The Central Business District is very sensitive to the provisions for improved accessibility. This is apparent from the decline in values that have characterized the area. The decline in property values in the Fourth Ward alone accounted for a loss in the municipal tax base of more than twelve and one half million dollars in the period from 1952 to 1958, without a gain in other benefits. Several phases of an extensive plan for the redevelopment of the Central Business District are in various stages of planning and execution. The success of these, and particularly the Charles Center renewal project, is of prime importance to downtown, and is contingent to a large degree on the improvement of traffic service to the area. The southern corridor routes provide a large measure of this service. Connections leading directly to streets serving the central City area, including the Charles Center and the adjacent Civic Center site, are provided for traffic to and from the East-West, Southwest and Jones Falls Expressways.

The decline in the use and character of the central City area for residential purposes has been a problem of mounting concern in Baltimore. Included among the several redevelopment projects now planned for the area, are a number of apartment buildings designed specifically to meet the requirements of middle and high income groups as well as the rapidly growing retired or pensioned group. Planning of this nature to date has centered on the Charles Center site, the Mount Vernon area, the Mount Royal Plaza and Mount Royal-Fremont Projects. Additional facilities have been included in the recently proposed plan for the Jones Falls Valley. The reduction of traffic congestion as well as the improvement of accessibility is mandatory if the central City area is to return again to the dual function of serving both the business and social needs of the region. The Project routes passing south of the Central Business District will reduce traffic congestion and provide access to the proposed areas without introducing the nuisances associated with through traffic and the interchange with other traffic directly in the areas.

With the determination of the route for the East-West and Southwest Expressways many of the problems associated with the decline in the central City area may be approached with logic and confidence by both public and private interests.

Parking

Terminal facilities for parking and the interchange of people and goods are essential parts of the transportation system. The demand for adequate parking facilities strategically located is usually associated with the Central Business District.

Within the central City area, the problems associated with increasing traffic volumes and the demand for both short term and long term parking are more acute. The Central Business District Report prepared in 1959, included the most recent survey of any magnitude of the problem of parking supply and demand. While it was concluded that supply and demand were generally balanced at the time of the study, the locations of parking facilities relative to the traffic system and the business and employment concentration were not satisfactory.