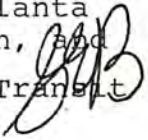


May 15, 1967

MEMORANDUM TO: Richard H. Rich, Chairman
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

FROM: Glenn E. Bennett, Executive Director, Atlanta
Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, and
Secretary, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit
Authority 

SUBJECT: Some Planning Principles and Non-Engineering
Aspects of Rapid Transit

I would like to set down here some of the basic philosophy which has guided us in transit planning, and also to mention possibilities for the future. Transit in Atlanta will be a tremendous influence; it will be the biggest single factor in guiding growth in many parts of the Metropolitan Area.

The Planning Commission concluded in 1960 that a balanced transportation system with transit would (1) help shape the pattern of development of the region in a desirable and efficient way, and (2) provide the necessary access to central Atlanta so that the orderly growth of employment and business activity could take place there.

The Planning Commission is concerned with serving the economic need and shaping the metropolitan area. MARTA has been created primarily to "build a railroad" in accordance with the generalized plan which has been tested against planning factors. We have come to the engineering stage now. This is a time when cost estimates need to be based on specifics. If the Planning Commission could have built a railroad, we would not have needed MARTA.

As we make decisions on precise locations we are continuing to test and re-test basic assumptions made earlier with respect to population growth, density, economic change, and many social factors. Serving the disadvantaged people, the educational institutions, the new centers of interest, such as the stadium, auditorium, and cultural center, are of great concern to us at this stage. We are

aware of the opportunity we have for relating harmoniously all of the exciting activities in the developmental stages in central Atlanta, and upgrading the City's aesthetics and urban design. These are non-engineering factors which are currently receiving attention from planners.

The present work program of the staff of the ARMPC includes an updating of earlier regional land use plans. In connection with this we have developed statements of regional goals related to transportation. These are policy statements. They set up criteria against which transportation improvements can be measured. For example, one section deals with aesthetic standards as follows:

"New or improved transportation facilities should be located and designed so as to enhance the appearance of the region, with appropriate regard to topography, soils, wooded areas and water bodies, as well as the character of existing and projected man-made development."

The objective of a regional plan is to guide new growth into sensible patterns, and discourage extensively scattered urban development which is wasteful of land and other resources. Transportation systems are the greatest single influence on development. Consequently, planners study the effects of any proposed transportation improvements, such as roads and highways of all categories and transit, on future land uses.

Here are a couple of paragraphs from our policy statement on the preservation of neighborhoods and community values, also on preserving freedom of choice:

"Neighborhoods are considered the basic unit of residential community development. They may be defined in one or more of several ways: by tradition, through identification by the residents, from observed patterns of commonality in age and character of development, by natural or man-made barriers, as the limits of local trade or service areas, and so forth. Where they can be defined, the integrity of sound or renewable neighborhoods should be protected: major transportation arteries should be located and designed so as to bound, not penetrate, such areas."

"Residential development and renewal should be planned and conducted so as to make available in every sector of the region housing of a wide range of types and cost, thus allowing the individual maximum freedom to choose where he wishes to live. To enhance this freedom of choice, all residential areas should have comparable accessibility to areas of employment, recreational and commercial activity. Public transportation

facilities should provide this comparable accessibility for residents least able to depend on private transportation."

All of this ARMPC planning policy relative to transportation is consistent with the objectives of the H.U.D. programs. Federal money has improved and expanded planning all over the country; there's no doubt about it. Atlanta can boast a little over having the oldest publicly supported metropolitan planning agency in the United States. Because of local initiative back in 1947 we have had metropolitan planning long before the feds got into the business. Now, many cities have agencies something like ours, but because we had a foundation of area-wide planning we could do a comprehensive transit plan in 1961, a nature preserve plan in 1962, an airport plan last year, code studies two years ago, and carry on many other activities in the field of economic and social research. HUD knows this. It has a bearing on present transit work; the transit routes are a part of the overall metropolitan plan and not independent and separate.

We are now working on area-wide water and sewer problems, capital improvement programming, preparation for the 1970 census, and other items in addition to MARTA non-engineering work. HUD knows this. Sidelines include metropolitan training schools for police officers and improved communications and records systems for law enforcement agencies, to mention a few.

Let's look at Central Atlanta. This is a concern of ARMPC because it's the heart of the region. It is the subject of much study by the City of Atlanta in the community improvement plan (CIP) which is aimed toward the establishment of priorities for redevelopment of land all over the City. Now that Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. is organized and well staffed, we have the opportunity to better serve the original purpose of rapid transit with respect to downtown interests, both private and public.

Growth and development occurs in Atlanta with or without public planning. Portman's Peachtree Center is far along; Cousins' air rights project is starting with an 8,000-car parking facility; the Nasher Park Place 18-acre air rights project is under study by architects, planners, and economists, and Georgia State College has a big and significant expansion program. Later this year contracts are expected to be let for Georgia Plaza Park, a landscaped open space with underground parking garage. The State, Fulton County, and the City of Atlanta are cooperating on this venture which will result in an attractive government-centered public park which will upgrade the area near the Capitol.

Now we have the opportunity to coordinate all of these activities and others, and create before long a central Atlanta plan with both short-range and long-range goals. Transit is an integral part of any downtown plan, and our present alignments of routes will tie together all the major developments mentioned above.

A corridor impact planning study is now in progress, as you know. It will show the relation of transit to low-income groups and their economic and social needs. Other considerations are the relation of transit to educational institutions, vocational schools, community centers, and renewal projects. The transit corridors, the lines of the system, will be pulsing and throbbing with growth and our efforts to properly direct and control these dynamics must never cease. Planners are now working with both private and public agencies in an attempt to identify the many possibilities which the transit corridors offer us for enhancing community values, serving the largest number of citizens, and guiding development toward most sensible and efficient patterns.

In our discussions with H.U.D. officials and when we talk to our transit visitors who will be in town next week, I think we ought to keep some of these points in mind.

I want to take this opportunity, Dick, to express our gratitude to you for the time and energy you are putting into this task, which is at times extremely difficult and complex. Without your leadership it would be much more so!