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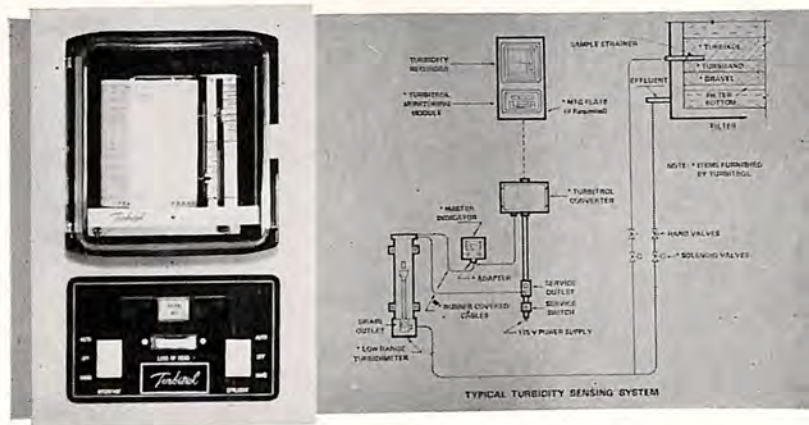
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From The Editor's Desk

The programs at our weekly luncheon meetings continue to be excellent. Next month, we'll have some photos of the Science Congress winners as they present their achievements to the Society.

This month we report on perhaps the "sleeper" program of the year — the one that really made a lot of members say, "Why couldn't it be done that way?" There may be several good reasons why Norman Stambaugh's plan for a railroad oriented rapid transit won't work, and we publish his paper so those who know will know we want to hear those reasons. That paper begins on page 22.

Keep the last weekend in May open for our Annual Summer Outing. The Committee is already hard at work, and details will be forthcoming.

Stewart Huey, Editor

QUOTES WE LIKE

"A real friend never gets in your way . . .

. . . Unless you happen to be on the way down."

—ANON.

RAPID TRANSIT NOW — ANOTHER LOOK

by Norman Stambaugh

Back in 1952, I became interested and made some studies to show that the railroads had a natural facility to start a Rapid Transit system for Atlanta, but I couldn't arouse much interest. The railroad said they didn't want any part of it, because of feather bedding and union domination they couldn't make it pay. Then our expressway came along and it looked as though we at last had the answer. But our first expressway wasn't finished before it became apparent we had created another monster that we could not seem to control.

Yes, these expressways move a lot of vehicles, but at a slower, and slower, and more exasperating pace. To expand, these are gutting our cities, and soon there will be nothing left but expressways and parking lots, with the people and facilities they should serve moving away and leaving them to die if nothing succeeds in solving the problem.

It is not hard to see that mass movement of people, and doing away with much of the need for movement would do much to correct this, but means for satisfactory mass movement and intelligent long range planning is not yet realistic.

Why we are where we are, and as we are, is important. Some say Atlanta developed from cow paths—but this is not true. Atlanta did grow from paths or trails that the early inhabitants created and used. It was the conflux of such travel as existed then, and still is the Conflux of today's travel by rail - auto - truck - air - and foreseeably by water.

Even when railroads were very new, they reached out from the ports and factories toward a conflux or junction, where East, South, West and North met, and exchanged their resources, and so Atlanta grew. Since it was primitive, it grew along these arteries, and so Atlanta today, and its outlying towns, are largely developed along the railroads, and this is tremendously important. This is why I am concerned. They didn't put the railroads thru Atlanta—At-

lanta developed along the railroad. Thus railroads are here now—open, flowing arteries. To use them to their real capacity is mandatory. Why deface our city when it is not necessary—let's use what we have!

Look at the accompanying map — can you show us a better place to put our rapid transit—that is, mass rapid transit?

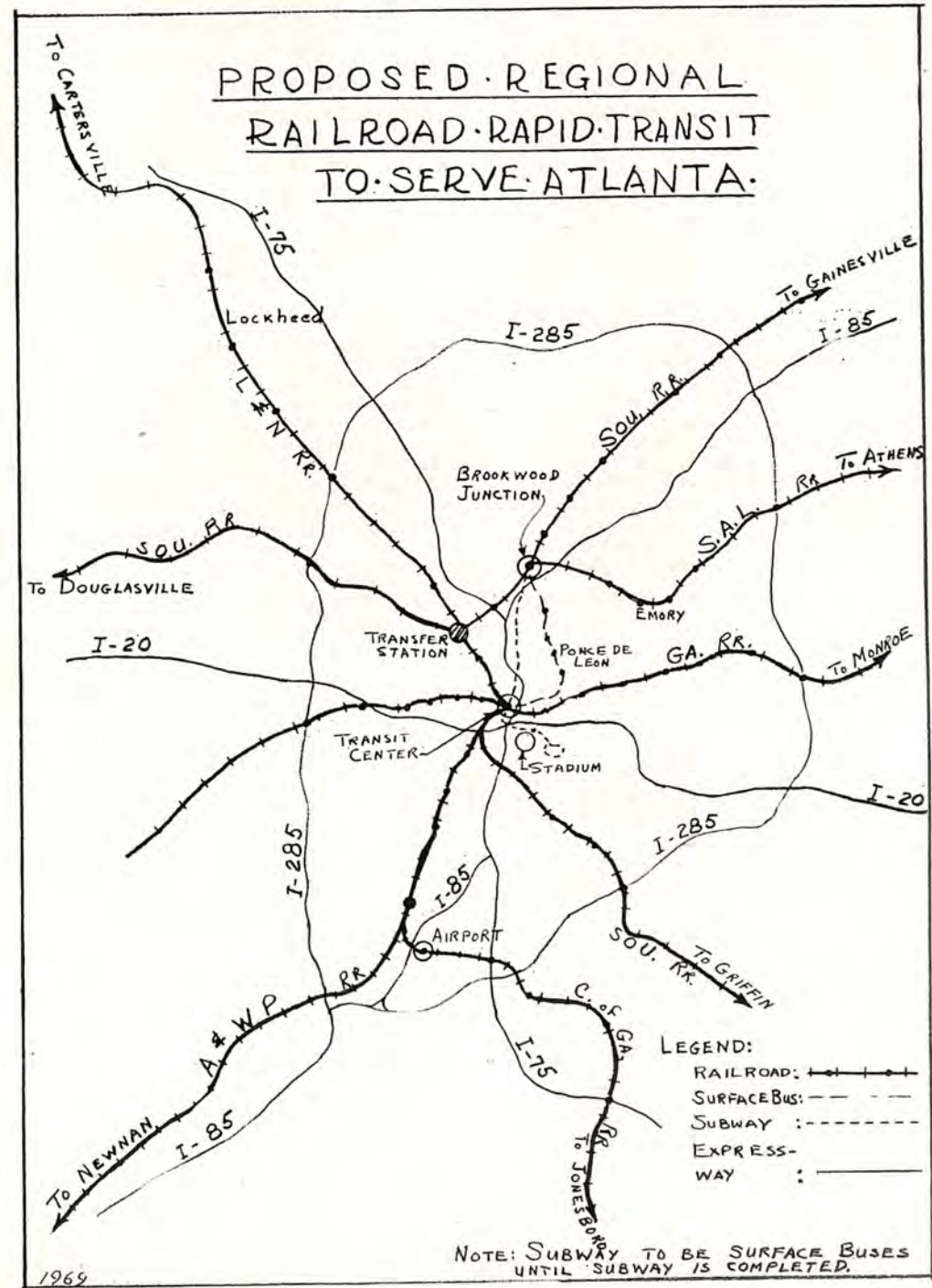
An auto is a selfish thing—"I will ride it alone, or my family will ride it, thus I will occupy the highway, and you be damned. If I want to go slow—I will. If I want to speed and jump lanes, I will, etc. etc. We cannot solve our transit needs by your's or my auto in a metropolitan environment. But if you could conveniently use your car to get to a place where you would be able to whisk, in minutes, near to where you want to go, your car would be a help. With your car and rapid transit together, a solution to our dilemma is found, for we will keep the autos off of our downtown streets, leaving surface buses, routed to radiate out from the transit stops more speedily and efficiently.

Parking lots could become sites for buildings, factories, and stores. Better still, congested city dwelling would not be necessary, but people could move out to satellite towns instead.

I now want to become specific. Look at the black lines on the map? They are railroad right of ways! Note that these railroads do not end at Doraville, College Park, Decatur, or the Airport as does the MARTA plan, but they go on to Buford, and Gainesville, Palmetto, or Newnan, Jonesboro or Griffin, Decatur or Covington, Emory or Athens.

This brings me to what I am really offering, or visualizing. Instead of a very expensive system, as proposed by MARTA, going through already densely developed sections, I propose that the railroads be developed to handle the rapid transit, not just from Lenox or Decatur, or Hightower Road,

(Continued on Page 27)



This sketch illustrates the suggestions made in Norman Stambaugh's article, "Rapid Transit Now—Another Look."

CONT

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Another Look at Rapid Transit—Con't.

but from farther out, as expansion needs call for.

There are reasons why this is very good. If no more is provided than MARTA has proposed, nothing more than a glut of high rise apartments will develop, and the chance for home ownership, on a decent plot of land will disappear. If industry is served by MARTA's proposed transit, residential areas must disappear and then the city will become less and less useful.

On the other hand, if rapid transit is provided from the smaller satellite cities, then family living in healthful open space is possible, where schools, community centers, and typical American living is possible. Also, along these railroads are the logical industrial sites, and with rapid transit provided from the population centers, workers can reach their job without the nerve racking traffic problems now faced by all who work in large plants.

This is but a rough generalization of what I am proposing. But, you say, even "MARTA" planned to make use of the railroads, where are you so different?

Specifically, I am proposing what has been done in Philadelphia and what is being proposed in the Cincinnati, Dayton area, and in others recently heard from—that is let the railroads, who have the vital right-of-way, know how, track building equipment, and trained crew handle the development and operations of the rapid transit facilities. But you say, "You just said the railroads want no part of it." That was back in 1952, and today, if they would not have to invest their capital to do this job, but be subsidized to the extent that they could derive reasonable income on their investment, they would.

This is the crux. I propose that the State — possibly through the Highway Department — subsidize the capital improvements needed and guarantee the annual reasonable income for this. It is believed by some that this would be far cheaper than to acquire the right-of-way, equipment, and operation of the proposed project that MARTA planned. In fact, it is considered possible

that the interest on the bonds that would be required by MARTA would care for the subsidy. Why should the State pick up this tab? Because it will help the entire State. It will mean everything to the satellite cities. It will also mean that instead of the State having to build extra expressways, the rapid transit will reduce the growing load on the expressways and eliminate some new ones. Of course, something would have to be worked out to provide these funds to the Highway. Some suggestions are that the Federal Government might make grants to cover capital costs, such as it is doing for the Airports and trucking industry.

When the actual interurban rapid transit is taken care of by the railroads, who are most qualified, and with fewer private vehicles on the street, the present city transit system should be revamped to provide better routes out from the rapid transit stops, and avoid lines converging into the downtown area as now. The city-transit should also remain in the hands of its private operating company; but to maintain low cost transportation it will be necessary for both Rapid Transit, and street transit to be subsidized. However, low fares alone will not make the overall transit system work—other vital ingredients will be necessary, such as conveniences, speed, parking, and access roads must be provided to get to the stop. It means that modern electronic safety and schedule control must be provided.

Best of all, this could start taking place this year if the legislature could act, and the working arrangements be set up, whereas if we wait for MARTA, perhaps Atlanta will be so fouled up that it will not matter anyhow.

I for one want a Rapid Transit, but to be Regional, and not MARTA. I was glad the Governor scotched the MARTA plan. I have reason to believe he will go for this Regional Plan. The State can participate on a regional plan, but would find it hard to go along on MARTA.

I hope I have been able to start something—that more able politicians, and engineers take this up and put it over. It is what we need. It will do the trick and can be done decades before anything else could.