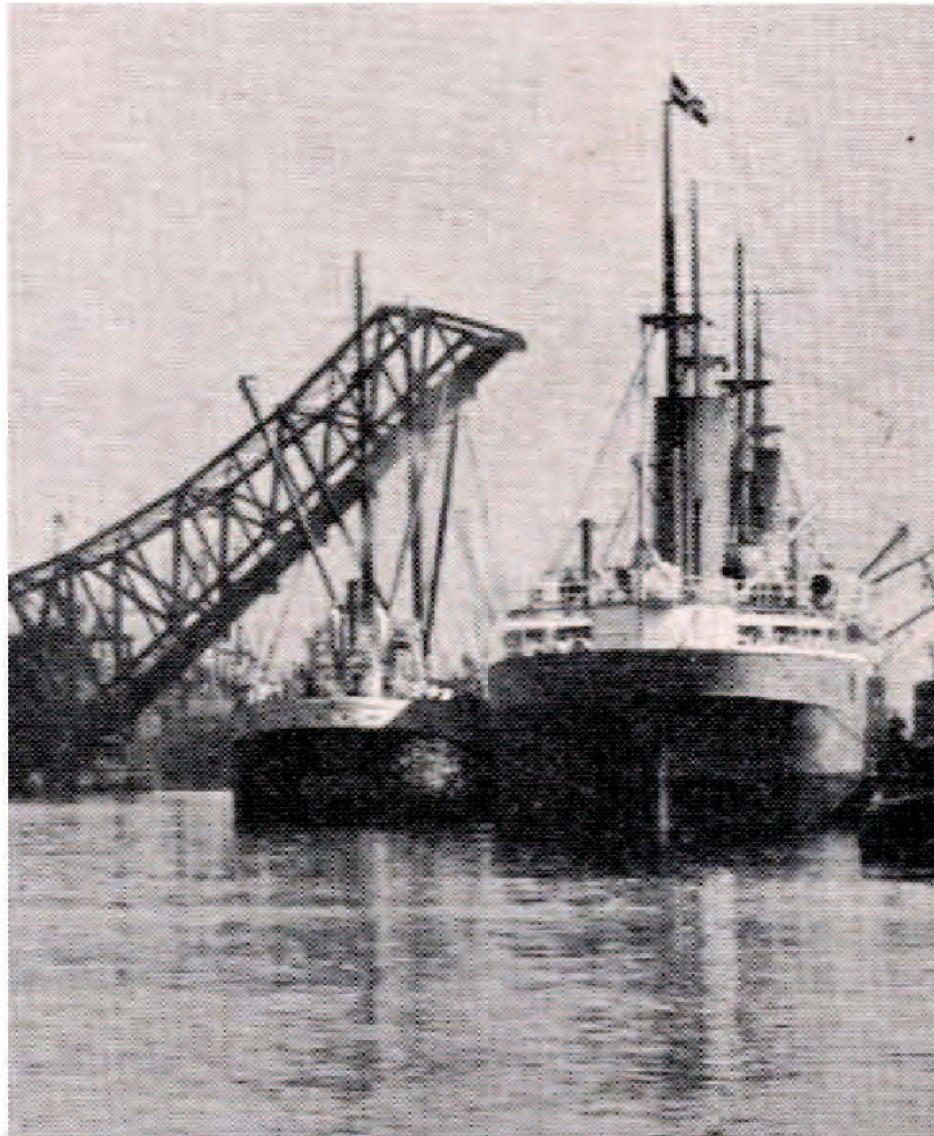


Transit and Phosphates

The discovery of phosphates in Central Florida had a dramatic effect on the development of the city of Tampa both economically and socially. As the mines grew, the city experienced a great need for additional man power and increased transportation needs.

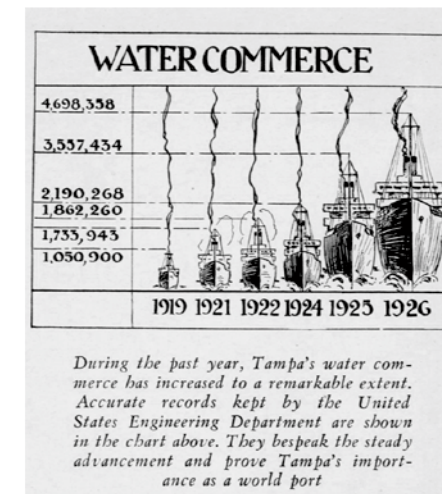
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Fort Brooke has been established as the first settlement in today's Tampa area	Henry B. Plant railroad extends to Hillsborough River	Exportation of phosphate and fish products extends to the North of the United States.	Tampa Street Railway Company is established	Seaboard Air Line (SAL) and Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) begins transporting goods to and out of Tampa
1824	1884		1885	1902



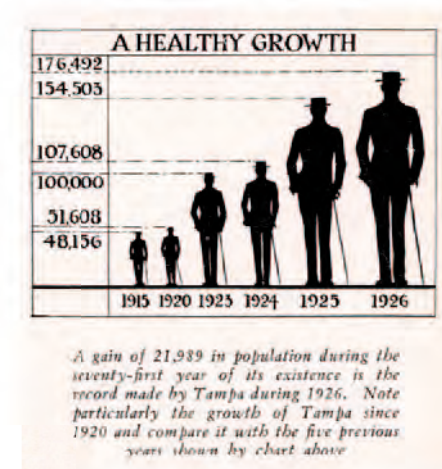
Port of Tampa

The Port of Tampa plays an important role for the development of the city because of the transportation demands from the phosphate mines in the Tampa area. The port itself has grown tremendously and become a hub of importing and exporting goods, not only for the state but also for the east coast of the United States. Today, the Port of Tampa is one of the biggest hubs of transportation throughout the nation, importing goods from the Asian peninsula and exporting goods to South American countries. It has an economic impact of \$8 billion dollars per year and provides thousands of jobs to the area. It is also one of the top shipbuilding and repair centers in the southeast.



Growth of the Port of Tampa

Initially starting off as a transportation hub for fertilizers, the port has grown exponentially ever since. This growth has generated jobs and business opportunities for locals, following the growth of the port Tampa became an attractive location for investors. This led to the population increase and the growth of the city.



Population Growth

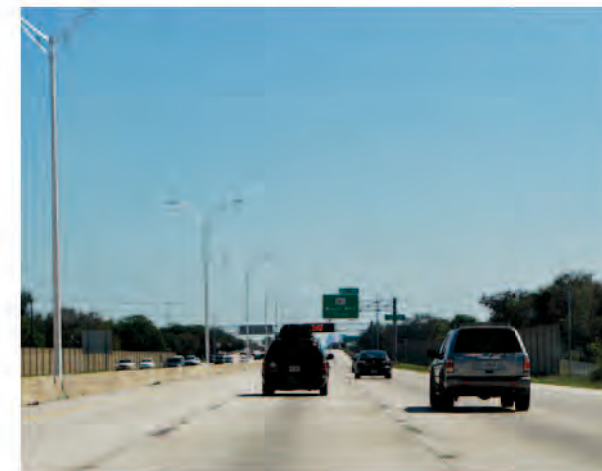
The population growth in Tampa has a direct correlation with the growth of the Port of Tampa.



1. On the way to Skyway Bridge



2. On the Skyway Bridge



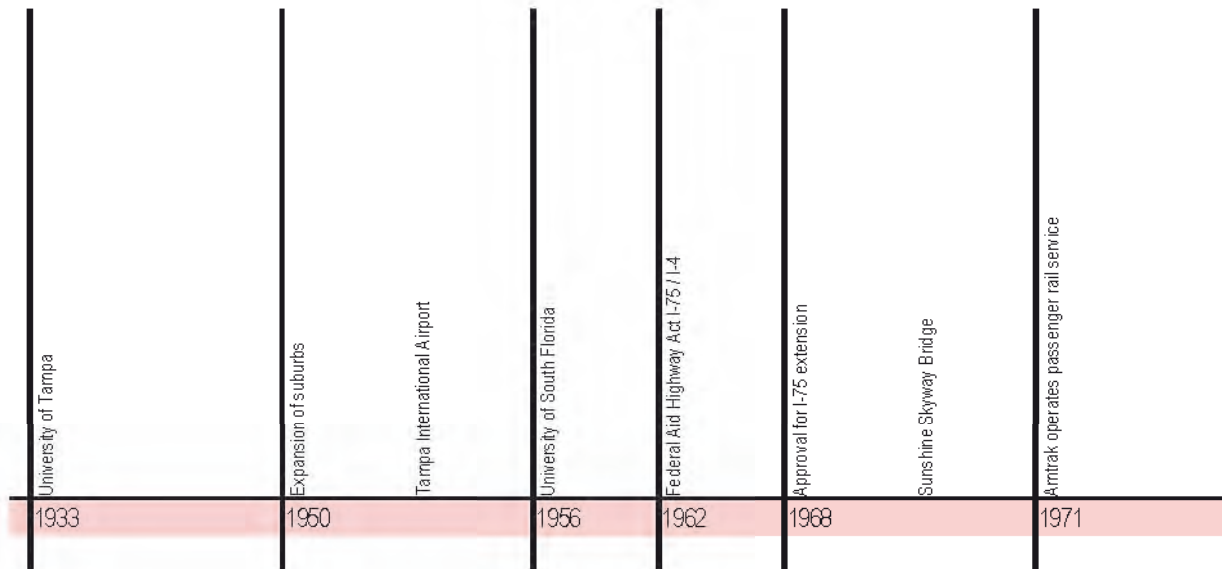
3. Approaching Tampa



4. Downtown Tampa

I-75 and I-4

Lengthy railway transportation became less attractive for businesses transporting high volumes of goods across the nation. This fueled a motorway building boom which interconnected the cities of the United States. The construction of these highways reduced the distance between cities, the traffic, and subsequently the transit time. It also led to a sprawling of residences as commuters were capable of traveling a greater distance over an equivalent period of time. Typically the choice to move outward from the city core directly correlated to living cost. The two primary arteries which feed the Tampa Bay area are Interstate 75 and Interstate 4. The Interstate 4 corridor is significant because it forms a physical connection with Orlando, creating a void along the corridor which is quickly filling with rapidly forming developments along the road.



Built Intersection of I-75 in Tampa, 1980
Completed intersection of Interstate I-75.



Building I-75 in Tampa, 1963
Construction of an intersection for I-75 near Tampa. With the increased traffic flow, the city needed major connections to highways. Since the residential developments were already built, they were cut by the road.



Florida Road Maps, 1959

Map of the road network prior to the construction of I-75. The road system is focused on the port and its surroundings and is limited to close-by distances.



Florida Road Maps, 1979

With the construction of I-75, the city and its freight infrastructure has shifted outwards from the port area. Imported goods are now easily transported by motor ways.



Florida Road Maps, 1989

As the population increases and the economy grows bigger, Tampa starts to extend its city limits. With more demands on motor ways, the infrastructure has grown and expanded locally; feeding more freight to transportation hubs of Tampa.



Florida Road Maps, 1994

Towards the 21st century, Tampa has grown to become a series of cities with multiple ports of transportation that import and export goods from the east coast to the entire world. With its attractions and beaches, it became a major tourist attraction location. More highways and roads were built to accommodate the circulation load of the city.

OSCILLATING COMMERCE AND LEISURE

Supply and leisure spaces are two important components which delineate downtowns. The form, location, and frequency of these spaces have significantly mutated in response to the needs of the inhabitants of Orlando and Tampa. Below is an example of this transformation. Both are photos of the same location in Winter Park, FL. The one on the left is of Winter Park Shopping Mall taken in 1966, the one on the right is Winter Park Shopping Village taken in 2010. They were/ are places of supply and leisure; however, the format of each is reflective of changing tendencies in urban planning both in Orlando and Tampa. Air conditioning in the late 60's moved supply centers from outside to inside in the format of shopping malls. The 90's reversed this thinking in an attempt to animate streets through walkable sidewalks and streets within open-air shopping villages. Perpetual mutations of the form, location, and density of commerce and leisure spaces is characteristic of the development of these places in Central Florida. Since commerce and leisure are significant components of a downtown, the following case studies investigate both the downtown core as well as the places which have stretched commerce and leisure across metro areas.



Winter Park Shopping Village 2010



Winter Park Shopping Mall. Courtesy of State Library and Archives of Florida



Orlando Metro Area, FL 2011

Orange Avenue at Pine Street



1900-1920



1920



1920-1930



1930-1950



1970-1990

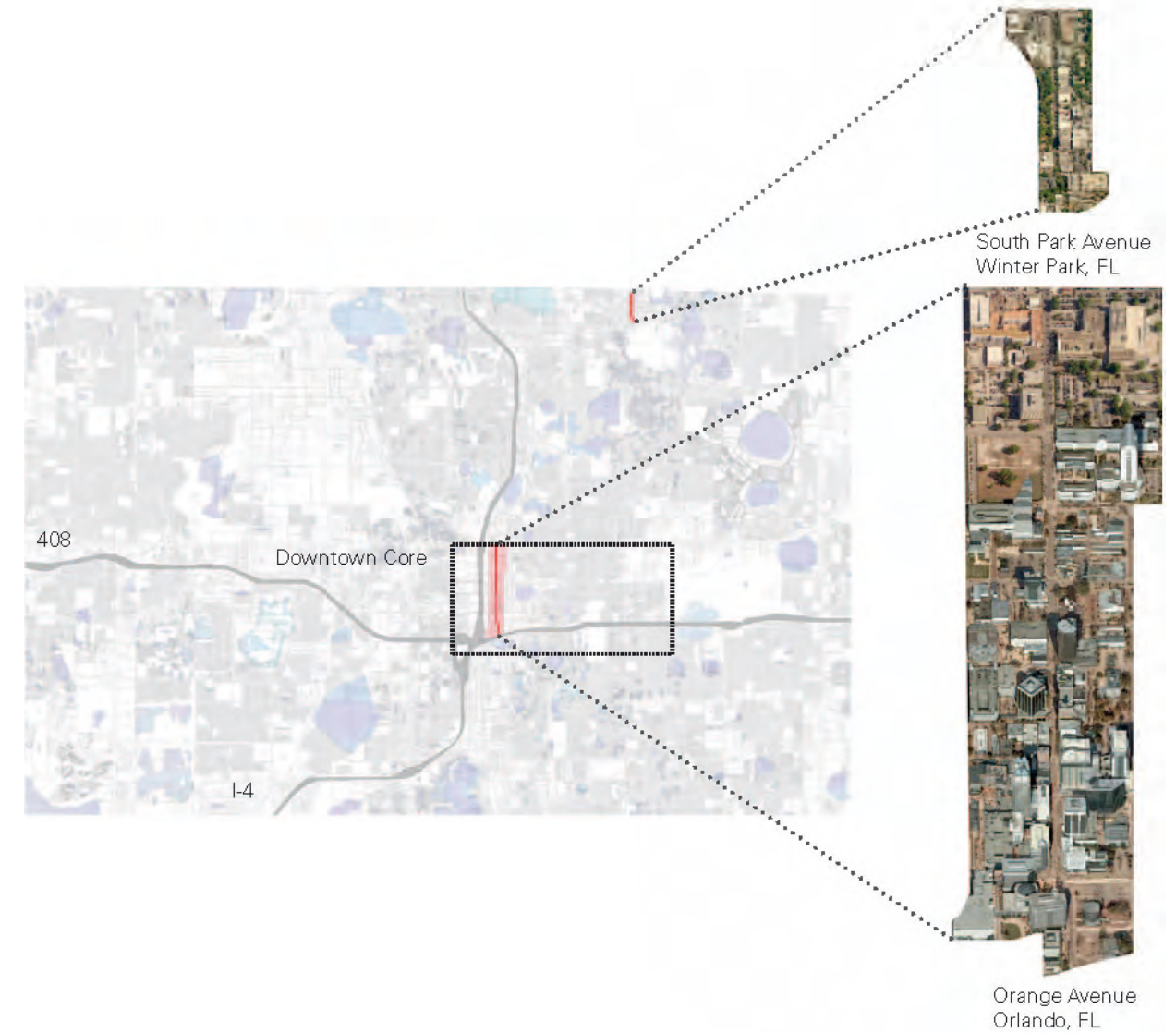


2010

Photos on this page courtesy of Downtown Arts District of Orlando, Florida.

Re-Purposing the Avenue

Both the role of the Main Avenue and the way its spaces are occupied has seen several iterations within the past century. Andre Corboz states, "In the United States, if there does exist an animated public place it is the street, or at least certain streets - truthfully, a rather small number of them, and even then only at certain hours." This is true of Orange Avenue in Orlando, FL and South Park Avenue in Winter Park, FL.



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Corridor of Business

Orange Avenue is commonly referred to as the core of the city's "downtown." This spine is almost exclusively a business district yet the city zones it as an Activity Corridor. Although some buildings have shops and restaurants on the street level, they are more often deserted than animated.

- Government
- Business
- Mixed Use
- Hotel



Regions Bank

Plaza Cinema Cafe

Seaside Bank

BB&T Bank

Grand Bohemian Hotel

Orlando City Hall

Orange County Court

Bank of America

Southern Bank

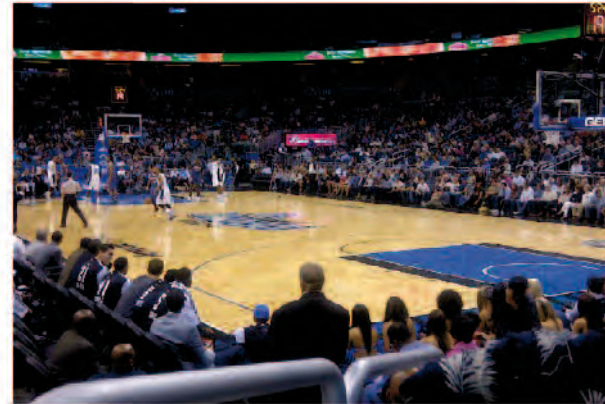
Wells Fargo Bank

Suntrust Bank

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Shifting Landmarks

The majority of Orange Avenue's landmark buildings are government structures, banks, and offices. Recently the city has taken action to create cultural nodes within this area. The most recent addition is the new Amway Arena which has created a new corridor on the west side of Interstate 4. Future plans for a Performing Arts Center will anchor the southeast corner of Orange Avenue.



New Amway Arena - Exterior. Courtesy of Central Florida News 13.

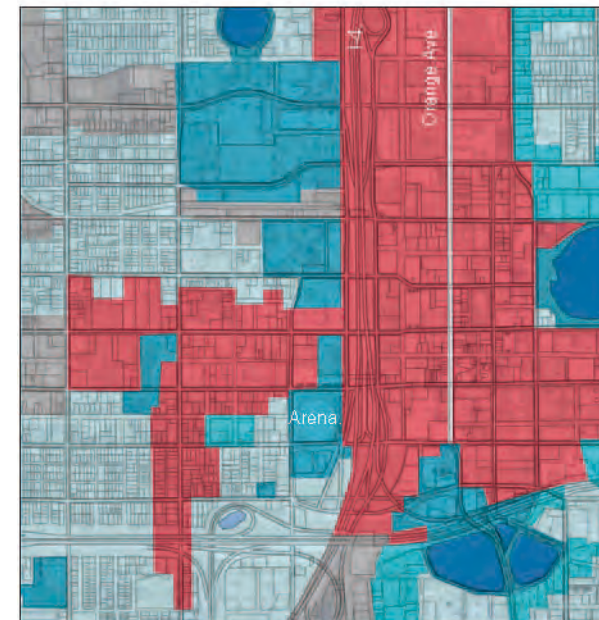
New Amway Arena - Interior



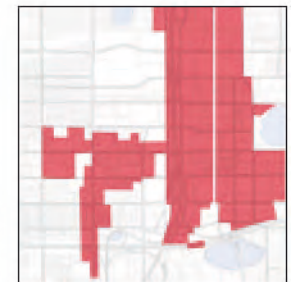
Orange Avenue looking south. Future Performing Arts Center will replace the Federal Building pictured on the far left.

Corridor of Activity

Although Orange Avenue is predominantly a business district, it is still zoned as Orlando's Activity Corridor. The limits of this corridor have been bounded by Interstate 4 however, the completion of a new Arena to the West has extended the Activity Corridor in to historic neighborhoods.



Industrial



Activity Center



Residential



Public/Civic

Business to Leisure

Orange Avenue

Although Orange Avenue is primarily a business district, pockets on the south end transform into places of activity in the evening. Some of these areas are even closed off to vehicular traffic for events. This is a striking contrast to the vehicle filled streets devoid of pedestrians during the day.



The Animated Street

Park Avenue

Park Avenue, located north of Orange Avenue, embraces the pedestrian traffic that its sister street seems to be missing during the day. This is primarily due to the high concentration of commerce and leisure spaces in the form of restaurants, shopping plazas, museums, and parks. It is technically the downtown of Winter Park with its own municipal buildings; however, it lacks the density of business present on Orange Avenue.

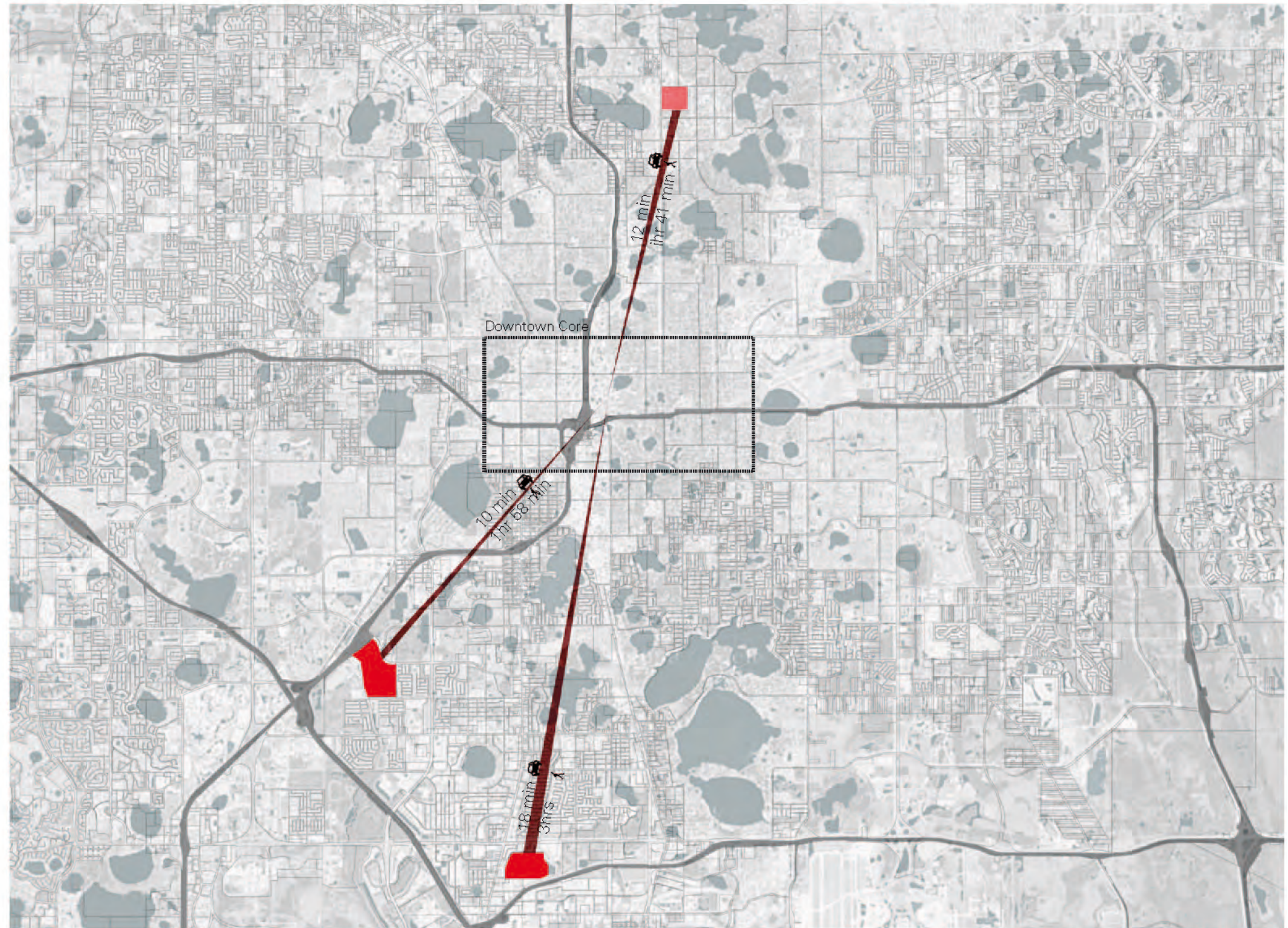


The Introverted Plaza

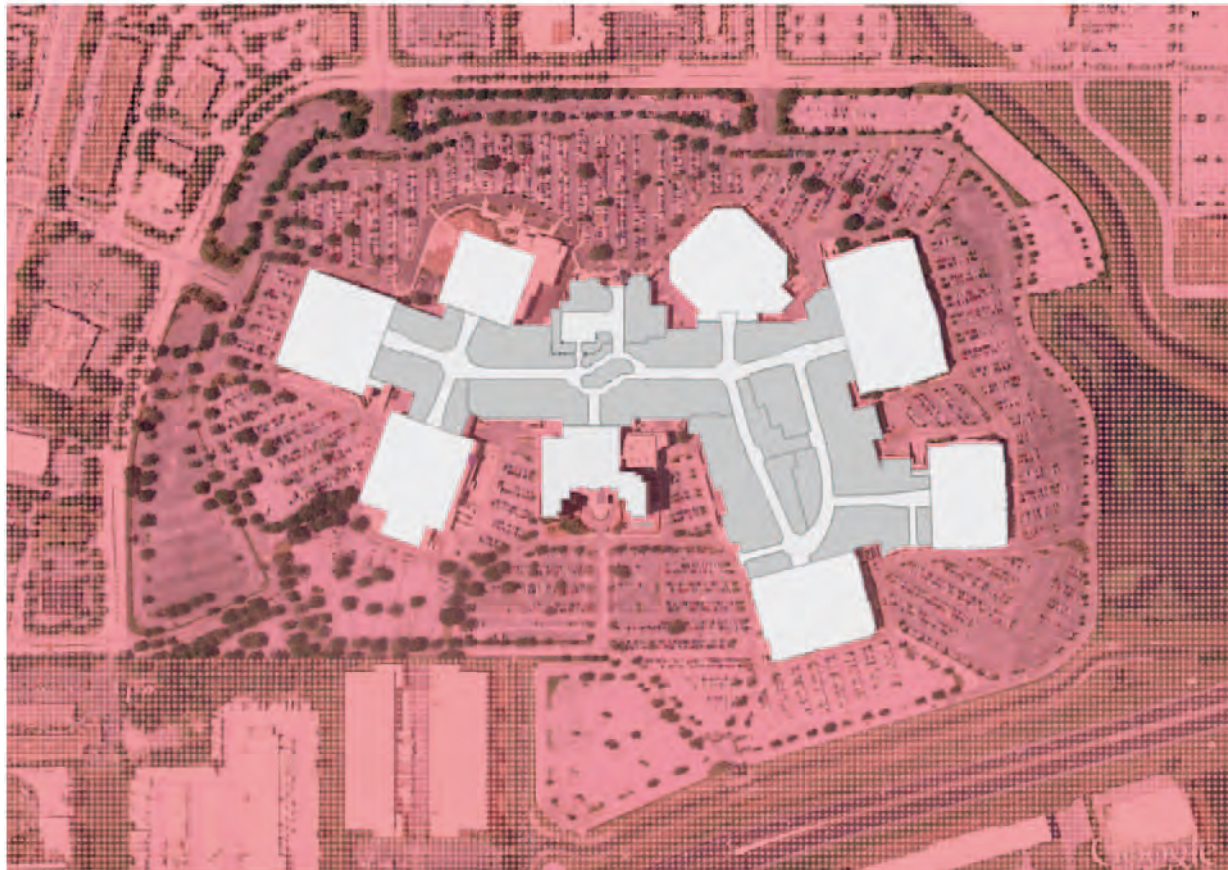
The age of air conditioning, in conjunction with residents moving out to the suburbs, directly impacted the downtown core. Air-conditioned commerce centers (shopping malls) followed residents out to the suburbs, providing them with a comfortable place of commerce and leisure. This conditioned format moved the pedestrian from an exterior avenue to an introverted structure which is indifferent to the street.



Orlando, FL



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- Anchor Store and Walkways
- Supplement Stores

The Anchor Store Format

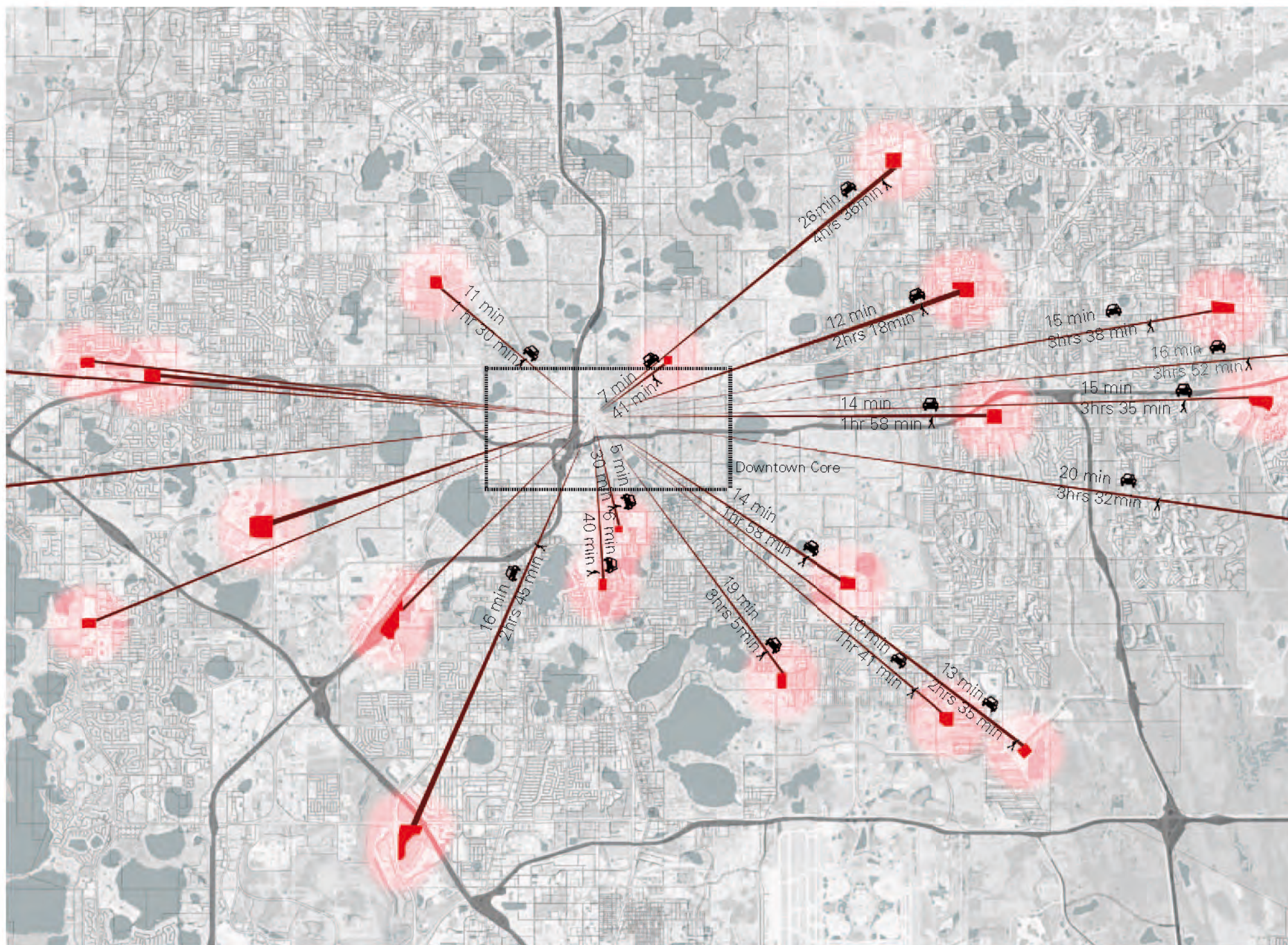
The shopping mall format is typically composed of three components, anchor stores, supplement stores, and wide open walkways. Although the shopping center may have one or two entrances into the covered walkways, the primary entrances are through the anchor stores. In turn, the anchor store serves both as a place of commerce but also as a necessary space of circulation. This entire structure sits in the center of a large open parking lot. The exterior is primarily a solid mass with openings only at the entrances out of necessity. This format isolates the shopping event from the exterior world.

Plazas of Necessity

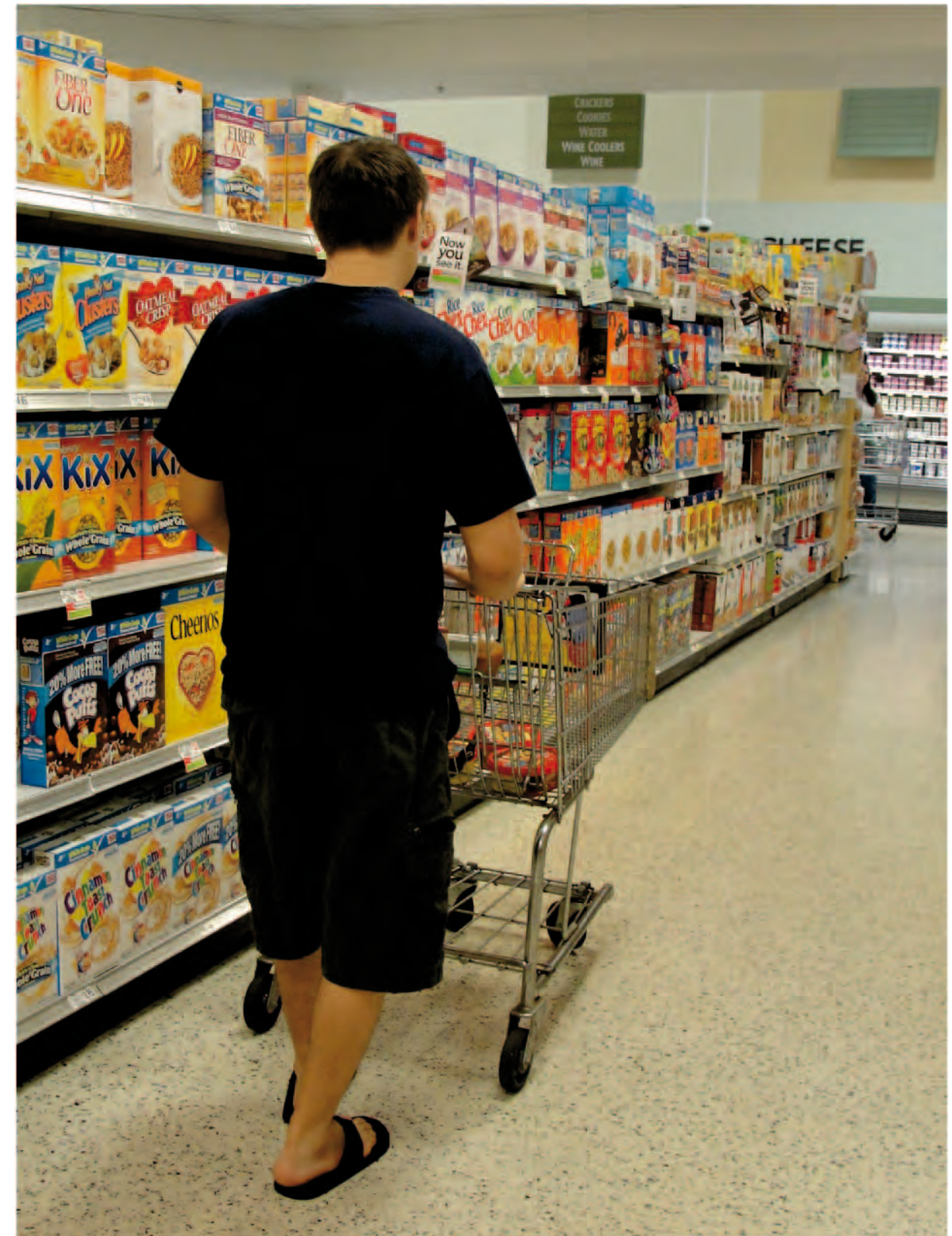
The most frequent of all commerce spaces is the plaza of necessity. This is the plaza which residents must go to on a daily to weekly basis, primarily for food. Much like the air-conditioned mall, they are typically large opaque structures situated in an open parking lot. Framing the opposite end of the parking lot is typically a strip of shops fronting the street. This format does recognize the street; however, it does so as a mode of marketing, not as a mechanism for activation. Ironically, the format creates a comfortable social experience within the structure, but a spatial void between the buildings.



Orlando, FL



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Suburbia and the Commerce Plaza

The sprawling nature of these plazas directly correlates the rapid growth of suburbia from 1965 to present day. Although they are highly criticized for creating landscapes of parked automobiles and their lack of outdoor leisure space, their format does provide pleasurable commerce space within. Additionally, their frequency in the greater metro area provides access to essential goods without the burden of traveling to the city center.

Suburban Growth in East Orlando

Orlando, FL 1965



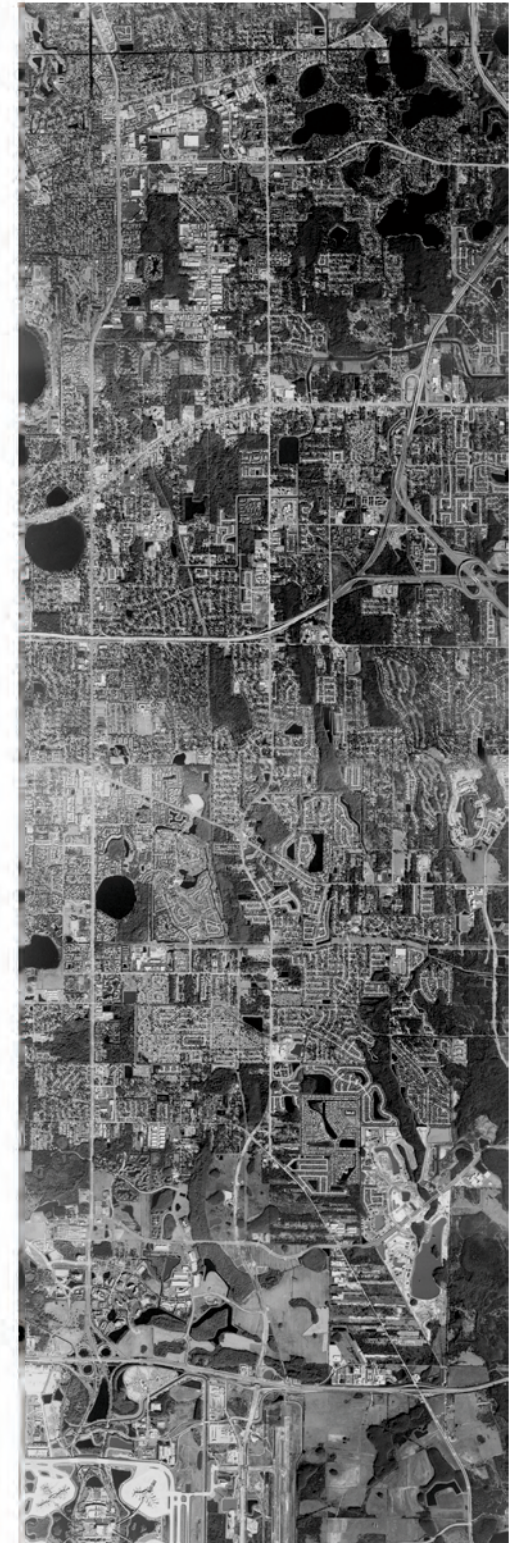
Orlando, FL 1984



Orlando, FL 1993



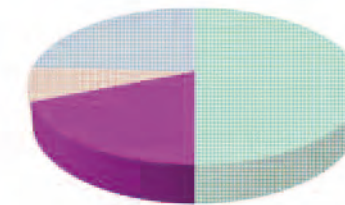
Orlando, FL 2002



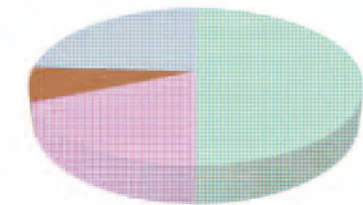


The Plaza of Efficiency

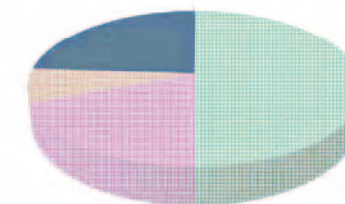
An intimate relationship between supply centers and leisure space has been historically present at the core of Pioneer Era territories. Such places as Fort Maitland were transformed into parks (now known as Lake Eola) which served as both places of relaxation as well as the acquiring of goods in a market format. Today a pale shadow of this remains today where the Sunday market has become a leisure event rather than a necessary supply center.



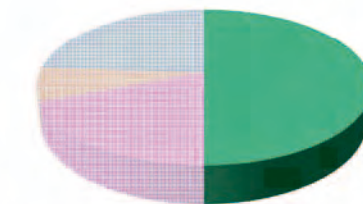
19% Walmart



7% Street Front Store



24% Retention Pond



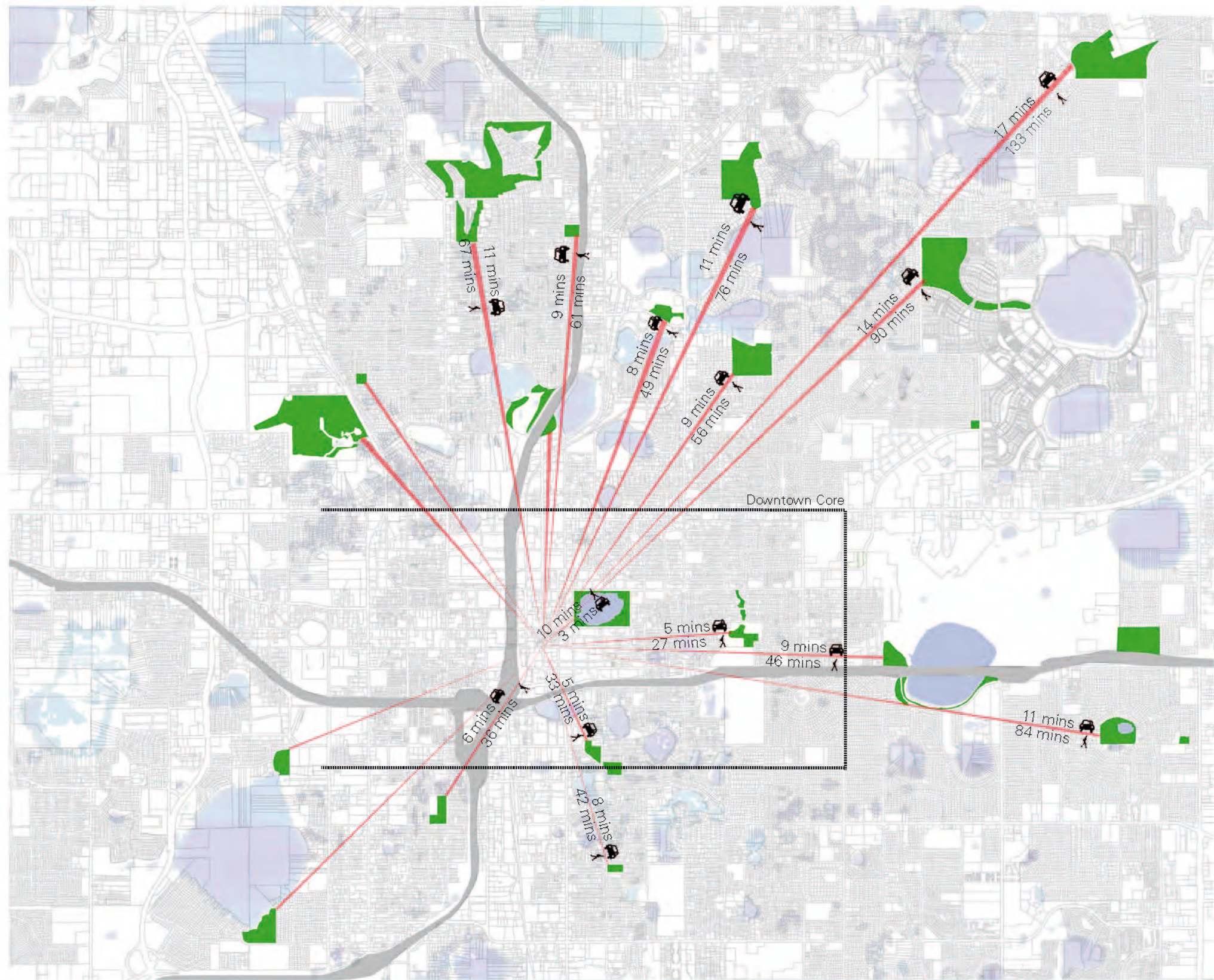
50% Parking

Plazas of Leisure

The most frequent occurrence of dedicated leisure space in the Orlando Metro Area exists in the form of outdoor parks. Only one significant park exists within the downtown core while the rest exist in a sprawling and introverted format. Much like the shopping mall, the park exists isolated to its contextual placement, rarely engaging the urban fabric.



Orlando, FL



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Park as Event

Although Lake Eola Park is the only significant park in the Downtown core, it is also the only park which attempts to engage its contextual surroundings while simultaneously providing leisure, performance, and exercise space as an escape from the city.



Park as Attraction

Lou Gardens in Winter Park is typical of several parks in the Orlando Metro Area. It is a privately owned park and open to the public for a fee. This format limits public access. However, the control over usage creates a place where special events can be coordinated and planned in a park format.



Park as Daily Life

The neighborhood park is the most common type of park in Orlando. They are frequently built as amenities to privately developed communities. Their frequency and private nature usually results in low usage. However, it does provide convenient park access, available on a daily basis to those who take advantage of it.

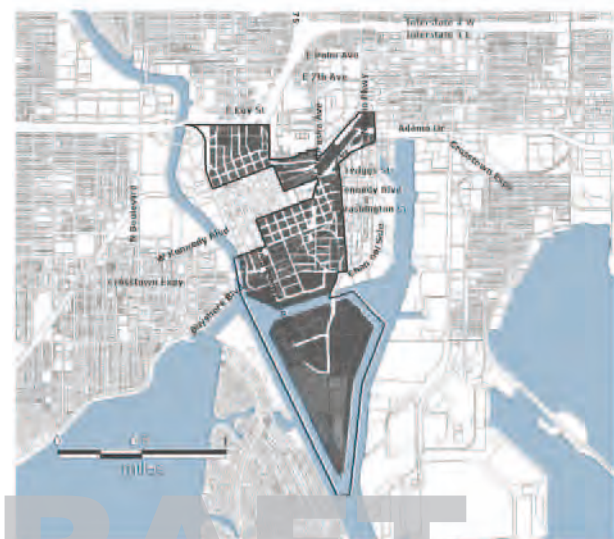


Infusion in Static Conditions

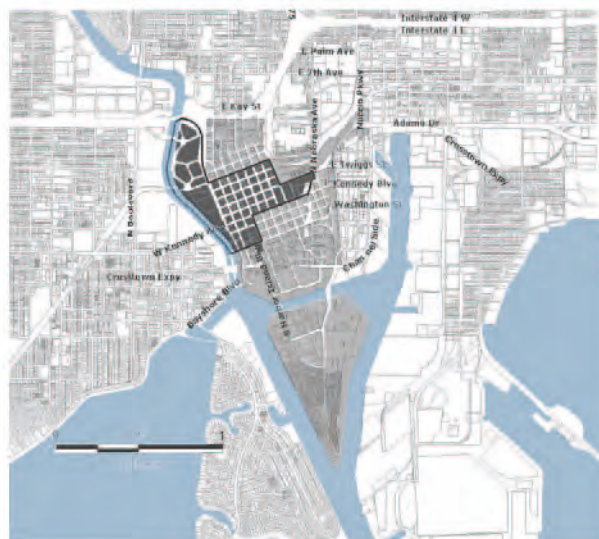
Over time the downtown district has tried to reinvent itself by changing zoning laws, creating incentives for development, and developing the community. The original downtown was developed in an organized grid that spread out from there. The Port of Tampa, being such an influential part of Tampa's economy and growth, affected the downtown condition. The downtown has remained a business focused district causing the development to be static. Due to the distance of the Port to the downtown, residents set up housing communities in the land between the two major points of the city. This development drew residents away from the downtown and the situation has remained the same ever since.



Historic Downtown, Tampa, Florida



Current Downtown, Tampa, Florida



Proposed Addition Downtown, Tampa, Florida



Tampa Metro Area, FL 2011

Static Concentration of Business

Today's downtown Tampa district still shows the business focused ideas of the past. Tampa's government has focused hard on making the city a business center and has been very successful. Tampa houses the headquarters of many influential companies including, Citigroup, MetLife, JP Morgan Chase, New York Life Insurance Co, and Bausch and Lomb.

- Government
- Business
- Mixed Use
- Hotel

- Multi-Business Facility
- Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel
- Bank of America
- Wachovia Bank
- Fifth Third Bank
- Tampa Convention Center
- Tampa City Hall
- Multi-Business Facility
- Multi-Business Facility
- Embassy Suites
- Multi-Business Facility
- Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel
- St. Pete Times Forum



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City Core Gateways and Destinations



Parking Diagram

Business Driven Infrastructure

The following diagrams describe the factors that contribute to the business focused mind set of the city of Tampa. The downtown district of Tampa is primarily focused on car travel, the parking spaces needed to accommodate the city prevent a pedestrian friendly area. The large parking lots emphasize the lack of public space and park space within the city.

The lack of a entertainment district within downtown has lead the residents to move away from the downtown and develop other communities to supply their need, which had lead to the creation of other districts, including Channel Side and the Soho district. These communities act as a gathering place for locals and provide the live, work, play community people seek.

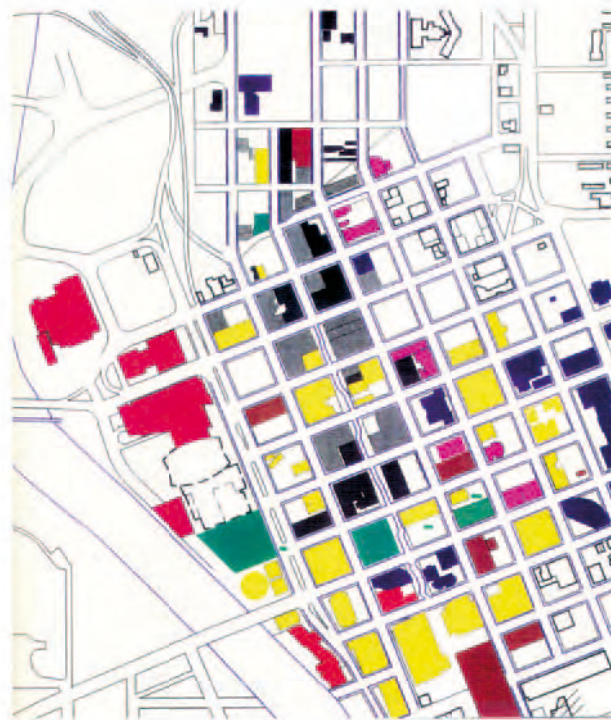


Built and Vacant Space

- Underutilized Corridors
- Pedestrian Mobility and Safety
- City Proposed 2-Way Streets
- Existing Activity Centers
- Key Parking Structures
- Transportation Corridors accessing City Core

Infusing Mixed Use

The lack of green space, pedestrian friendly streets, public transportation and the reliance on the car all reinforce the lack of a mixed community. In order to try to overcome this condition the city of Tampa and initiated several different ways to promote a more pedestrian friendly environment that will promote a more mixed purpose community. By introducing residential towers with shopping, restaurants, and hidden parking the focus will be diverted from a 9-5 community to a 24 hour community.



Business Buildings



Green Space



Government Buildings



Public Buildings



Skypoint Residential Development
Courtesy of Metro Jacksonville



Tampa Convention Center
Courtesy of Railway Preservation

Plaza Revival

Over the past decade a push for community plazas has taken over Tampa. The lack of public gathering space within the downtown district has led to the creation of cultural plazas on the edge of the city overlooking the water. These plazas include parks, playgrounds, shopping, and arts centers. There are two types of plazas that have been created in Tampa. One plaza focuses on the arts and houses the Tampa Museum of Art and Children's Museum, located near the Tampa Performing Arts center. The second type of plaza is focused on shopping and entertainment. The Channelside Plaza houses a retail, entertainment, and dining district, along with the Tampa Aquarium. This plaza type is more focused on social gathering than cultural experience.



Tampa, FL





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The Empty Green

The Tampa Museum of Art, designed by Stanley Saitowitz and Natoma Architects, serves as a modern day “temple and forum.” The building acts as art as well as being a clean background to display art while providing a space for gathering. The building located within a park, hovers over the landscape. This provides shade for those below, promoting assembly. “The building is not only in the landscape, but is the landscape, reflecting the greenery, shimmering like the water, flickering like clouds. It blurs and unifies, making the museum a park, the park a museum.”

The building also promotes the idea of assembly by creating a large atrium space with the galleries surrounding. The building form, composed of large voids, acts as a visual frame to Downtown Tampa, connecting the building with the landscape. At night the metal box is transformed into a lantern, providing color and light to the surrounding park.

Although the main concept of the building was to produce a common gathering place, the actual use of the building does not match the intention. The space is currently not used to its full potential, instead of frequent gatherings, the park primarily remains empty.



All Tampa Museum images courtesy of ArcDaily

Revitalizing the Past

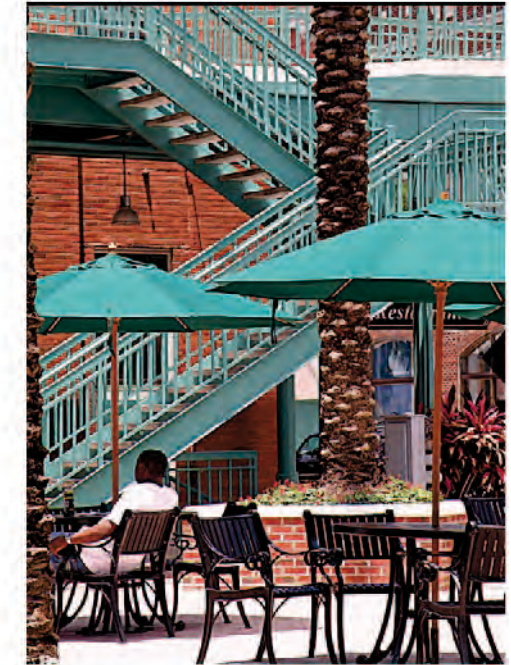
Ybor City, once a manufacturing hub for cigars, has transformed into an entertainment district where the area's rich history of culture and excitement lives on today. Within the past twenty years the historic district has been transformed from an area plagued by dilapidated buildings to a hub of activity. One cause of the deterioration of Ybor was the building of I4 through the district. In order to revitalize the area new zoning laws were established to permit nightlife activities, such as bars and clubs to stimulate the economy. Today, Ybor has a various forms of activities, including a movie theatre, restaurants, bars, and shopping areas creating a place for gathering and socializing.



Ybor City, Tampa, FL 2011
Courtesy of City-Data



Ybor City, Central Plaza
Courtesy of Find Apartments



Ybor City, Central Plaza
Courtesy of Gather Travel



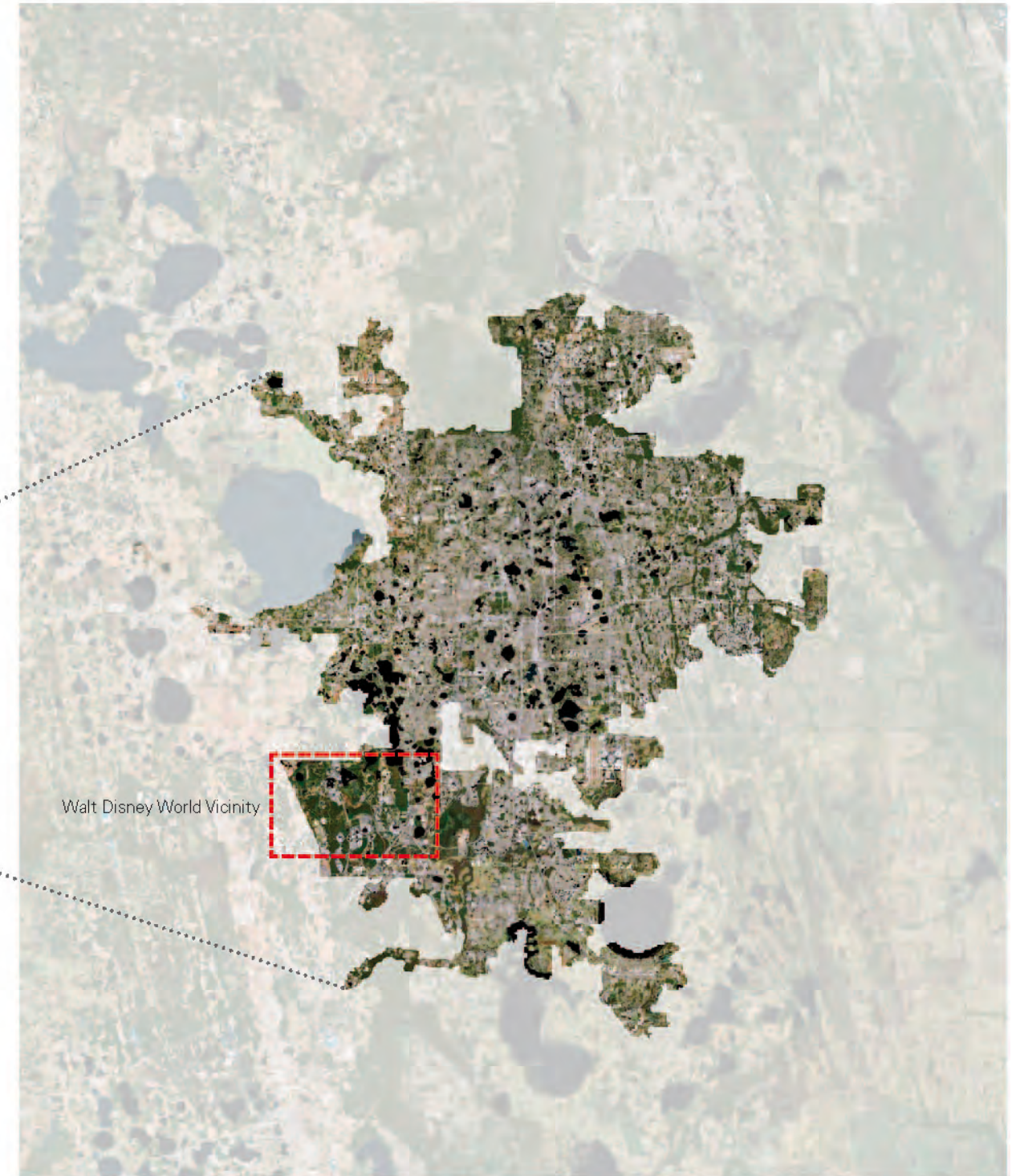
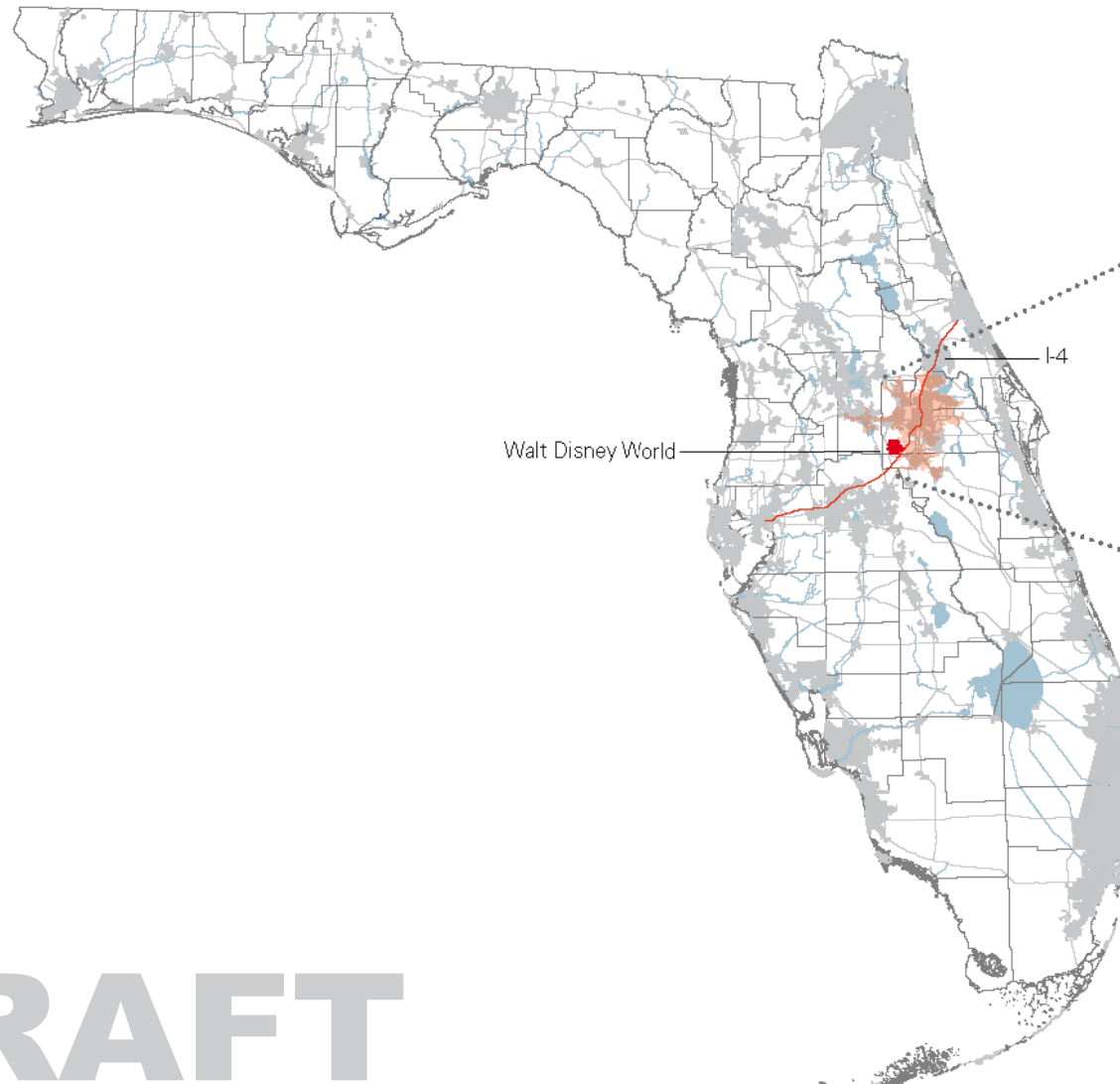
Ybor City, Tampa, FL 1917
Courtesy of UFDC



Ybor City, Tampa, FL 1900
Courtesy of UFDC

UTOPIAS OF ISOLATION

The identification of downtowns with business, government, leisure, and supply generates an odd paradox when Orlando is examined in relation to Disney World. The coming of Disney World in the 60's had a significant impact on the economy of Orlando and its surrounding areas, socially binding the two territories together. This interconnected relationship is most visible in the expansion of roadways which connect the areas of high tourism with Orlando's current city proper. Yet this connective infrastructure has simultaneously created utopias isolated from the city proper. These utopias are significant in the delineation of downtowns for they are primary and inseparable contributors to the economics of the greater Orlando area. Curiously, they have simultaneously secured the right to govern their territory autonomously.



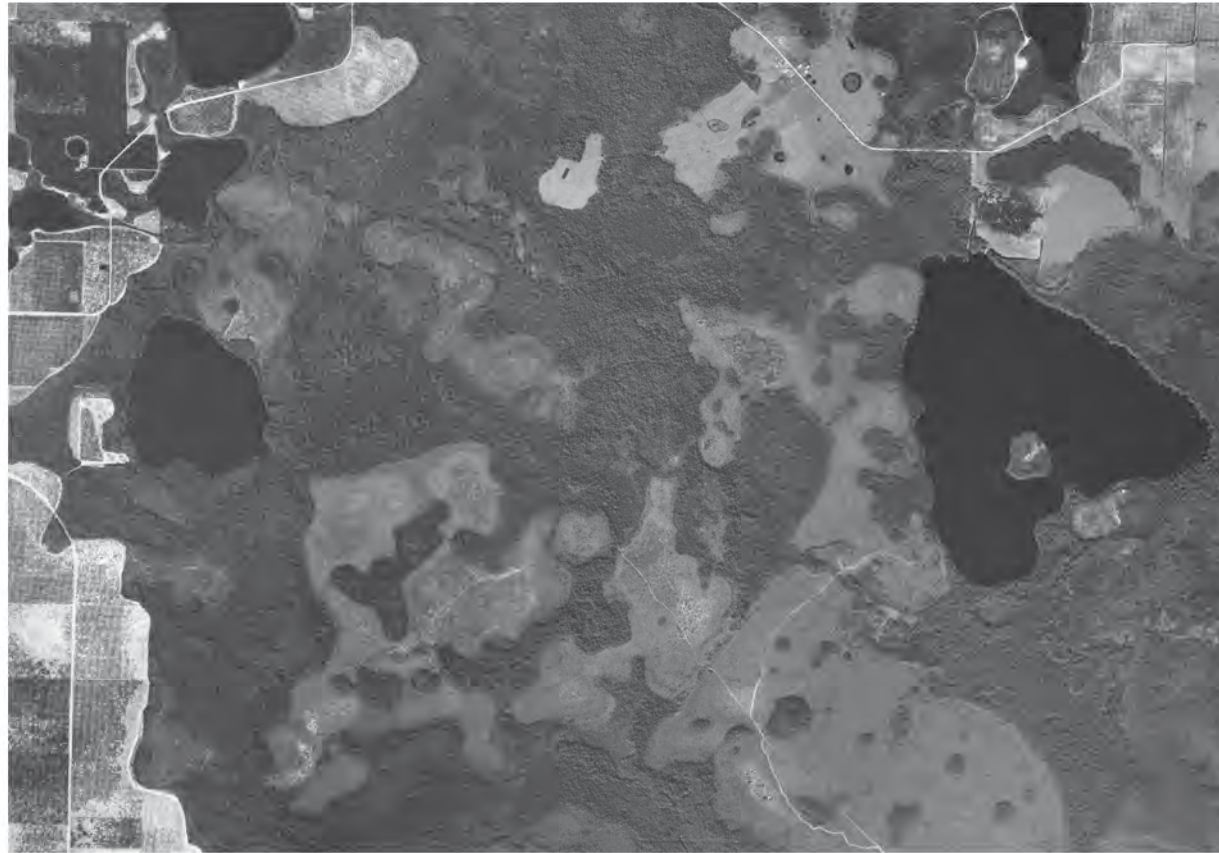
Orlando Metro Area, FL 2011



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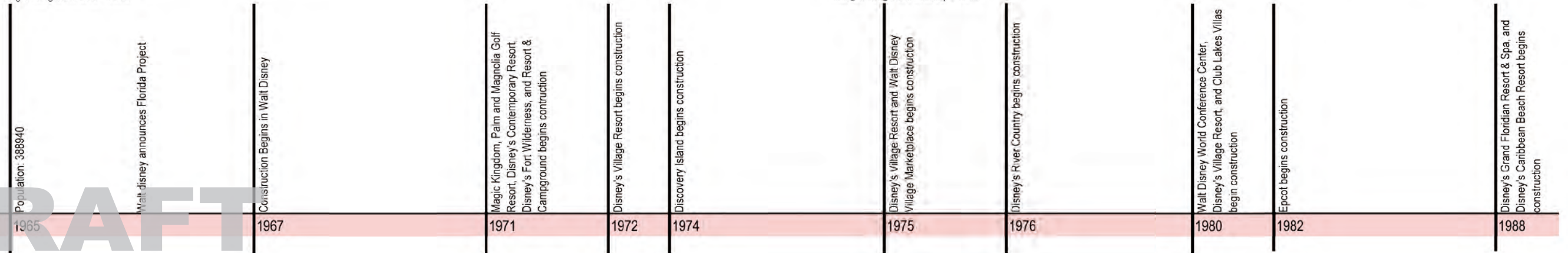
Disneyfication

Disney World in Kissimmee, FL is the world's largest and most-visited recreational resort. The resort covers an area of 30,080 acres and includes four theme parks, two water parks, 23 on-site themed resort hotels, including a campground, two health spas and physical fitness centers, and other recreational venues and entertainment. "While it is relished as a collective fantasy of escape and entertainment, the theme park is a tightly structured discourse about society. It represents a fictive narrative of social identity - not real history, but a collective image of what modern people are and should be - and it exercises the spatial controls that reinforce this identity."



Magic Kingdom Site - 1965

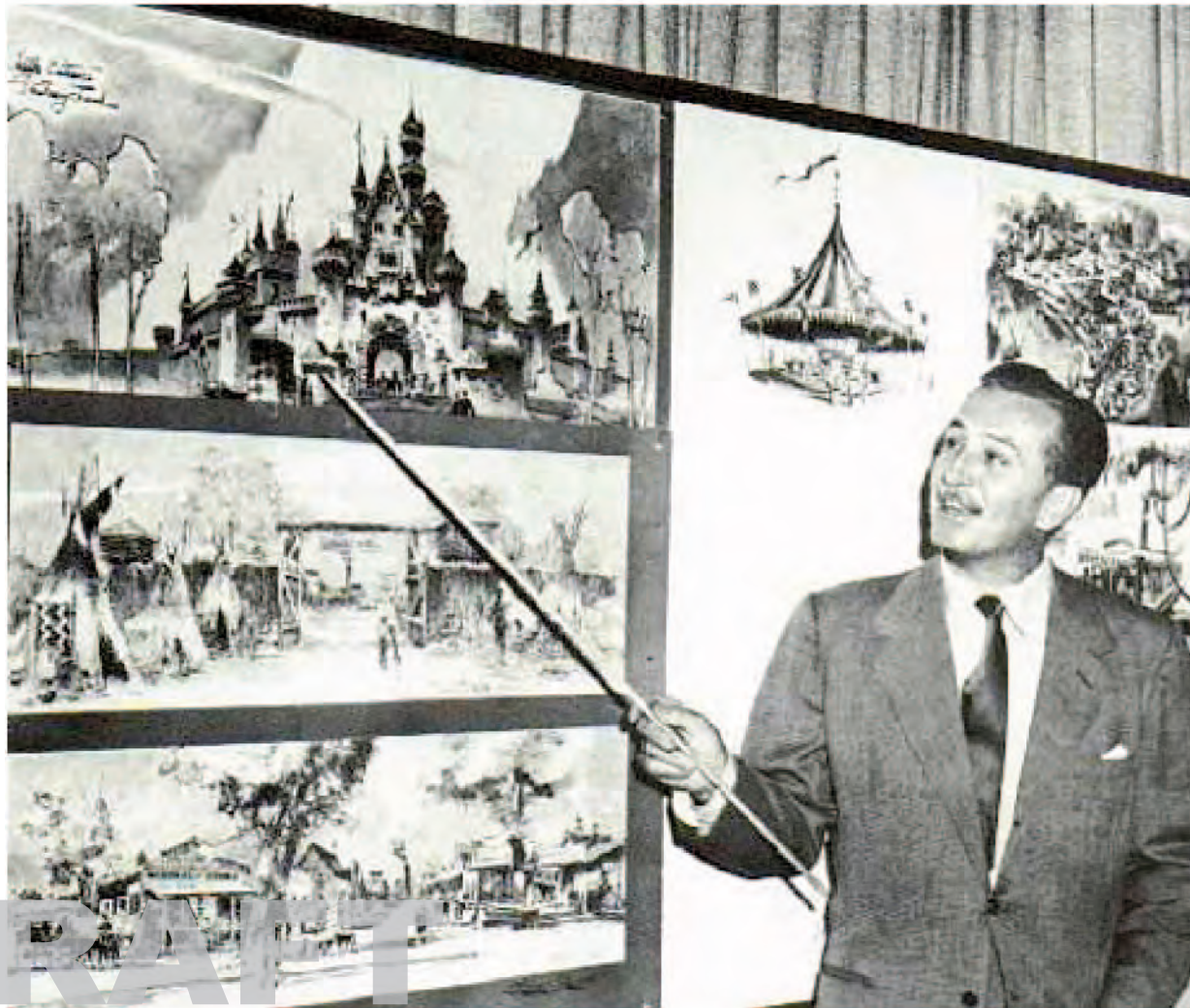
Magic Kingdom Vicinity - 1975



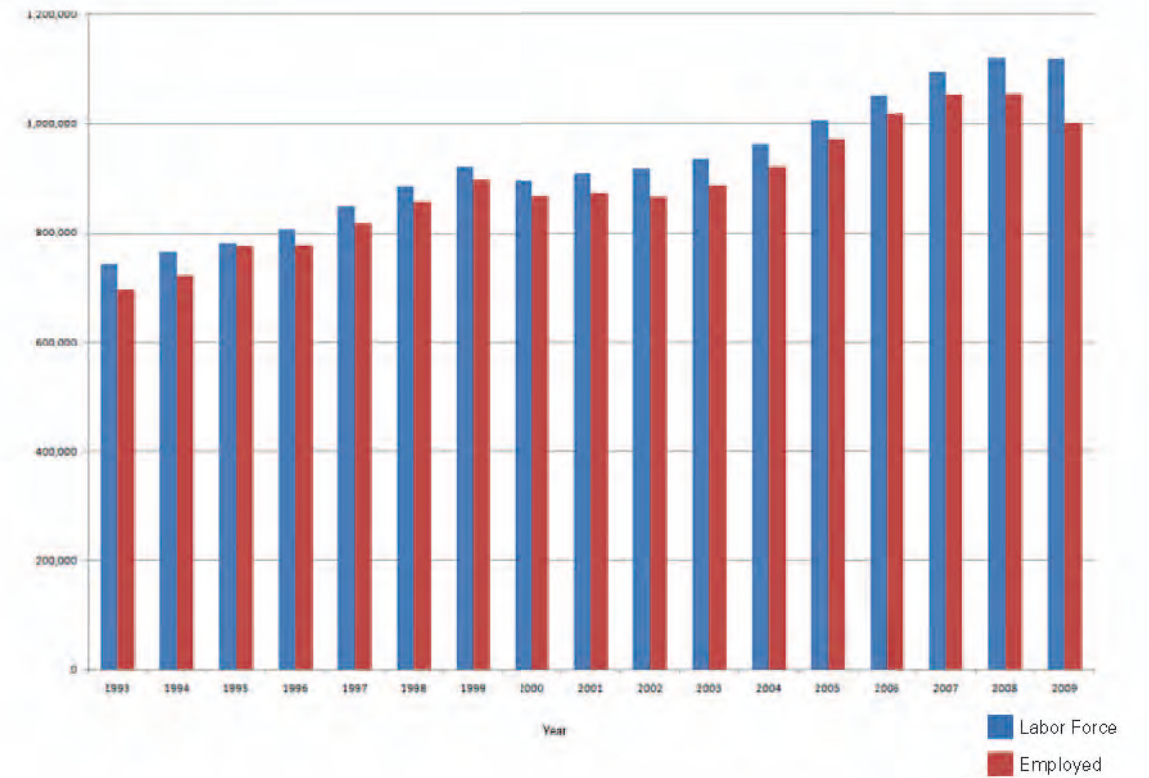
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Economics of World Making

The creation of this cluster of utopias requires significant resources. The construction of Walt Disney's first theme park, Magic Kingdom, in the mid 60's marked the beginning of a spike in population and employment in the greater Orlando area until the early 80's, with where steady growth continuing to today.



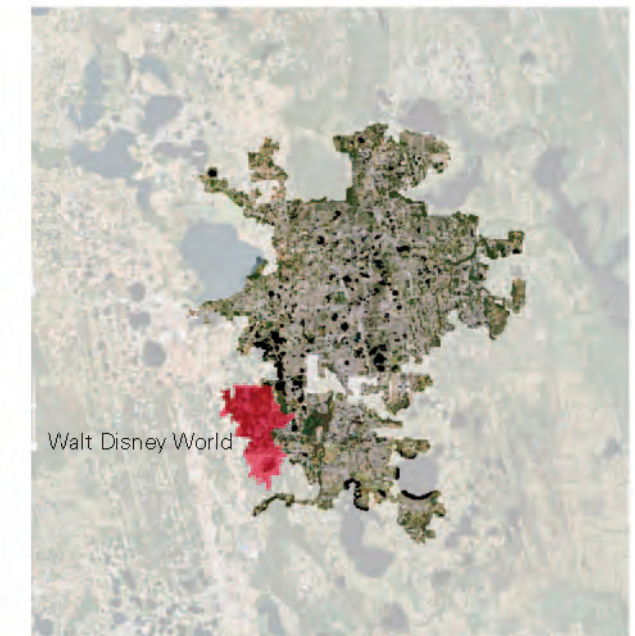
Orlando Region Employment Statistics
Numbers Expressed in Millions



Orlando Metro Area 1970



Orlando Metro Area 2010



The Path to Utopia

The extensive highway expansions in the 60's and 70's created easy access to Walt Disney World for an automobile-centric nation. The itinerary between the highway to the park was carefully crafted. The sequence of events steadily removes the individual from the Orlando metropolitan area to an isolated utopia by leaving the parked cars behind in a massive parking lot and utilizing idealized "public" transportation.



Magic Kingdom Vicinity - 1975



1 - Interstate 4



2 - Parking Lot Gate



3 - Parking Lot



4 - Tram Transportation



5 - Monorail Transportation



6 - Main Street - Magic Kingdom Theme Park



7 - Inside Cinderella's Castle

Why I am Obsessed with Everything Disney

Interview with Ingrid Molliner
West Palm Beach, FL

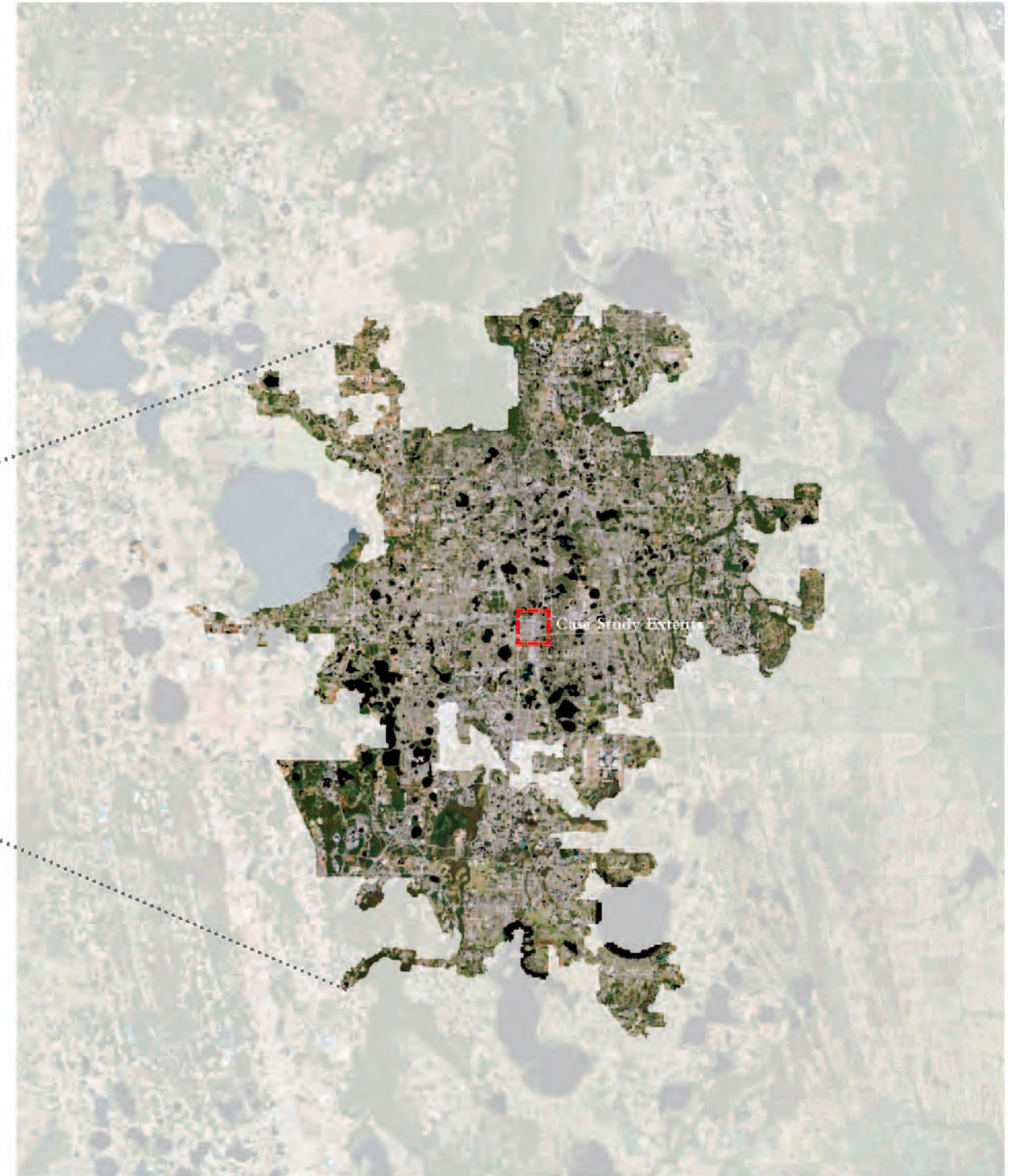
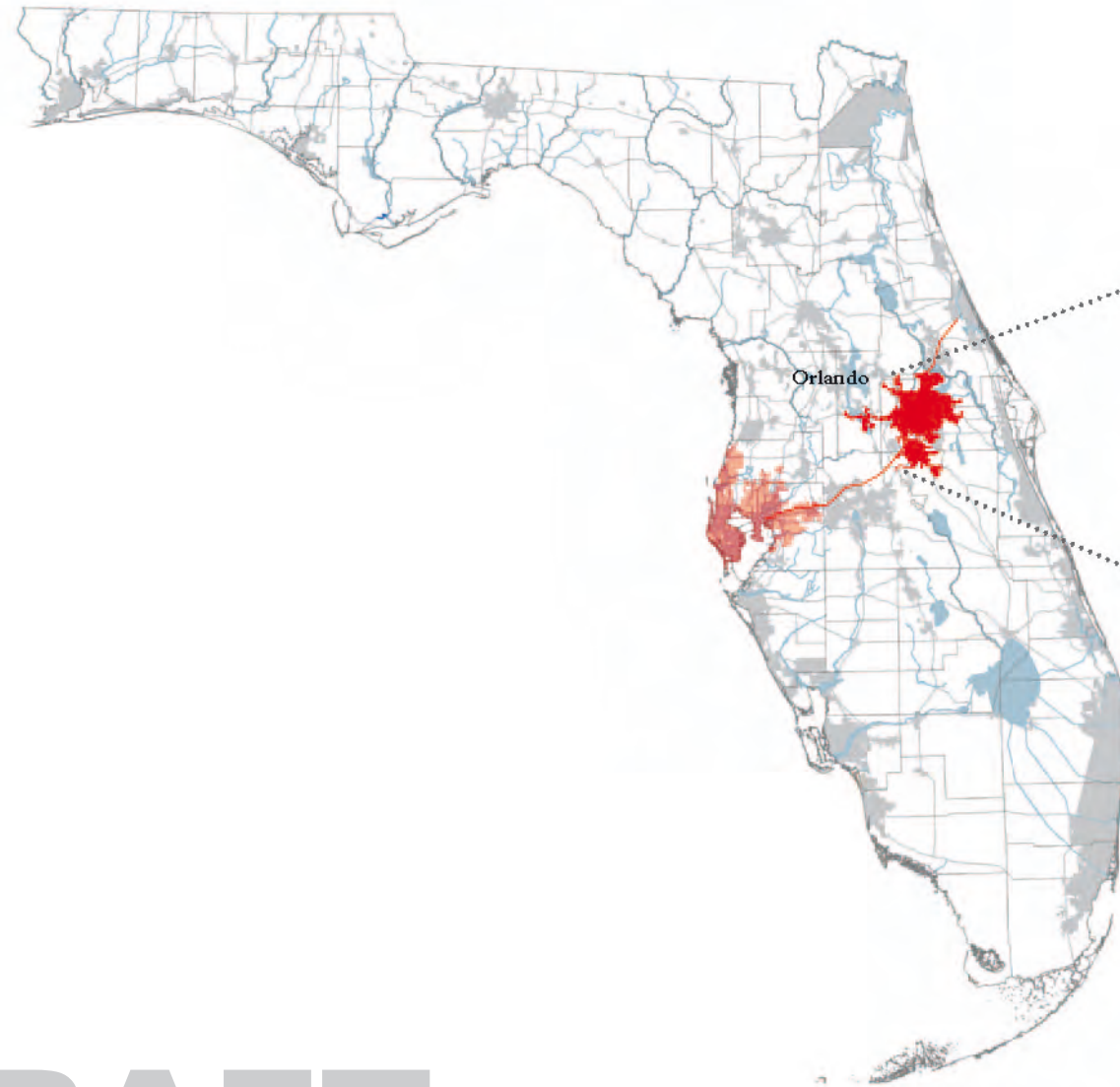
I grew up [as] a Disney fan, as my parents would drive us from south Florida to Orlando at least three times a year to see the big felt Mickey Mouse. From the beginning the entire design and "magic" of Disney intrigued me. The whole idea of going through different themed areas of fantasy, including all of your favorite childhood movie characters, amazed me as a child. As a child, no other family vacation would ever compare to that. Growing up, I learn a little more about the park every time I visit which explains the "magic," behind the scenes secrets that explained a lot about how the park got to be so important to me as a child. Plus, it has an emotional attachment for me. It was more than just visiting a theme park. It marked a special occasion every trip, whether it was a birthday, a family reunion or an engagement.

When my fiancé and I began dating, we made frequent trips to Disney. When it came time to plan an engagement, he knew that the most significant place to me was the park. It was the only place where I have had significant memories since my toddler years. For the engagement, he made the trip separate from the rest by the surprise of my closest friends and my immediate family meeting me for lunch in the Disney castle. With experiences like those, it is almost impossible to continue to expect anything less than a childlike fantasy. I cannot help but be obsessed with everything Disney.

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VOIDS

Manifesting themselves in both tangible and intangible forms, voids in the urban fabric are a natural occurrence, the by-product of an evolving city. These voids do not become problematic until they are so pervasive as to present a risk to the city's continued health. This is a very real risk for Orlando, whose downtown area is riddled with infrastructural divides and the enormous surface parking lots that large venues require. Physical voids amplify the deteriorating socioeconomic condition of the city center, accelerated by the recent trend towards suburban development that has decentralized the city's economic base.



Orlando Metro Area, FL 2011

Government Policy and the Emergence of Void

Don't confuse a sprawling city for an uncontrolled one. The unique growth patterns of the contemporary American city are not a mutation of some other established tradition of city development; they are the direct result of Federal-level legislation that has occurred in the last century. Florida has been particularly affected, given the legislation's concurrence with Florida's initial period of significant growth. In combination, the laws have effectively subsidized an extensive, automobile-based infrastructure and established the single-family home as the primary form of housing in America.

Development along Lake Apopka



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Laying a Legislative Infrastructure

Federal-level legislation establishing a strong infrastructural system of highways and zoning patterns occurred during a key moment in Florida's history, concurrent with the state's early growth period. Legislation also sought to make home ownership more widespread in the middle class, with an emphasis on stand-alone, single-family homes. As a result of these factors, Florida may be more predisposed to sprawling growth patterns than other, longer-established states.



City Population in 7 Major Florida Cities

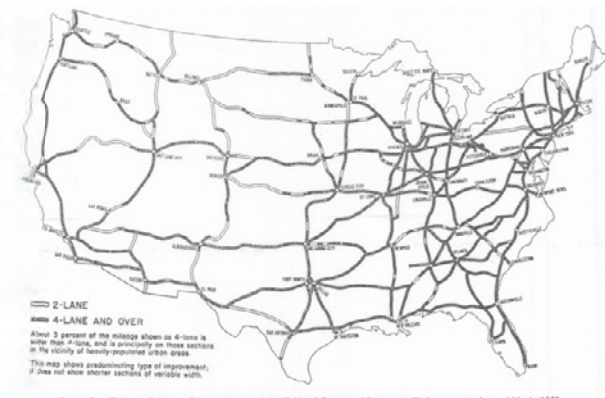
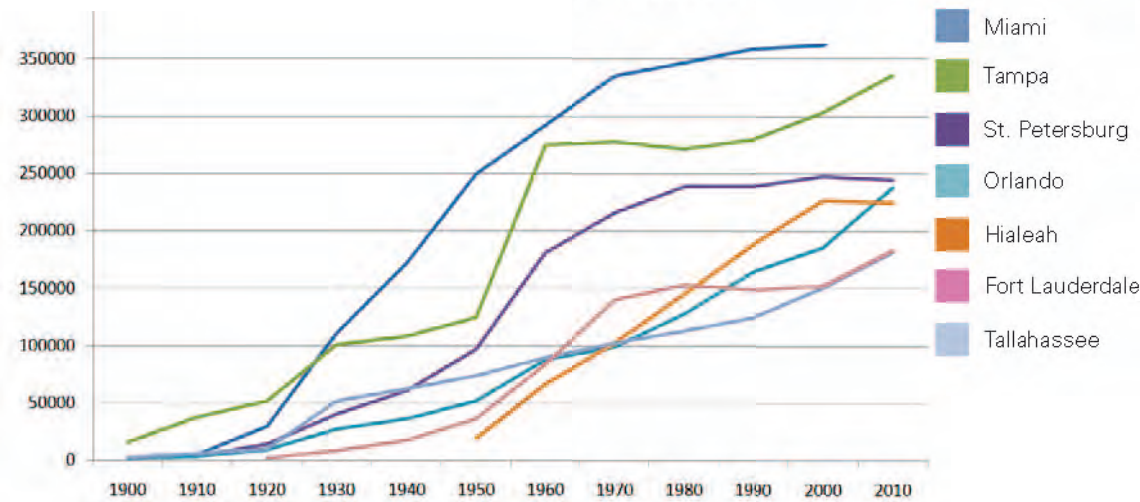


Figure 2.—Statistical status of improvement of the National System of Interstate Highways as to lane width, in 1965.

The GI Bill of Rights

Following WWII, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly called the GI Bill of Rights, provided for the Federal funding of veterans' education, as well as granting them access to VA-backed home loans. This bill is understood to have had a positive impact on strengthening America's middle class, which forms a strong economic base for the country's growth.

A System of Interstate Highways

The Federal Aid Highway Act, passed in 1956, established a nation-wide interstate highway system to provide for the defense and economic development of the nation, also cementing the American obsession with the automobile for decades to come.

<p>1916 Federal Aid Road Act is passed to provide regular funding to the states for highway building</p>	<p>1921 The Federal Aid Highway Act extends federal subsidies while bringing further pressure on the states to expand their highway departments and increase control over local road-building</p>	<p>1926 Standard Zoning Enabling Act. The first legislation in zoning of land and property. The SZE Act "endeavors to provide, so far as it is practicable to foresee, that proper zoning can be undertaken under it without injustice and without violating property rights."</p>	<p>1934 The National Housing Act of 1934 creates the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to reduce the cost of mortgages and spur home building by offering federal mortgage insurance.</p>
	<p>1928 A Standard City Planning Enabling Act. "The organization and power of the planning commission, which was directed to prepare and adopt a 'master plan'"</p>		<p>1938 The Federal National Mortgage Association is created as a subsidiary of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide a secondary market for mortgage loans.</p>

<p>1944 The G.I. Bill made housing even more affordable for 16 million returning veterans.</p>	<p>1945 Baby Boom generation begins</p>	<p>1947 The Housing and Home Finance Agency is created to oversee most federal housing programs</p>	<p>1949 Federal transportation activities are consolidated within the Department of Commerce</p>	<p>1956 The Federal Aid Highway Act authorizes \$25 billion of spending over a decade on the interstate highway system, but the system ends up costing far more than planned</p>	<p>1964 Urban Mass Transit Act provides federal subsidies to public transit agencies</p>
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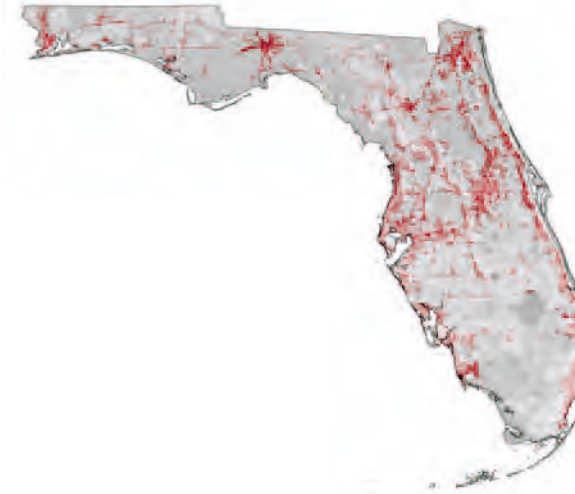
Expanding Access to the American Dream

Providing motivation for the individual and stability for the society, home and land ownership has been a fundamental tenet of the American way of life forever, and Florida in the mid-20th century was a prospective homeowner's dream: a temperate, coastal state with a virtually endless supply of land and a low cost of living. Federal legislation during this period also contributed to the state's housing boom by promoting widespread homeownership and subsidizing affordable housing.

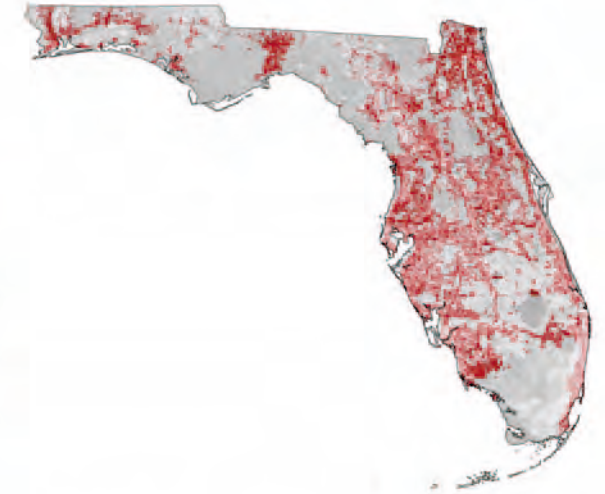


The new Expressway leading through Downtown Orlando, Florida

A postcard from 1963 advertises Orlando's new Expressway



Current Development, 2010



Projected Development, 2060

Projected Development

Extrapolation of Florida's historical and projected growth patterns reveals expanded conurbation around the major cities, resulting in an amalgamation of several urban centers: Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and St. Petersburg. Central to this process is the continued availability of inexpensive, developable land, which provides the economic incentive for less-dense, sprawling growth patterns.

1965
Congress establishes the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a cabinet-level agency

1968
The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability by housing providers

1972
Defined Developments of Regional Impact (DRIL), providing for heightened regulation in the planning and approval of very large developments that affect more than one county.

1974
Several landmark pieces of legislation provided for the further expansion and subsidy of infrastructure and housing projects. Acts include The National Mass Transportation Assistance Act, The Housing and Community Development Act, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

1985
The Growth Management Act requires each city and county in the state to adopt a local comprehensive plan to:

- Guide and control future development.
- Preserve, promote, protect, and improve public health, safety, comfort, and good order.
- Protect human, environmental, social, and economic resources

1986
The Low Income Housing Tax Credit is created to spur the construction and rehabilitation of low-income housing

1990
The National Affordable Housing Act creates the HOME Investment Partnership Program. HOME grants are used by state and local governments to develop "affordable" housing

1993
HUD (Housing and Urban Development) mismanagement corrected through government reorganization

Congress creates empowerment zones to stimulate development in distressed areas through tax incentives and direct funding

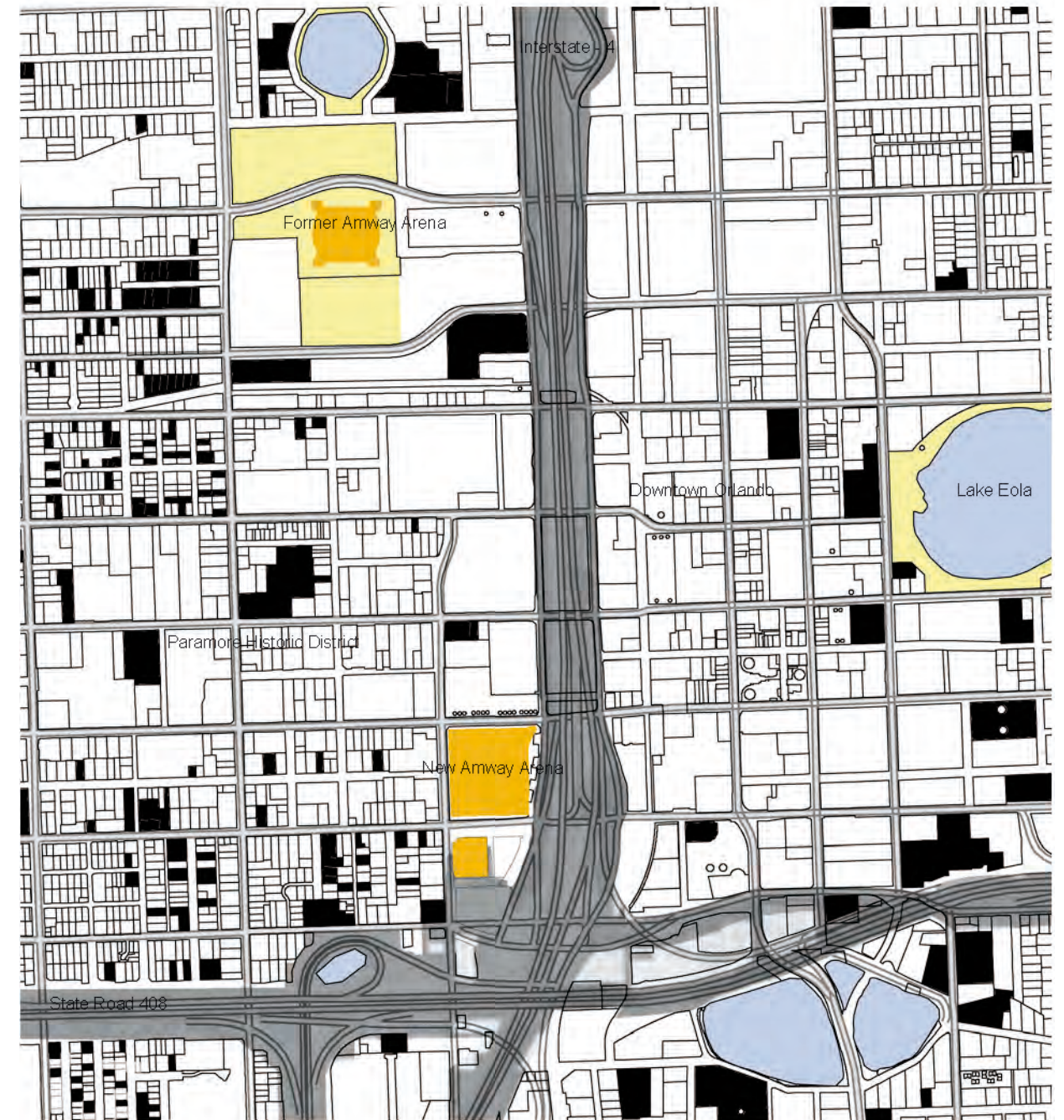
2003
President George W. Bush signs the American Dream Downpayment Act, which subsidizes low-income home buyers' down payment and closing costs.

2008
The Troubled Asset Relief Program is signed in to law to stabilize financial markets following the subprime mortgage crisis.

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Void Spaces in the Urban Core

In contemporary American cities, such as Orlando, voids are formed when a city grows beyond its original framework, leaving behind a series of spaces that carry the memory of what has been. This can be seen in a residential area whose economic base has been decentralized, or found when the city grows to encompass an undevelopable area, leaving a space of uncharacteristically low density in the urban fabric. Voids can provide a necessary space for density alleviation- a place for the city to breathe- but an overabundance of them can become a barrier to the territory's continued growth.



- Infrastructure corridor
- High-capacity venue
- Vacant lots
- Intransversable feature



Looking southwest over Lake Eola



Former Amway Arena parking lot



I-4 Corridor at the new Amway Center

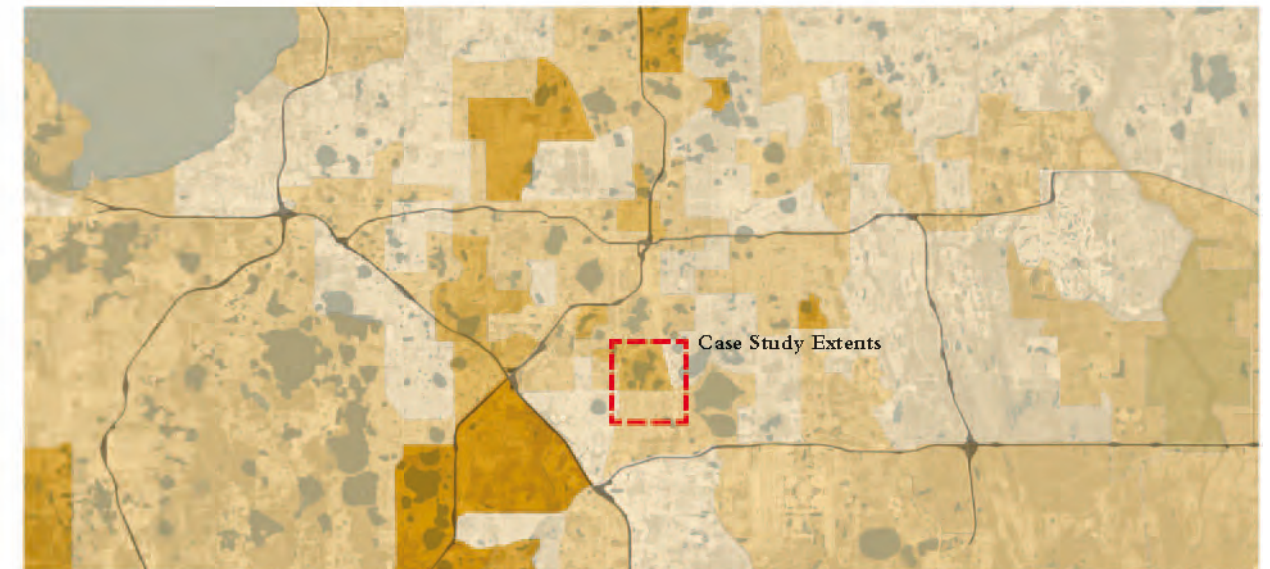
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Void Spaces in Orlando, FL



Infrastructural Voids

A large commuting population requires a large transportation infrastructure, and so a series of elevated highways support the city. On ground level, however, they divide the territory and create unusable or undesirable areas.

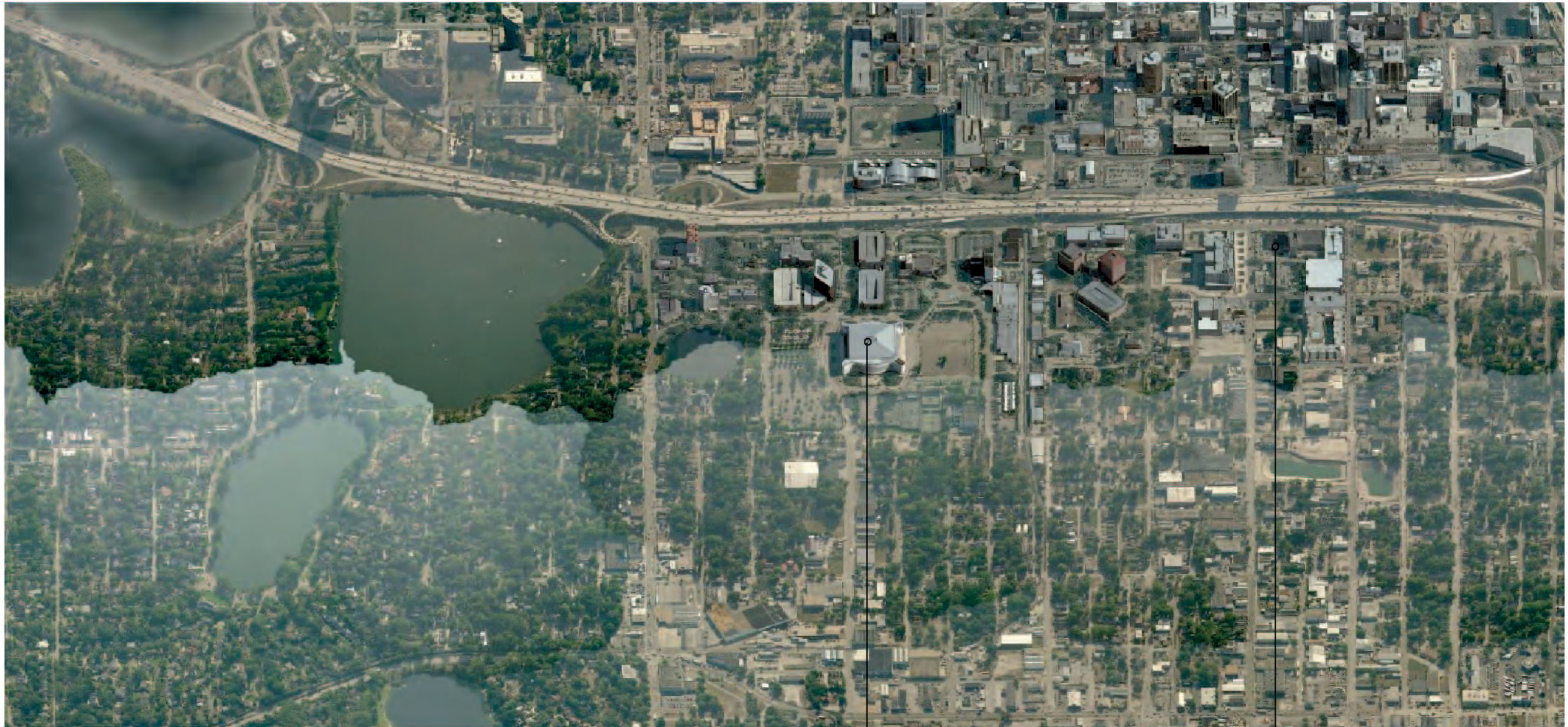


Vacant Housing Units in 2010

- Less than 10%
- 10 to 20%
- 20 to 30%
- 30 to 40%
- More than 40%

Downtown Vacancies

According to US census data taken in 2010, vacancy rates in the downtown area range from 10 to 40%, while most of Orlando's suburban development had lower vacancy rates.



Former Amway Arena

New Amway Arena

Venue Capacity and Void

Entertainment is a key industry in Orlando, and the city has no shortage of large venues. These large venues attract large crowds, and therefore traffic, but while Disney may be famous for its state-of-the-art transportation systems, the City of Orlando is not. How does the city handle the high-intensity, short-span traffic that arenas and theatres create? In downtown Orlando, just west of I-4, the city has two arenas- one old, one new. Comparing these two venues reveals a significant shift in the city's approach to high-capacity venues.



The Old Amway Arena



The New Amway Center

Figure/ground analysis of site

New Approach to High-Intensity Venues: Integration versus Isolation

Built in 1989, the Amway Arena was intended to replace the Orange County Convention Center as the city's premiere venue, thereby bringing economic activity to the downtown area. Since then, however, the surrounding area has suffered from crime, lower property values, increased vacancies, and the physical void left by the arena's extensive surface parking lots. In 2010, the arena's successor, the Amway Center, was opened about a mile south of the old arena. The design of the new arena, when contrasted to that of the old arena, reveals a fundamental shift in the city's approach to high-capacity, high-intensity venues. The new arena is integrated into the city in a neighborhood with a mix of uses and scales, and the use of a parking garage instead of surface parking reduces the space consumed by this necessary function.



Arena as object in a field



Arena entry integrated into streetscape

Approach and entry

Parking strategy



Surface parking for 7100 cars within 5 blocks

Scale of immediate context



Residential neighbors



New parking garage



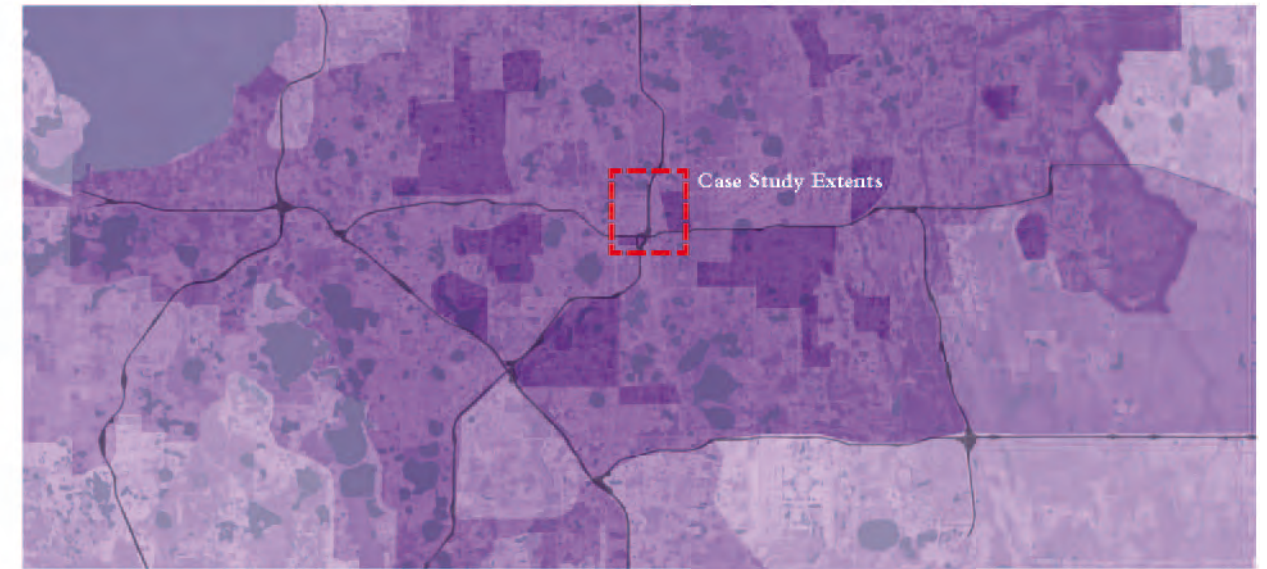
Across from medium-scale commercial buildings

Socio-Economic Voids

With the economic core of the city decentralized by sprawling urban development, a socio-economic void has developed in the downtown. Population density decreases in the vicinity of the core, and reforms into a ring of density a "safe" distance from the center. In a sprawling city like Orlando, the automobile has become a prerequisite to social viability, effectively establishing societal "upper" and "lower" classes, which often divide along racial lines.

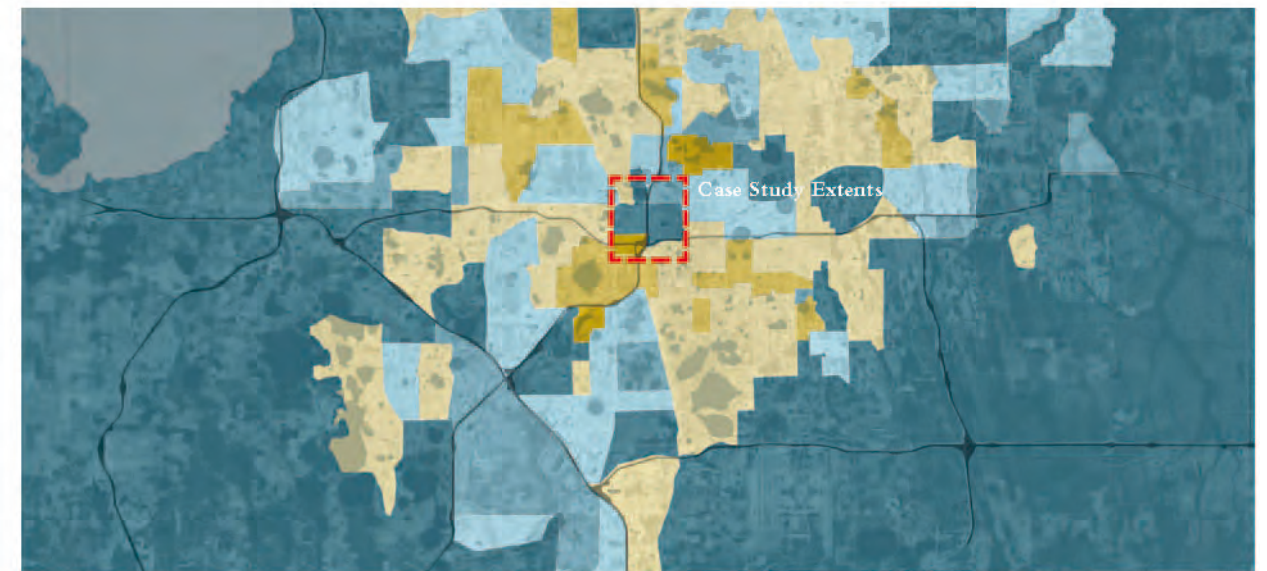


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Population Density in 2010

- Less than 50/sq mi.
- 50-249
- 250-999
- 1000-4,999
- 5,000 and higher

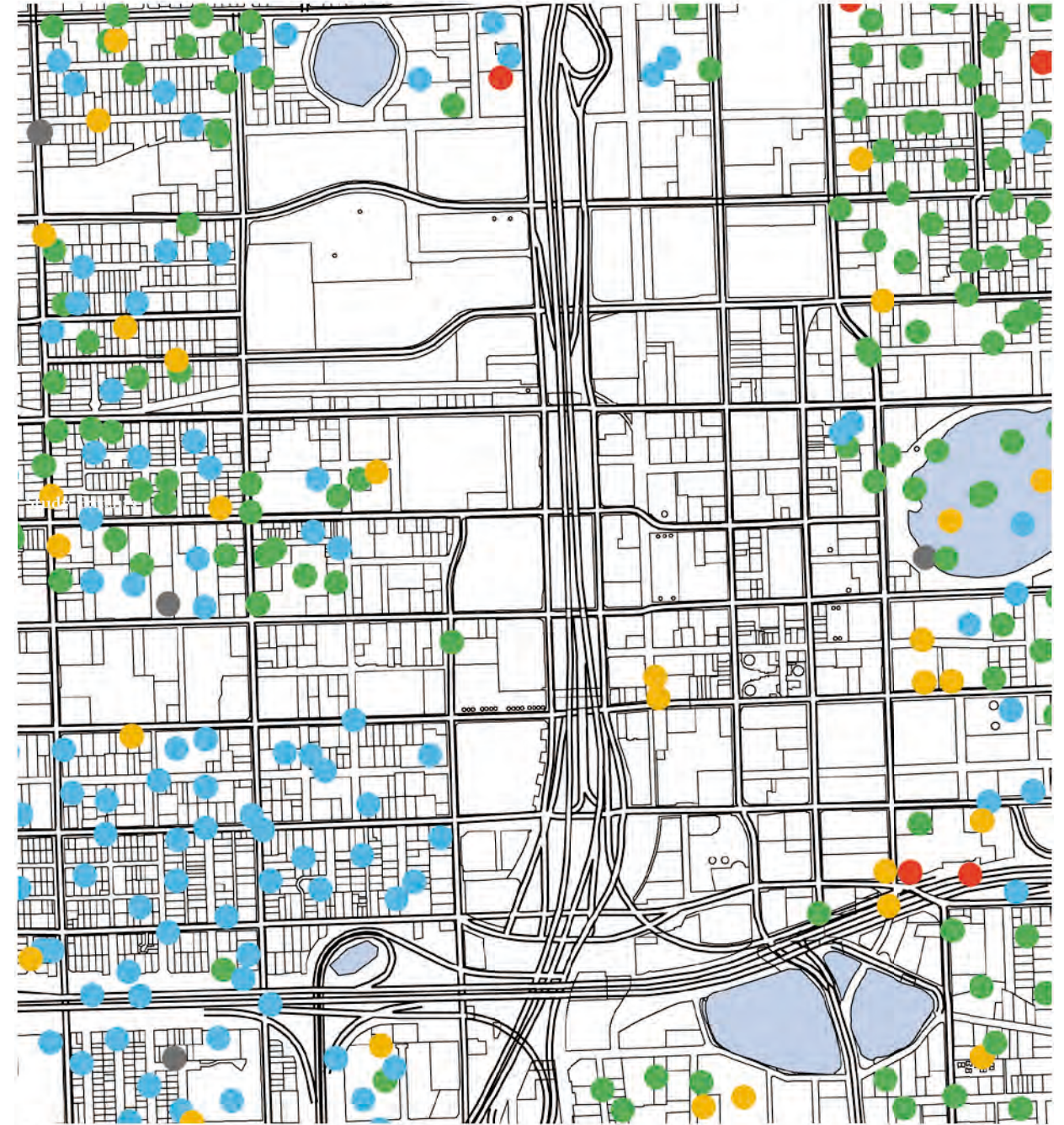
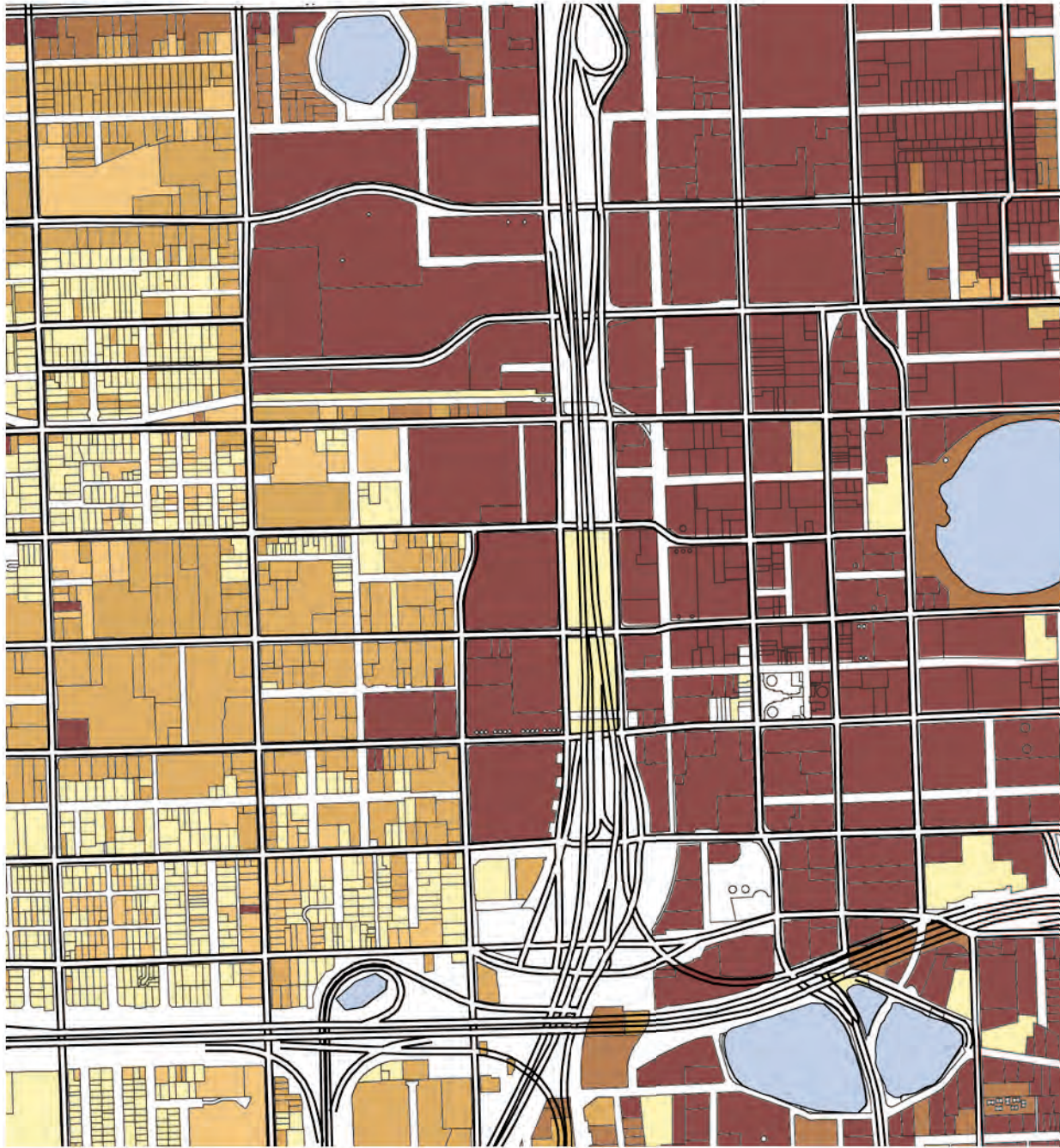


Population Shifts Since 2000

- Over 20% increase
- 10 to 20%
- 0 to 10%
- 0 to -10%
- 10 to -20%
- Over 20% decline

Decentralized Density

The region considered Orlando's downtown- the area near the interchange of I-4 and SR-408, is not more densely populated than the surrounding areas. Interestingly, the areas of densest population form a fragmented ring around the city's downtown.



Property Values in Void Spaces

Land values in the downtown area are high but fall dramatically on the west side of I-4. Large-scale venues buffer Paramore's residential district from the noisy eyesore that is I-4, but property values are not similarly buffered. This area is riddled with vacant lots and has lower land values than the rest of the downtown area.

Relative Property Values

- Highest value
- Lowest value

A Divided Downtown

The racial composition of Orlando is split dramatically along the I-4 corridor. East of I-4, in the downtown core, the population is primarily white, while Paramore Historic District, on the west side of I-4, has a predominantly black population. In the map below, one dot corresponds to 25 people of that ethnic or racial classification, and the distribution illustrates the density void that is at the core of the city.

Distribution of Racial and Ethnic Groups in 2010

One dot = 25 people

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Other



- Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Parks and recreation

Existing Adjacencies

On the west side of I-4, in the shadow of Orlando's downtown towers, many residential parcels in Paramore Historic District are directly adjacent to industrial areas. In some places, commercial lots mediate between the two land uses.

- Religious institution
- Government-run building
- High-capacity venue
- Surface parking lot

Filling the Gaps with Social Services

At the center of the Paramore Historic District's residential area, a commercial hub is now riddled with vacancies. Government-run organizations, social services, and religious institutions fill many of the largest gaps in the district's urban fabric.



Paramore is visually connected to Downtown



Large-scale government facilities near I-4



Industrial areas create a foreboding streetscape



Social services are prevalent in the area

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Matthew Mamula, Personal Interview (20 May 2011)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to

Jose Cruz

Chris Fernandez

Ingrid Molliner

Dinielle Nelson

Peter Sprowls