

THE ATLANTA
REGIONAL RAILROADS IN THE
RAPID TRANSIT PICTURE

last

Back in February of ~~this~~ year, I presented to the Georgia Architects and Engineering Society a concept that I had long been interested in, that proposed to bring the railroads serving Atlanta so well for the past century, back into the picture of providing regional transit and commuter service, by providing a climate that would remove the economic handicaps that had progressively forced them out of the field they are so eminently fitted to handle---the hauling of large numbers of people, economically, and efficiently. thus

The age of the personal automobile provided (more flexible and enjoyable means of transportation (remember this word enjoyable) than the smokey, dirty, off schedule trains of the past) making the personal auto preferred, even for the long haul. Then the airplane, delivered the coupe de grace, ~~took~~ the railroads, today being almost out of the passenger business entirely. and

When I talked of using the railroads for our rapid transit I presume there were many who wondered why I looked to this means of solving our rapid transit, delima.

This is brought about by several factors:

First: The booming use of the personal car has begun to boomerang and is defeating its own ends. There are not enough highways, expressways to handle the volume of cars wanting to use them, bringing about monumental traffic jams, air pollution, and parking problems, etc therefore the average commuter is now looking for a better answer to his desire to live out, yet not have to pay so heavily in precious time, frustration, and health. He is asking if possibly there isn't a better way.

Second: The Government is beginning to face up to the fact that every expressway worthy of the name takes so much of the city away, that economically it becomes more and more impossible to consider.

true

Third: It is in most cities, and certainly is in Atlanta, that the right of way that the railroads have are very advantageously located to best serve as rapid transit routes, and serve the various sections of the city, and this without causing the disruption or loss of a single bit of the existing city.

I, thus propose that we look to the railroads again, and see what they offer if anything.

So:

First, they move masses of people, better than any other means, and have for a century. Having done this, they have much that it takes, such as trained personnel, management ability, construction ability and equipment, operation, and maintenance moxy.

Second: The railroads started so far back that the cities were not here, but rather the cities grew along the railroads. If these right of ways are now put to this new use vast portions of the city will not have to be sacrificed to acquire expressway right-of-way, and with stops suitably located, feeder bus lines can radiate out into the neighborhoods from these stops, over the existing streets, and not have to be routed down town as now to congest the downtown streets as is now done. to

Third: The railroads are inter-city, going on, and on beyond the limited range that M.A.R.T.A. could serve. This means that our outlying cities and towns become satellite cities, and open spaces become available for NEW CITIES, industrial complexes, and office parks, and by reaching out to cities like Gainesville, Athens, Monroe, Covington, Jonesboro, Griffin, Newnan, and Cartersville, it becomes a state responsibility, and the state can legitimately participate in its funding and contribute services of the highway department, and other state agencies. This is needed to take care of grade separation, provide access roads to the stations, and parking at the stations, and other services and implementation acts. In return the successful operation of this leapfrogging operation will lessen the need for new expressways, thus reducing the expansion needs for expressways.

Fourth: It has been shown that experience in handling trains as demonstrated over the years by the railroads, is a most valuable phase of railroading, and the existing, trained personell is a most valuable asset that the railroads have to offer.

Fifth: The management and technology of running a transportation system is incomprehensible to most, but is extremely important and NECESSARY. The existing trained technical and managerial resivor that the railroads already have is trully priceless. The know how forecc for construction, operation, and upkeep of Facilities is truly hard to come by. The railroads have it already, ready.

I do not propose, nor do I recomend for a new Metropolitan System to take over the railroads right of way and install tracks, stations, rolling stock, etc., and organize and operate a rapid transitsystem.

I am proposing for the railroads to be substedized to the extent that their facilities can be updated, with new or supplement track as needed modern trains or cars, computerized scheduling and controlls, then under suitable controlls leave the operation to the railroads own operation staff. I further propose that they be guaranteed a satisfactory earning on the investment, and operation by an anual supplementary earning supplement, if rates cannot be set that will show the necessary earnings. This will be required becaused rapid transit will not attract the patronage if it is ecomonically unattractive to the user, therefore a subsidy most likely will be necessary.

I also propos that the present city transit company operate the feeder bus service with the existing and augemented equipment, and that the city transit and railroad fares be kept as low as necessary to meet the competition of the personal vehicle, by substedizing the earnings if necessary.

I propose that the capitol improvements needed be provided by Federal and Metro Bond grants, and by highway aide in the provision of grade separations where necessary, and access roads to the railroad stations and paving the needed all day parking lots at the stations.

I suggest that funds to cover these substedies might be raised in various ways, such as to have the Bureau of Public Roads permit an exit toll to be charged to leave the expressways between certain sections. This will serve two purposes. First it is to raise the needed subsidy and bond revenue funds, and to also discourage use of the private cars to get into the congested down town areas, and in turn encourage use of the rapid transit, and city transit. Also for the same reasons, require that a tax be imposed on all parking down town, hopefully believing that both revenue that is needed, and that ecomonic deterrent to use of the private vehicle would stimulate use of the transit facilities.

Another gainful development to the railroad operation of the rapid transit, would be the planned dual airport for Atlanta.

When the two airports are in operation, the interchange of passengers will become a major problem, and to throw this load onto the expressways will be intolerable. Yet that is about all that can be done, as helicopters and short hop planes are too risky, and impractical. But if there are railroad facilities between these two airports, shuttle trains can handle the loads. As of now there is a possible rail facility available for the present airport, and if the new airport is located so that a few miles of track from the nearby railroad is possible then the railroad is the way to handle it by using shuttle trains for passengers and baggage. Furthermore if this second airport is located north or east of Atlanta, a downtown Central Air Terminal can be created, as the State now controls the air rights over the railroads, right where the railroad transit center would be. This area could become a large parking facility to handle the central terminal needs, and with airpassengers being picked up from the down town terminal and hauled by train to the embarkation port, a reduction of the terminal facilities could be made at these points. to the benefit of the public, the air lines and the communities. Also by this set up the railroads, being regional rapid transit facilities, could thus become feeders for the air lines from the outlying cities on the lines.

It seems that with all this to start with, a definate demand and effort should be made to endeavour to implement something that has so much merit.

However, the way things are moving, this cannot be dallied with. Critical decisions must be made without any delay. Some grant funds are even now available, and possibly by the end of the winter large participation by the Federal Government will become available, that will be eagerly sought by rival cities, and rival groups right here in our own city. Much has to be accomplished, as of now the railroads have no program to participate in this. They must be either sold or or compelled to participate. Our rival, grandiose MARTA scheme must be replaced by this or this incorporated into its picture. The Federal Government must be sold, however it seems that this will not be too hard, for much has recently been discussed in Washington to give the railroads a subsidy break such as the airlines and expressway now are receiving.

I have just been coaching, I want to have you get us a quarterback and a team of experts who can now take the ball and score. I am not trying to create any job or work for my company. It is out of my technical qualifications, and I don't care who takes it on if it is pushed as it should be. If MARTA will take it on and push it, fine, or Voreese, or Mingledorf, or someone capable but not already too committed to be handicapped with it.

As I said in the beginning, I asked for this opportunity to talk to you about this, because I need your help, or rather we need your help. We have made a lot of contacts. I have been corresponding with Mr. Volpe the Secretary of Transportation in Washington, and have a lot of literature furnished from his office. He wants grassroot help with congress, to get the funds for the program they are working on. It needs our Congressmen, and Senators support; It needs our legislature support. I already have the Governors hearty support. We have the support of the air lines for the Central Terminal idea, and train for transferring passengers. We have the indorsement of the Atlanta Transit Company. We do not have the backing of M.A.R.T.A., but do have their strong resistance, for it is undermining their plan, and we want to either stop them, or have them accept this modification. You are a very representative cross section of our community, and if what I have proposed to you makes sense, there are those among you who can reach some that need to be met, your help is wanted, and I beg of you to become really involved, with our State, County, and City governments, not just Atlanta, but Decatur, Marietta, Hapeville, College Park East Point, Jonesboro, Chamblee, Doraville, etc.

Thank yo so much ~~xxxx~~ for having heard me thru. I hope it has hit home. If there are any questions, I will be happy to try to answer them.