

# TOURS/SAINT-PIERRE-DES-CORPS: WHAT IF THE A10 MOTORWAY OPENED UP URBAN PASSAGES?

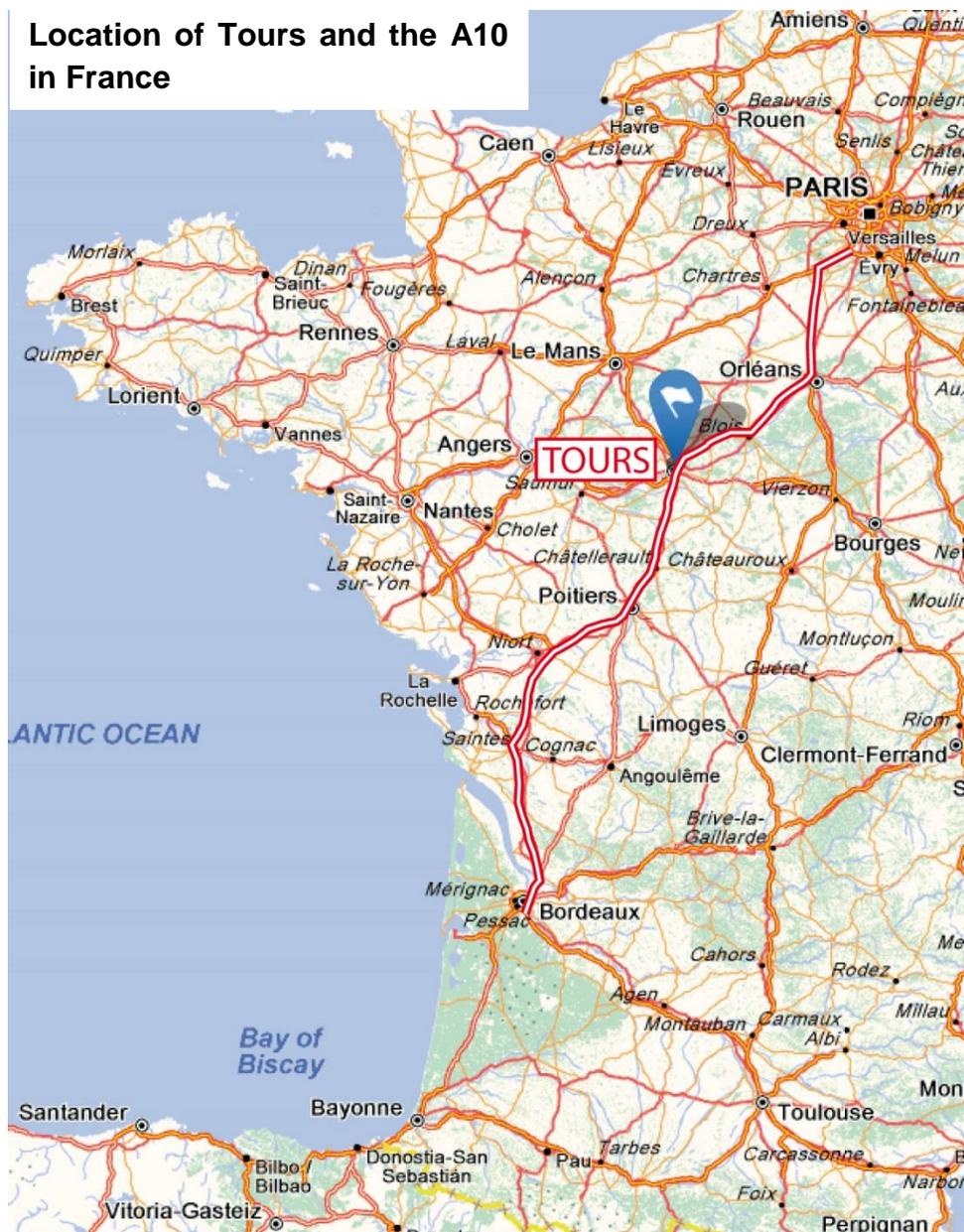
## Description of the site



### Its location

The A10 motorway is a major road link between the Paris Basin, South-Western France and the Spanish Basque Country. Greater Tours District lies between Paris and Bordeaux. The A10 motorway passes through the heart of the city, less than one kilometre as the crow flies from St. Gatien's cathedral, the cradle of the city.

Location of Tours and the A10 in France



Basic map: Michelin

## Its history

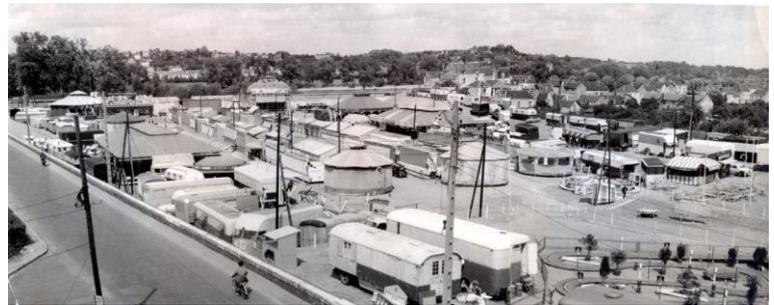
### It began with a waterway...

In the 19th century, a project to canalise the River Cher resulted in the building of a link canal between the Loire and the Cher to facilitate the carriage of goods and people between Nantes and Montluçon. It was decided to locate the link on the eastern edge of Tours but, as a result of economic development, the canal very soon lost its purpose.



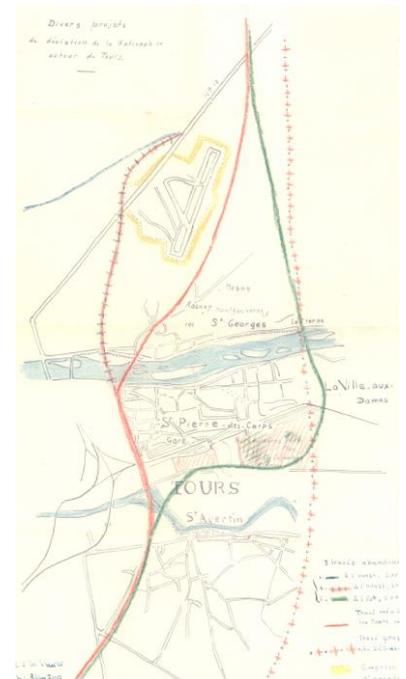
### ...Followed by a transitional period with no real purpose for the area

After the Second World War, the local authorities decided to abandon the canal, filling it in with the rubble left by air raids and turning it into an urban boulevard. Between the filling-in of the canal and the building of the motorway, there was a transitional period that saw the funfair occupy the site where the old canal station had once stood.



### Finally, a controversial motorway route

In the 1950s, the Mayor of Tours, Jean Royer, decided to move traffic off the RN10 road that ran through the centre of the city causing major disruption. The project for the A10 motorway included various possibilities for the section crossing Tours District. One option was a route to the west, where the ring road runs today. Another option was considered on the east side of the district, between Saint-Pierre-des-Corps and La Ville-aux-Dames. Eventually, the option retained, despite strong opposition from local people, avoided the city centre but still ran through Greater Tours (cf. red line on the plan opposite). The project was added to the national motorway programme and it was agreed that the infrastructure would also be used by traffic within the Greater Tours District.



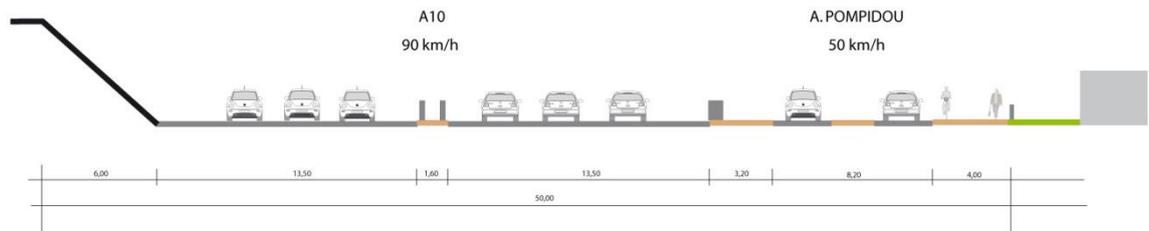
## Eventually, an urban motorway opened in 1971

In 1971, the first section of the A10 was opened, followed in 1974 by the remainder of the Paris-Bordeaux motorway. In those days, the motorway was seen as an example of modernity, stimulating economic development. However, a number of inconveniences were beginning to become apparent.

The new Avenue Georges Pompidou lay parallel to the A10, resulting in the "A10 corridor" across the urban district, ten lanes of traffic consisting of 2x3 lanes on the A10 and 2x2 lanes on Avenue Georges Pompidou. The avenue has recently been redesigned so that there is now only one lane of traffic in each direction and more space for pedestrians and cyclists.



Cross-section of today's "A10 / Avenue Georges Pompidou corridor"



Taken in its entirety, the corridor (lanes of traffic + slip roads + embankment + various wasteland) covers some 20 hectares between the Loire and Cher rivers.



## Urban Context

### Three scales, two uses

The section of the A10 that crosses the Tours district is used on:

- A national and international scale: the A10 is the main motorway link between Paris and South-Western France.
- A « County » and regional scale: the A10 is the main vehicular gateway to the largest economic cluster in the Centre region (in terms of employment).
- A local scale: the A10 is used by local people as a ring road and as access to the city centre.

Taking these three scales as a basis, the motorway can be said to have two uses with:

- The flow of traffic in transit between the Paris Basin and Aquitaine (or beyond),
- The absorption of local traffic, within the urban district and between the town and its immediate vicinity.

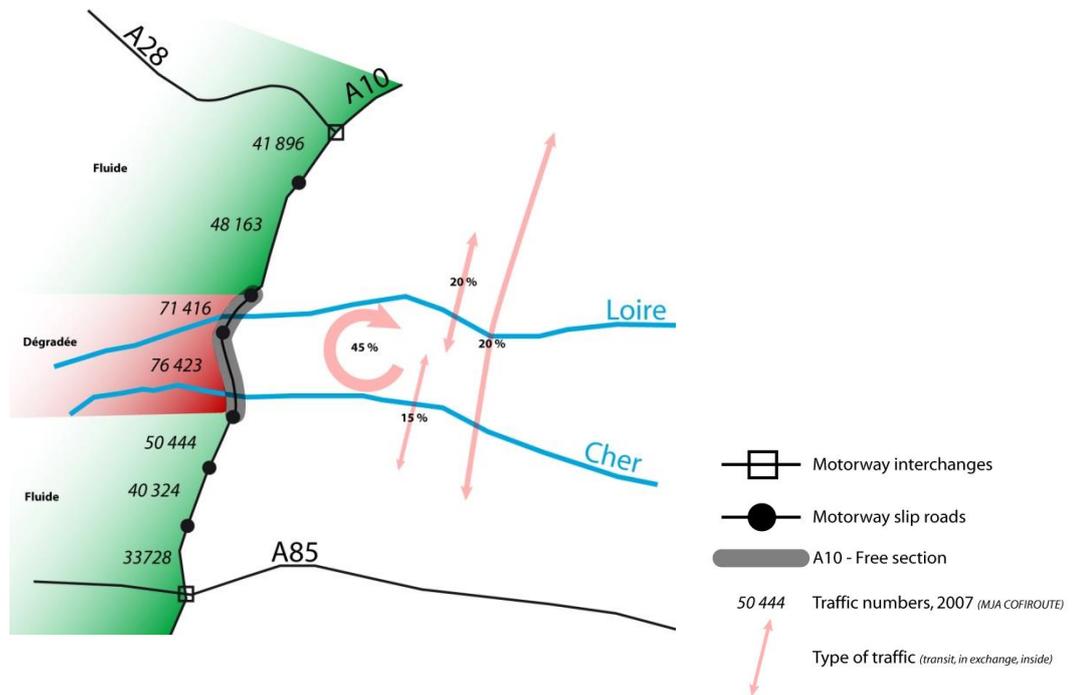
Together, these traffic flows represent some 80,000 vehicles a day at the Tours Centre exit. 80% of the traffic is generated by people living in Indre-et-Loire, i.e. either people

whose point of departure and destination lie within Greater Tours or people travelling between the city centre and its suburban districts.

The following effects have been noted:

- The difficulty of combining local traffic and vehicles in transit, especially at rush hours,
- Impaired air quality, with air regularly exceeding alert thresholds,
- Noise,
- Major cleavage between Tours and the outlying towns of Saint-Pierre-des-Corps, Saint-Avertin and Chambray-lès-Tours.

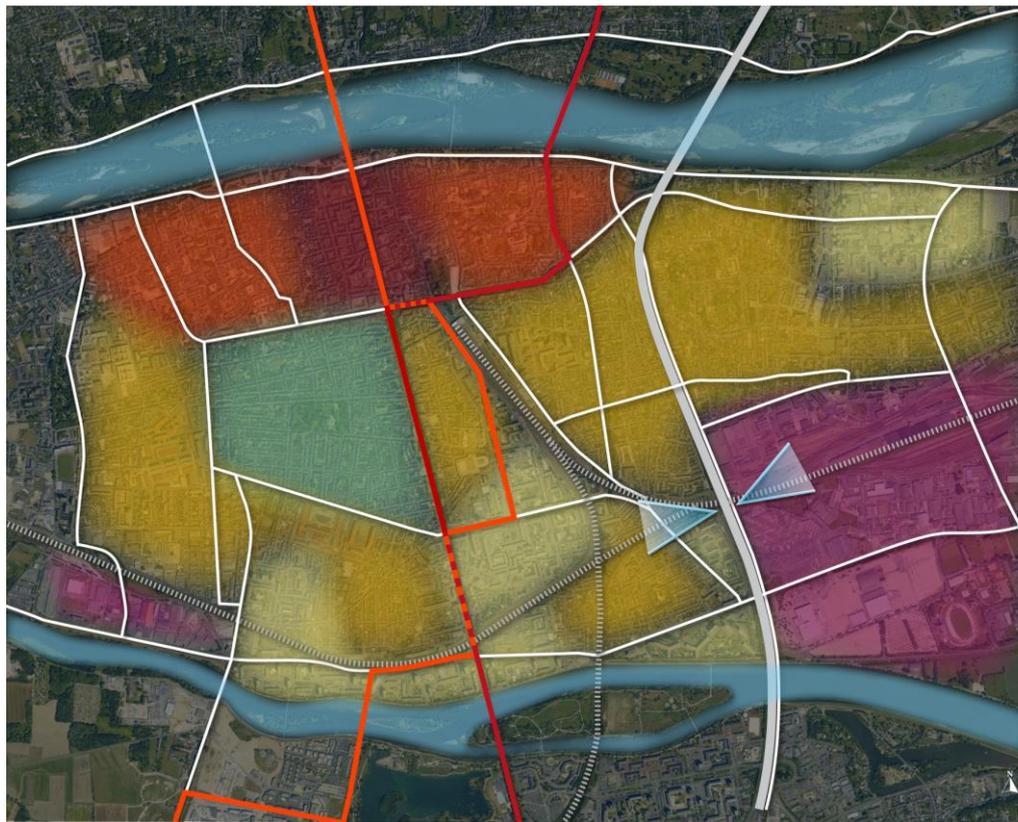
Diagram of the current operation of the A10



These observations highlight the issues for the future – combining the current interplay between the three scales and two uses inherent to the A10 and urban living along this corridor.

### An informative urban route

The A10 crosses the Tours District from North to South, along the way revealing the town's history and an excellent view of surrounding urban districts in all their diversity. With its different points of view, the road infrastructure gives insight into the geography of the Tours area, notably the urban landscape as a whole. The recent drop in the speed limit to 90 kph is already giving A10 users a greater sense and understanding of the locality that they are driving through.



**L'autoroute A10, dans son contexte urbain tourangeau**

- Typologie urbaine**
- Secteur hyper centre
  - Secteur historique
  - Secteur industriel et grands équipements
  - Faubourg
  - Grands ensembles
  - Quartier des Prébendes
  - Cours d'eau
  - ▲ Point de vue
- Infrastructure**
- Ligne 1 tramway
  - Ligne 1 BHNS
  - A10
  - Voire interquartier
  - ⋯ Voie ferrée



**A corridor consisting of two distinct infrastructures**

The A10 and Avenue Georges Pompidou form the “A10 corridor” that runs through the heart of Greater Tours. The presence of the old canal embankment and the difference in altitude between the two infrastructures add further complexity to the corridor, making crossings between Tours and Saint-Pierre-des-Corps more difficult.

Landscape view of the current "A10 / Avenue Georges Pompidou corridor"

Schéma du profil en long de l'A10 et de l'avenue G. Pompidou, entre la Loire et le Cher



entre loire et cher 2800m

Schema profil long A10Pompidou.ai



## An intrusive infrastructure

### A poorly-integrated motorway

As soon as the canal lost its navigable waterway status in 1955, projects abounded for the wide area of land that marked the boundary between the towns of Tours and Saint-Pierre-des-Corps. Funfairs were held there in the 1960s. The Town Council of the day wanted to turn it into an urban boulevard to ease congestion for people travelling through Tours on the RN10 road. After long discussions of various potential routes, the one selected for the motorway was chosen at the end of 1960 once Tours City Council had obtained compensation for the funding of Boulevards Churchill and Wagner, enabling it to reorganise urban traffic flows. The A10 opened in 1974. This short look back at history shows that, from the outset, the question of mobility within the urban district was primordial and closely linked to the motorway project. From this retrospective, it is easy to see that the A10 was initially seen as a decision taken at national level and imposed on local people.

### A ring road, an inefficient solution

The ongoing urban development, the concentration of city functions and the increasing urban sprawl very quickly raised questions about the routing of the motorway, which was seen as an intruder cutting through the heart of the city. Should it be rerouted? The idea of a ring road was first mooted in the 1980s (just a decade after the A10 was opened for use).

The desire to move traffic in transit away from the city centre, though, was unachievable when considered in the light of the actual facts of the situation. Firstly, the traffic surveys conducted these last few years confirm that the urban section of the motorway is mainly, and by a long chalk, a means of local mobility and that any ring road would only carry 20,000 of the 80,000 vehicles using the motorway. Moreover, although the idea of a motorway-grade ring road is an old idea that enjoys support, it has never been included in a regulatory document or infrastructure programme. In 1993, for example, the SDAT was unable to achieve a route that satisfied all parties and it had to be content with evasive "arrows". Later, the national scheme for transport infrastructures (*Schéma National des Infrastructures de Transports*, SNIT) launched by the Government in 2007 did not include it in the list of priority investments.

### Discovering the opportunities afforded by the motorway and the need to "make do"

The studies carried out before defining the territorial consistency scheme (*Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale*, SCoT) again highlighted the realities of A10 usage. Based on the findings, the appropriateness of a ring road was finally re-assessed. Having demonstrated the relative failure of such a scheme to impact on the 80% of local traffic, the SCoT abandoned any possibility of a motorway ring road. Instead, it launched a process that documents the maintenance of motorway status aiming to ensure that its layout, the development of the surrounding areas and the services that it provides comply more closely with its uses and are more in line with the urban fabric along its route. The dream of a ring road has been abandoned. Instead, real action will be envisaged for the existing infrastructure, while maintaining its status and characteristics as a motorway.

## Building a common view of an infrastructure requiring "a new territorial character"

One direct consequence of the abandonment of the motorway ring road project for the Greater Tours District is the need to make the best possible use of the opportunities

afforded by the existing infrastructure. Based on this position, technicians from the ATU and VINCI Autoroutes analysed the portion of the A10 crossing Greater Tours from north of Saint-Radegonde to the A10/RD37 sliproad at La Thibaudière in the south. Eleven sequences were identified within the area crossed, based on urban features, landscape and the characteristics of the road.

The motorway actually crosses very different sectors including residential districts, commercial areas, major infrastructures and wooded hillsides.

The bridges and viewpoints in the area have been more or less ignored up to this point, even though the area crossed is part of UNESCO's World Heritage list. The infrastructure is seen as a nuisance for certain local people. It also cuts the city into two distinct sections. Despite this, the local people have come to accept the areas lining the motorway and all the crossing points even though they are obviously lacking in quality and are inconvenient for users, especially when considering mobility on a human scale (pedestrians and cyclists).

While the motorway's use remains essentially local, most of the vehicles are cars and trucks. Only a few coaches running "county" services have been using the motorway daily since September 2012. However, some of the "Fil Bleu" urban network routes cross the motorway in several places. There is no multimodal usage or management on the A10 and the location of the toll gates affects automobile traffic within the city itself.

## The A10 route through Greater Tours: the 11 sequences studied



The analysis highlighted three aspects and three project areas.

## Turn the A10 into a local service infrastructure

### Develop the road to create :

#### *an infrastructure that takes care of the city*

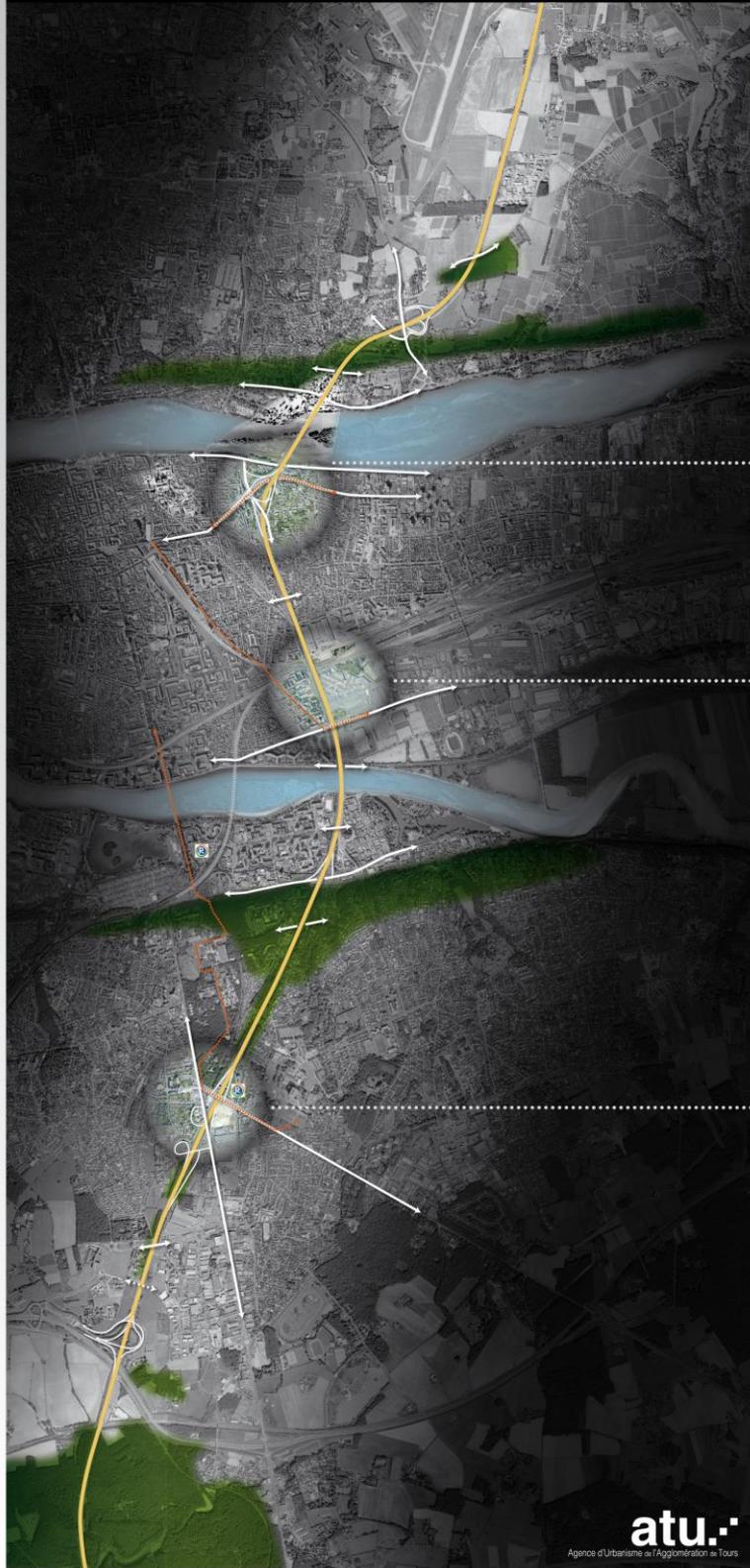
- better protection for local people
- a more permeable infrastructure
- an incentive for urban projects
- turn the A10 into a part of the city's urban projects

#### *an infrastructure that supports multimodality*

- public transport
- encourage multimodal traffic
- uniform management of tolls so that they become a means to regulation

#### *a landscape infrastructure*

- reveal the city and rivers
- enhance the bridges and flyovers
- adapt the layout to the sequences crossed by traffic



### Three project areas :

#### *The Loire junction*

- create a multimodal traffic cluster
- improve the visibility of the interchange
- strengthen the link with the Loire
- envisage an urban project combining mobility, services and tourism

#### *The "over and under" cluster*

- improve traffic flows under the A10 and the railway lines
- create a multimodal traffic cluster
- strengthen and diversify urban functions

#### *The southern entrance*

- create a multimodal traffic cluster
- promote a high-density urban building project using plots of land whose designation can be changed

**atu.**

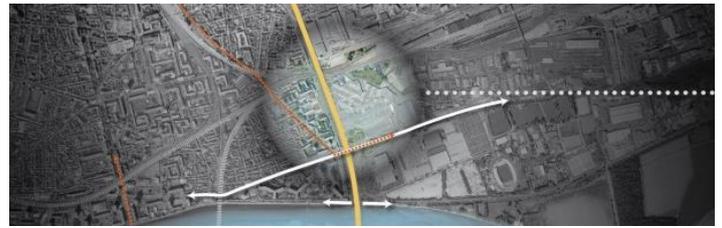
Agence d'Urbanisme de l'Agglomération de Tours

## The project site: "over and under"

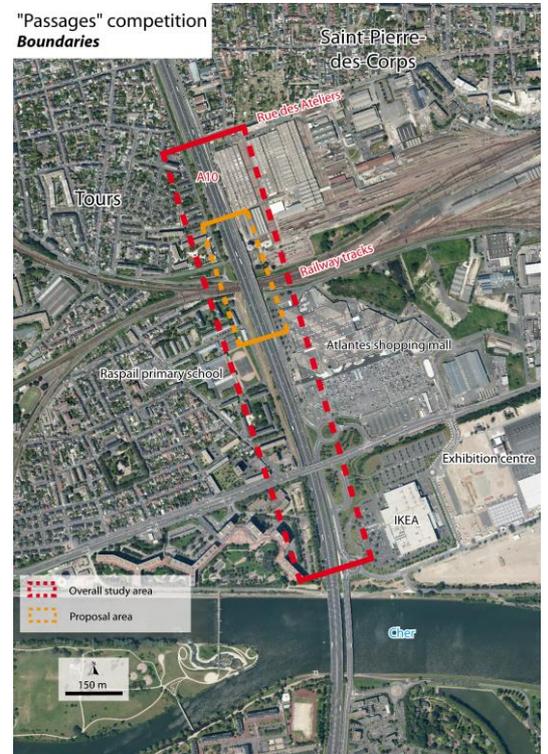
The site corresponds to Les Atlantes and Rochepinard sectors. It stretches from the banks of the River Cher in the south to Rue des Ateliers in the north. This means that consideration is being given to the A10, the land alongside it, its flyovers and its underpasses.

The two main issues identified for this site following the analysis are as follows:

- Consistency between multimodal accessibility and urban development within the sector;
- Improvements to all types of connection to each side of the A10 "corridor";
- Interconnection between scales and uses (national / local).



The site in 1960



Vue en perspective du "corridor A10", entre la Loire et le Cher

