



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE
BEFORE THE CENTRAL ATLANTA PROGRESS, INC. ANNUAL LUNCHEON,
FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 1970, 12:00 NOON, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Your presence here today is a solid indication to me that the State of Georgia is taking a vital interest in the challenging field of transportation for all Americans, and does recognize that efficient application of transportation technology can go far toward solving the multitude of social ills that infect nearly every city and urban area in the land.

Really, it is a sincere pleasure to be back in Atlanta. Over the years I -- like so many Americans -- have watched this city grow and move ahead. This is a dynamic city, with one of the strongest central cores in America. While so many American cities are seeing their downtown areas deteriorate, exactly the opposite is true here.

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Downtown employment, they tell me, is expected to double its 1961 figure by 1983, with person-trips more than doubling during that time. More than 10 million square feet of office space was constructed in downtown Atlanta during the sixties, and already more than 12 million square feet are expected in the seventies.

Atlanta is a progressive city, a city which -- over the years -- has enjoyed an uncommonly excellent relationship between its political structure and the business community. Central Atlanta Progress is, of course, the undisputed keystone about which this private-public cooperation exists, and I consider it a privilege to be here to address your annual luncheon meeting.

It was Congressman Fletcher Thompson, incidentally, who was the real spark-plug in my taking the time from a hectic Washington schedule to be here with you for "Transportation Day -- Atlanta."

I am especially delighted with the innovative character of Central Atlanta Progress. This working partnership between government and private enterprise should be the rule, not the exception, in cities across America. If there were more cities like Atlanta, we would have less to worry about in Washington.

I notice that Fletcher has his name in the morning papers, commenting on two Department of Transportation grants that are being announced today. The first one is a \$400,000 grant to MARTA to underwrite the development of short-range management and operations planning for bus transportation, and a long-range rapid transit plan for submitting to the voters late next year or in 1972.

The other grant, for \$200,000, is to the City of Atlanta and to C-A-P. This is the Federal share of what the experts like Bob Bivens always find a fancy name for -- the "sub-area transportation study." We were particularly delighted to approve this application; we could quickly grasp its importance to the community in light of the fact that the private sector -- through C-A-P -- was contributing \$60,000 in cash and staff time to make this a true team effort. This type of joint effort is precisely what President Nixon is referring to when he calls for a private-public partnership to solve the serious urban problems that afflict America.

We look forward to the results of this study, and are confident that the work will be of high caliber and will call for an action plan that will move Atlanta over the threshold and into the seventies with full support from all sectors of the community. With the completion of the sub-area study, and with the results of our own Department of Transportation center cities study -- of which Atlanta is one of five cities across the nation -- we look forward to continuing the partnership and moving forward boldly with a formal program on behalf of the central core as the hub of an important region.

Let me make mention of the role Atlanta is playing under our Center Cities Transportation Study. This major project involves five great American cities: Atlanta, Dallas, Denver, Pittsburgh, and Seattle. Intensive study of transportation requirements in the core areas of each of these cities is giving us a base of information which, ultimately, will be applicable to practically every metropolitan area in the country.

In-depth studies of the needs of business, of the individual, of local government, of industry are being compiled systematically and scientifically.

Already, individual projects in several of the cities are under way. Here in Atlanta, we have inaugurated the "Town Flyer" experiment, the shuttle bus system that whisks passengers from surplus parking areas at the Stadium and Civic Center to the central business district. Though such innovations take time to become accepted by the public the Town Flyer has become quite popular. It is conservatively estimated that up to 2,000 cars a day have been removed from clogged downtown streets.

Such a system could well be applied in other cities. The expertise gained here will be of value to Americans throughout the country.

Yes, Atlanta is a city of progress. As the transportation center of the southeast, it is the meeting place of many rail, airline, bus, and truck systems. It is the region's major center of manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, finance and government. Your extensive network of radial and circumferential freeways makes you the envy of many other cities. Your attitude as a community is excellent, your ambitions and your hopes are high.

Yet I cannot come here today and paint an entirely rosy picture. I must -- in all honesty -- bring to you, the business leaders of the downtown community, a word of advice; yes, a word of warning.

Let me pass on to you something I learned as a businessman, saw as a Governor, and certainly recognize now from my vantage point in Washington.

A city which is not upgrading or developing a means by which it can move large numbers of people effectively, efficiently, safely and smoothly from where those people are to where they want to go is a city of obsolescence.

I say "obsolescence" because as cities grow in population and in density -- as Atlanta certainly is -- they redistribute population through urban renewal projects and through normal expansion; they find that property values change radically, that the face of the city isn't what it used to be, and that mobility from one part of the city to another becomes a vital, basic necessity.

And, my friends, we can never provide the mobility Americans demand and deserve if we restrict ourselves to automobiles alone.

I am well aware, of course, of Marta's proposal for rapid transit for Atlanta, and its subsequent demise at the hands of the voters.

And in a broad sense, I can sympathize with those taxpaying voters who felt deeply that they were doing the right thing in voting "no". After all, a rapid transit system is a sizeable project, requiring sizeable funds. And at the time of the referendum, there was no assurance of federal assistance for public transportation.

But let me make a very important point. This Administration, from the President right on down, is well aware of the social aspects of urban transportation. We are convinced that the cities of America need public transportation just as they need public safety, public health, public welfare, and public works.

And we are similarly convinced that the Federal Government must play a substantial financial role in the development of public transportation. We have an awful lot of catching up to do, too. The Federal Government has spent more money in the past six weeks on highway construction than it has spent on public transportation in the past six years!

My friends, I know one thing for sure about Atlanta and its people. The word "defeat" is not part of your vocabulary. I have met today with members of the Marta Board of Directors. Our Urban Mass Transportation Administrator, Carlos Villarreal, has met with Raws Haverty, Marta's Chairman.

We know you are coming back with another rapid transit proposal; in fact, the \$400,000 grant I referred to earlier will help do the spadework for the next referendum.

We are most interested in working closely with you as you revise your transit proposals, improve the design of the system, build up state and local support, and -- perhaps most important of all -- educate the public as to the absolute necessity of a modern, efficient, clean and safe rapid transit system.

And once you have done the work here at home, we fully expect you to come knocking on the door in Washington looking for financial assistance. And, if all goes well, we expect to be ready for you.

You are probably aware of the Public Transportation Legislation that the President and I have proposed to the Congress, but let me touch upon the highlights.

Our Bill proposes a 12-year, 10-billion program to provide funds on an assured basis for the construction, expansion and improvement of public transportation in a growing America.

Those of you who were involved in the rapid transit funding proposal here know only too well how difficult it is to get public approval to sell bonds when there is no solid assurance of matching Federal funds a few years down the road.

Our legislation is bolstered by a budgetary mechanism known as "contract authority" which will enable us to obligate over 3-billion dollars (for the first five years) practically as soon as the Bill is signed. It will provide one-billion dollars a year for the last 7 years of the program.

This Bill is, in a sense, the public transportation equivalent of the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which launched the interstate system. It has already been reported out favorably by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, and hearings are scheduled in the House for next week. We expect early Senate action on this Bill, and we hope the House will follow suit.

You may be assured that the Bill is going to receive national attention. People on every level of Government - in addition to the general public - will be speaking out on the measure.

If this Bill is to become law, and if these funds are to be made available to areas such as Atlanta, we need your help and support. If we are to go ahead and get to work with this program, it will be because influential people such as yourselves have contacted your Senators and Representatives and told them you hope they support the Bill.

There is no way of turning back the clock when you are dealing with the growth of a city -- especially, a city like Atlanta.

You cannot stop the growth, but you certainly can direct it.

With public support for that vital link that ties a community together -- public transportation -- Atlanta can grow, and direct itself, to become a showcase city for the nation.

Atlanta's history has brought you to the threshold of a very bright future.

As a rail center, you will continue to be the hub from which mass movements of bulk goods, indeed all the southland's heavy freight, will be moved.

As a key connector-city in the interstate highway system, you will continue to be prominent in the nation's motor carrier industry.

As the third busiest aviation center in the nation, you will continue to be tied to the future and not to the past. And with the imminent selection of a site for your new airport, you are venturing into an era of even greater aviation progress.

As you cross this threshold, however, you must be cautious to always choose that which is best.

Your decisions -- in the development of rapid transit, in the design and land-taking for highways, and in the selection of massive airport sites -- will be, by- and-large, irrevocable decisions. Your planning and your forecasting must be as accurate and as thoughtful as possible.

You must be sure, at the same time, that your planning efforts are not being duplicated, with needless waste of hard-earned money. Coordination of all your planning activities is essential.

I applaud the goals and the accomplishments of central Atlanta progress.

Today has certainly been an education for me; I have met people to admire, programs to applaud, and a spirit that is unsurpassed.

I have enjoyed "Transportation Day -- Atlanta", and I look forward to visiting the Lockheed people at Marietta this afternoon to see the C-5A.

I will look to Atlanta for new thinking, new daring, for bold determination as you cross the threshold into the seventies.

I am confident that with your solid combination of individual enterprise and public backing, Atlanta can be the greatest city in the nation.

Again, I thank you. The pleasure has been all mine.

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