

SPEECH OF RICHARD H. RICH, CHAIRMAN, METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT"
AUTHORITY TO ATLANTA ROTARY CLUB, MONDAY, JULY 10, 1967--DINKLER MOTOR
HOTEL.

INTRODUCTION

"Why don't we already have rapid transit? It's too late now--
it took me 40 minutes on the expressway this morning to get to work--
a 7-mile trip!"

"We've been talking about rapid transit for 10 years--when will
we get it?"

"What's the delay? Why aren't we building rapid transit?"

"WHEN WILL WE GET RAPID TRANSIT?"

These are questions I get every day from people who talk to me
in my capacity as MARTA Chairman. Before I start talking about routes
and other details, I would like to answer some of these questions first.

1. It took us 5 years to get a constitutional amendment and
supporting legislation passed setting up the Authority. This
was completed in 1965, with the Authority actually coming
into being January 3, 1966. The MARTA Board of Directors
is comprised of ten public-spirited citizens--not politicians--
but businessmen who are concerned about the future of this
great area.
2. Since the Authority came into being, the preliminary plan of
1962 has been almost completely updated. The growth of
Atlanta, the population shifts, and the changes they have
brought about have required a complete re-study of the lines
as then planned.
3. Financing is the major obstacle. The BASIC system is about
29 miles, and will cost about 350 million dollars.

The big question: "WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING FROM?"

- A. First, we must plan the system so it is feasible and well-engineered
so it will work. It must contribute to the entire urban develop-
ment, if we are to expect to get major funds from the U. S. Depart-
ment of Housing and Urban Development. Additional studies are
being made to determine the impact of rapid transit on the entire
community.

Congress has passed permissive legislation allowing federal grants of two-thirds the cost, with one-third matching funds from local sources. However, Congress has APPROPRIATED funds only in limited amounts, because of the severe drain on the Federal Government to finance the war in Viet Nam. So we have federal funds for planning, but massive funds required for construction are not yet available.

MARTA has now 960 thousand dollars in contracts, two-thirds of which is federal funds. In addition, the State's first contribution--500 thousand dollars--is now coming in. This will enable us to buy some critical right of way and to further refine our engineering.

The general sentiment in Washington is that urban areas MUST be helped. Atlanta stands very high with the federal authorities, and we believe that when massive federal funds are available, we will get our share.

B. But the federal grant is just the beginning of our financial problem. Federal funds will be available only if cities put up their one-third.

Our share for the entire system could run up to 200 million dollars--or more. That's a lot of money even if it is split five ways between the four counties and Atlanta.

Our economic consultants--Hammer, Greene, Siler Associates, Incorporated--are working now to determine a practical, fair and equitable plan for the local financial program. Local share of financing is expected to involve issuance of revenue bonds by MARTA, guaranteed by contracts with the local governments to service the debt.

Since this guarantee by the governments will no doubt require some increase in taxes, the financing must be approved by the people in a referendum in each of the five jurisdictions.

Quite likely, we will be asking for something like 12 or 13 dollars in taxes annually from the taxpayer who lives in a 15 thousand dollar house. We expect details on a financial plan very shortly.

A successful referendum will require much interest and great leadership from such men as yourselves.

We are in the proverbial "chicken or the egg" situation. The Federal Government will not provide funds until the local governments show their serious intent to do their part; and the local governments will likely be reluctant to step out without assurance of federal support.

So you fellows tell me: When will we have rapid transit--next year--5 years--in 10 years?

We can be ready to put this issue to the ultimate test--a referendum--possibly as early as November of 1968 or November 1969.

This sounds a bit negative but it is typical of the problems MARTA faces.

It is a most frustrating task but otherwise a most challenging one. We are not discouraged by the obstacles, and we certainly are not quitting or giving up.

If we do NOT start now, and get rapid transit under way, planned and built, traffic congestion will strangle our city when we get into the 1980's.

Rapid transit is not competing with any other developments designed to alleviate our traffic and transportation problems.

The leadership of our city--many of whom are in this room--must press for speed in the completion of the perimeter expressway, I-485, the Northside Parkway, the widening of the North Expressway, the completion of the Stone Mountain Expressway, as well as improvement of surface streets. These and others must be completed just to "keep even" with our present inadequate thoroughfares, while we continue to develop the long-range thrust for a rapid transit system which will be a "must" if we are to be a healthy city of two million people.

A very interesting proposal for an interim solution to our traffic problems was submitted two weeks ago by Robert Sommerville of the Atlanta Transit System. His idea is to pave the rights of way along the railroads and to allow express busses to use these special lanes.

He presented the concept to Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., who in turn passed it along to MARTA for our serious consideration. The Board of Directors has instructed the MARTA staff and engineers to study the proposal objectively, to analyze the costs, construction timetables, patronage, and to determine whether the busways would delay the development of rapid transit.

If the "Rapid Busways" proposal proves to be feasible and sources of financing can be discovered, we would endorse its implementation as an interim plan until the completion of the rail rapid transit system.

We would hope to have our studies completed in a few weeks and be in a position to make a recommendation.

But even with a "rapid busways" system operating and with the completion of all the expressways under construction, planned, or projected, we STILL will need rapid transit.

The number of cars will have doubled, and without rapid transit the development of Atlanta will be thwarted, and we will slide into a "second class" status as a city.

(Atlanta is most unique among American cities in its requirement for a strong, highly centralized business district. The role of the city in the area and in the entire region evolves from its character as a transportation hub, distribution center, headquarters for regional offices of most of the county's larger businesses and industries. If it is to continue and to expand in this role, the maintenance of a strong central business district with rapid transit and convenient access is essential.)

We must make our long-range plans as a city the same way we do for our businesses. We must plan for the orderly development and re-development of the entire city, as well as to provide adequate transportation. We must not have a fragmented with with sprawling satellite development but a strong and orderly growth process.

We can't go out and start digging right now but we must continue to plan for the future.

All of this is by way of preliminary, background information. Now I would like to bring you up to date briefly and show you some slides to outline some of our routes, station locations, and typical modern underground, aerial, and grade constructions.

First, I must point out that the engineers are just completing their proposals. Before these routes and station locations are finalized, three steps will be taken:

1. MARTA directors must approve these routes and locations in principle and recommend them to the local governments;
2. The 5 local political bodies must approve them tentatively; and
3. Public hearings must be held prior to the final approval.

(At this point Mr. Rich showed a number of slides. Following is the commentary he made with these slides.)

1. Being part of the Rapid Transit Authority is both frustrating and challenging. It requires considerable time in the field with our engineering consultants and the MARTA staff, checking out what is going developed on paper.
2. Our lines, routes, and stations are being developed under a contract with Parsons Brinckerhoff-Tudor-Bechtel, planners of the San Francisco System. As in the 1962 report, there is a Transit Center under Broad Street and in the gulch, with lines radiating to the east, west, north, and south. The display at the entry to this room, being seen today for the first time, gives you an idea of how Transit Center might be designed. The Central line branches off at Pershing Point into a Northwest stub and a Northeast line.
3. The Central Line, running in subway or tunnel north from Transit Center, has stations planned at Cain Street, North Avenue, Tenth Street and Pershing Point.
4. The Cain Street Station will be located on Peachtree between Davidson's and Peachtree Center.
5. The line follows Peachtree straight out West Peachtree with the next station located at North Avenue, opposite the Life of Georgia Building.
6. The Central Line branches northwest at Pershing Point, with a station at Northside Drive. Further extension of the Northwest Line will depend to a great extent on whether Cobb County becomes a participating member of the Authority.
7. The Northeast Line proceeds generally along Southern Railway rights of way, with stations at Piedmont Road, Lenox Road, Brookhaven, and on to Chamblee, Doraville and Norcross.
8. The Northeast Line leaves its subway just behind White Columns...
9. crosses the northeast expressway on aerial structure...and swings behind the buildings to go along the right of way on the Southern Railway tracks.
10. The line comes behind Lenox Square and crosses Lenox Road to the station.
11. Considerable work is still being done on the South Line, with changes in routing being made to provide a station at the proposed new terminal at the airport, and then on into Forest Park.

12. The South Line is also in subway under Broad Street south of Transit Center.
13. The line comes out of subway at Broad Street at Garnett and then proceeds along railroad rights of way southward.
14. The West Line terminates at Lynhurst Drive. This provides access to the citizens living in that area, and also allows those who drive in on I-20 and I-285 to park close to the expressway and ride rapid transit on into town.
15. The West Line comes out of Transit Center, proceeds through the railroad switching yards and underneath the "Cousins Development" and on out to the west.
16. The line also passes through some portions of the city which are in need of re-development and on which rapid transit can have a beneficial effect.
17. The East Line follows the railroad tracks along Decatur Street and DeKalb Avenue out to Decatur and on to Avondale Estates and I-285 on the east.
18. The East-West Line is on ground level in the "gulch" and proceeds along corridors such as this.
19. A station is planned for the location between Washington Avenue and Piedmont Avenue, and will serve many thousands of riders going to the enlarged Georgia State College, the contemplated Nasher development, the State Capitol complex, Fulton County Courthouse, and Atlanta City Hall.
20. The East Line makes extensive use of rights of way along the railroad where existing tracks are not currently in regular or heavy use.
21. The proposed basic system is the heavy red line on the map and contains approximately 30 miles of routes, 25 stations, and will have cost about 350 million dollars when completed. The extensions in the lighter red would bring the system up to 46 miles; and if the extension to Cobb County, shown in a broken line, is completed, the entire 66-mile system cost would be about 500 million dollars.

WHAT WILL ATLANTA'S RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE?
It will definitely not look like New York or Chicago subways, since the technology of building cars of greater comfort, beauty and speed has greatly advanced since those systems have been built.

As you are aware, San Francisco has completed a local bond issue of 792 million dollars and has received federal and state funds which will bring their total cost to approximately one billion dollars. The federal funds have been used largely for independent research concerning construction methods, equipment, etc.

Since they have contracted with the same engineers we are using, we will benefit from hundreds of thousands of dollars of their research.

The two outstanding successful systems which have been completed in recent years are those of Toronto and Montreal.

22. Some sections of our system will be in an open cut such as this one in Toronto with well-landscaped rights of way.
23. Stations will be designed to provide convenient access to passengers who would arrive and depart by bus.
24. Outlying stations would have large parking lots for passengers who will drive to the stations and "park-and-ride" the rapid transit on into town.
25. As in Montreal, the stations themselves will be colorful, modern, well-lit and spacious.
26. They will utilize various types of architecture and interior design to eliminate any possibility of monotony.
27. They will handle large numbers of passengers safely and efficiently.
28. Escalators will be provided at Transit Center and at other stations to minimize climbing of steps.
29. The cars themselves will be modern, air-conditioned, light-weight, spacious, rubber-cushioned, fast, and comfortable. San Francisco has designed a car along this line. For those who say the motorist will not leave his car to ride rapid transit, we answer, "he will if he is provided with something better."

We believe that a car designed with the attributes I have just described, capable of speeds up to 70 miles per hour and operating at average speeds of 45 miles per hour, automated for split-second timing, WILL attract many thousands of motorists off our crowded expressways and city streets to ride rapid transit.

It has done this in Toronto and Montreal in both instances attracting many more passengers than predicted.

TO SUM UP AND IN CLOSING....

We have talked rapid transit in theory for about 10 years and people generally approve it as a concept. Now we are fast approaching a time for making decisions and for taking action.

The growth of metropolitan Atlanta demands adequate planning for the future.

The number of cars will have doubled by the mid-1980's.

The population will have reached the 2 million mark in 1983.

The time to begin rapid transit is now, while we can, rather than in 15 or 20 years when we will not be able to do without it but there will be no place to put it.

The plan we are developing is designed to serve the most people in the best manner at the lowest possible cost.

Every year we delay means an increase of cost of 18 to 20 million dollars because of inflation and increased construction and other costs.

We are exploring every possibility for federal and state funds.

We who live in the Metropolitan Area and who will reap the benefits of the system, must now take the initiative.

The plan will be presented to the voters in a series of public hearings, and no increase of ad valorem taxes can be levied for rapid transit unless approved by the voters.

The completion of rapid transit will touch off a boom in this area which will far exceed anything we have seen in the past.

Toronto is a living example of what rapid transit can do for a city. Toronto opened a short rapid transit route in 1949 and the first extension in 1954. This system, built then for 67 million dollars, set off a 10 BILLION dollar development explosion. Between 1959 and 1963, high-rise apartments totalling eight and a half million square feet, were built. TWO-THIRDS of this construction was within five minutes walk of a rapid transit station.

Property values in Metropolitan Toronto have increased from 35 billion to 50 billion dollars in the past ten years, and two-thirds of this 15 billion dollars increase is attributed to rapid transit.

(CORRECTION: Please substitute this page for the concluding page of speech of Richard H. Rich, Chairman, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, to Atlanta Rotary Club, Monday, July 10, 1967. New page corrects statistics on Toronto patronage.)

And the people of Toronto ride the system--118 million passengers in 1966 rode the modern and comfortable system and left their cars at home or in the station parking lots.

What has happened in Toronto and what is happening in Montreal, will also happen in Atlanta when we build our rapid transit system.

WHEN WILL WE HAVE RAPID TRANSIT?

The decision will be made by us as individual voters when we go to the ballot box--next year or the following year--and vote "YES" on a program to finance and build the system.

If you--and men like you in the five local governments--will assume the role of leadership in supporting this project, we CAN have rapid transit...

And we WILL have rapid transit...

And the continued growth of this great Metropolitan Area will be assured.

Thank you.

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