



Judy Alembik and her husband, Aaron, relax in the living room of their Sandy Springs home. They've seen the area change and grow during the 30 years they have spent in their home at the Perimeter. **Bitu Honarvar** bhonarvar@ajc.com

Creating 'sense of place'

ATP

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The once-outlying areas have morphed into burgeoning metro communities.

Between them, there are 130,000 residents – a figure expected to grow when new Census numbers are released next year.

Those already there best the region in both education and income, increasing the ATP appeal and importance on the regional stage.

"You have the advantages of a more traditional suburb, but you have it close in," said Dunwoody Mayor Ken Wright. "You basically have it all."

For residents, that can mean brisker commutes on surface streets

– no need to hop on or off highways to get to job centers in Buckhead, the Perimeter Mall area or even downtown Atlanta. There is also the option of public transit – MARTA's two northern train lines end on the northern side of ATP – for both work and play.

But in true suburban fashion, there is plenty of parking for the trains. And when work is done, ATPers return to the leafy yards and big houses once thought to be the domain of those willing to live far outside Atlanta.

"We loved living intown and being close to everything, but two kids later we outgrew our shoebox down there," Polly Frederick said of her previous home in Brookhaven.

A growing family led her and husband Russ to buy a "5-4 and a door" in Dunwoody eight years ago.

The Georgian two-story home, nicknamed for the number of windows on the top and first floors, gives Russ Frederick a dream commute of five minutes.

The accountant can drive another five minutes to get to the highway, should he need to travel to visit clients.

Polly Frederick, a stay-at-home mom and part-time entrepreneur, finds everything in a three-mile radius: her kids' schools, Perimeter Mall, the post office and grocery store.

The neighborhood has at least five other families who moved from ITP for the larger homes. That sense of community allows the children – ages 11, 9 and 6 – to ride their bikes to the community pool and tennis courts. "This is our small town, with a sense of security and community, inside the big city," said Polly Frederick. "We could still be considered inside the outside of the Perimeter."

The notion of the highway as a dividing line is a relatively new way to create the division of city versus suburbs, David Sjoquist, an economics professor at Georgia State University, said.

The beltway around Atlanta opened in 1969. But before that, Atlantans