

atlanta civic design commission

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October 26, 1967

MEMO TO: Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
Vice-Mayor Sam Massell, Jr.
Members of the Board of Aldermen
Mr. Ray A. Nixon, Director of Public Works
Mr. Collier Gladin, Director of Planning Dept.

FROM: Joseph S. Perrin, Chairman, Civic Design Commission

SUBJECT: Bridge Ordinance

The Civic Design Commission forwarded at an earlier time a report to Mr. Ray Nixon and other city officials our opposition to the proposed bridge ordinance. Since that time a revised edition has been issued. No copy of this edition was sent to the Civic Design Commission. However, the revised version is also so highly restrictive as to have the potential effect of militating against the soundest and fullest development of our central city. Specifically, the Civic Design Commission feels that any ordinance dealing with these matters should be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of a progressive and changing city such as ours. We feel that:

Item (c) of Section 1 of the ordinance which sets 16' as a maximum outside dimension, and a minimum inside width dimension as 9', is highly arbitrary.

Item (d) stipulates that the maximum outside height dimension should not exceed 12'. This would preclude any bridge being built which is more than one story high. Here again the Civic Design Commission feels that this restriction is highly inflexible and may not meet the needs of our central city which faces major problems dealing with the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the years ahead. We do not feel that there is any particular virtue or magic in the 12' restriction. In some cases, more height may be practically and aesthetically more desirable than less.

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Item (e) stipulates that glass may not be used nearer than 42" from the floor of any proposed bridge. Our Commission feels that this is a design and engineering problem and not one which rightfully should be written in as a restriction in a proper ordinance dealing with bridges and walkways. Obviously, various kinds of glass are available today which by thickness and temper are stronger than many other materials used in such structures.

Provision (g) would prohibit pedestrians from stopping on any said bridge or structure for the purpose of observation. The Civic Design Commission feels that this provision is not only difficult to enforce, but undesirable in intent.

Item (j) provides that no moving platform or sidewalk would be permitted within said bridge or structure. This provision is unconditional and we feel it is unnecessarily prohibitive in its implications.

Section II would empower the Mayor and Board of City Aldermen to direct that any bridge or structure be removed without cost to the City. This provision is stated without providing any statement of cause or purpose for such a directive. The Civic Design Commission again believes that this provision as presently stated does not serve the best interests of the City.

The Civic Design Commission does believe that any proposal for bridges or overpasses should be reviewed carefully by appropriate instruments of city government to insure that the safety and well-being of Atlanta's citizenry be cared for and that the aesthetic character of the City be developed in a positive way. But the ordinance as currently proposed would seem to discourage the planning and erection of bridges or similar structures by:

- (1) inhibiting good design on the part of architects and urban designers;
- (2) virtually precluding steps in planning communication systems which would protect the health and safety of Atlanta's citizens;
- (3) discouraging the full revitalization of the central city by its inhibitive nature.

Mr. Collier Gladin of City Planning has submitted a report to the Civic Design Commission, a copy of which was attached to our report to Mr. Nixon. Mr. Gladin's report cites many instances across America where the prohibitive provisions of this proposed ordinance would have curtailed the development of many meaningful projects.

The Civic Design Commission asks your careful scrutiny of the proposed ordinance. We do not believe that it should be passed in its current form.

Encl.