

## Braves Move Out of Atlanta Not a Win For Cobb Co.

Written by Maury Brown

Tuesday, 12 November 2013 17:00

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When the Braves announced plans on Monday to move from downtown Atlanta to approx. 10 miles away in Cobb Co., it took most everyone by surprise. After all, this wasn't the Rays or A's stuck in outdated ballparks, Turner Field was opened in 1997. Based on the timeline that the Braves announced, shortly after The Ted's 21 birthday, it will be set to be demolished. Opened in 1997, it was built while current commissioner Bud Selig was at the helm.

Surprising.

Which was largely the idea. The Braves are smartly (at least for them), taking a sheet out of the Minnesota Twins' playbook: work behind the scenes, quickly release the news, and then get it all approved before any kind of opposition can mount a steady campaign against it. In sports parlance, you're smacking them upside the head before they knew what hit them.

While the Braves have denied that Cobb Co. will be pitching in \$450 million of the \$672 million price tag, they're tossing that hand grenade around before it blows up.

"It is through Cobb County, and Cobb County will be responsible for delineating the various buckets of dollars," said Derek Schiller, the Braves Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

The Braves [updated their newly launched website](#) for the ballpark to read:

*The exact number is being finalized with officials from Cobb County. At no time in our*

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*discussions with Cobb County, or any other municipality, have the Braves referenced a \$450 million public investment. Reports of this figure are erroneous. When the final deal points are reached, they will be shared with the public and the media.*

It's a convenient thing to say, because so far, no one in Cobb Co. is stepping up saying where the money is coming from.

The Braves write in their media Fact Sheet that, "During construction of the stadium, more than 5,227 jobs will be supported, with a total payroll of more than \$235 million."

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) has not yet been signed, but the statement from the Braves doesn't specify that all those jobs will be from Atlanta (although more than a few will), but the question is, if Dell, or HP or Intel wanted to build a new industrial complex, would Cobb Co. come rushing forward with a large chunk of change to make it happen? At least with those companies there's a large number of well paying jobs to infuse into the economy.

The problem with Cobb Co.'s investment is after construction it's not like Atlanta is getting "new" money. All that's happened is jobs and fans move 10 miles away from where it was originally. You're just shuffling discretionary income around. This isn't infusing economic development, it's shuffling it around.

Maybe Cobb Co. has some magical formula that will have all the expenses come from baseball related revenue streams. That would be fair. After all, someone in Cobb Co. that doesn't care one hoot about the Braves shouldn't have to pay for them. So, tie a tax onto parking. Tie a tax onto tickets. Tie a tax onto ballpark concessions. Tie it to the ballpark. That's fair. It may have fans shaking their fists at me for suggesting as much, but it's reasonable.

As for "The Ted", [it will be demolished](#) shortly after its 21st birthday. That was a solid investment.

In a time when the A's see sewage backing up, and the Rays playing in a dome, it seems hasty for Turner Field to be set aside... except for the Braves. Yes, the Braves will come out ahead in

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all of this. Cobb Co., and the taxpayers? That's a different story.

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- [Atlanta Braves Plan On Moving Into New \\$672 Million Ballpark In Cobb Co .](#) (Forbes)
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