Mass Transit Plan Gaining Wide Acceptance in East Bay Counties

Widespread acceptance by East Bay citizenry has greeted the Transit District's major transit acquisition and development program since its unveiling two months ago.

Business groups, improvement clubs, taxpayers' associations and labor organizations are rallying to endorse the new transit program and to support the District in its effort to improve public transportation in the two East Bay counties.

Leading the movement is the Citizens' Committee for Better Transit, which has as its general chairman State Senator Arthur H. Breed, Jr.

The committee is sponsoring the $16,900,000 transit bond issue on the Nov. 4 ballot, known as Proposition B. Proceeds from the bonds would be used by the District to replace Key System and Western Greyhound operations in the area with a substantially improved and expanded public transit operation.

Revenues from the operation will be sufficient to pay all operating costs, build up a fund to replace equipment as it wears out, and to pay off the bonds without an increase in taxes or fares, according to engineering and financial studies.

Typical extensive newspaper support of the transit program is a recent editorial comment of the San Leandro Morning News. The paper stated, in part, as follows:

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An Editorial

Bonds and Taxes

A basic distinction should be drawn between a bond proposal as advanced by a school district or municipality, and the bond issue that has been placed on the November ballot by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District.

The difference — of vital importance to home owners and businessmen — is one of tax support.

When voters must consider school or municipal bond measures, they can be certain that the bonds will be paid entirely from one source — taxes.

The transit district, on the other hand, will have at its disposal revenue not available to school districts or municipalities. This revenue is the fares which riders will pay when they use the transit system, conservatively estimated at approximately $13,000,000 a year.

When we say the difference between school and transit district bonds is basic, it is one that voters should bear in mind when they go to the polls Nov. 4 to weight the district’s program to expand and improve public transit operations in the two East Bay counties.

Engineering and financial studies have determined that this revenue will be sufficient to pay all operating costs, build up a fund to replace equipment as it becomes obsolete, and to pay off the bonds without an increase in fares or the imposition of additional taxes.

This means that property owners in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, who already carry a sizeable tax burden, can be assured that the transit district bonds will not represent another tax lien against their property.

As we have said, the difference between school and transit district bonds is basic, it is one that voters should bear in mind when they go to the polls Nov. 4 to weight the district’s program to expand and improve public transit operations in the two East Bay counties.

17 Seek Election To Transit Board

Seventeen candidates including six incumbents are seeking election to the board of directors of the transit district on the Nov. 4 general election ballot.

All seven positions on the board are up for election.

A wide-open contest has centered on Ward I, representing Berkeley, El Cerrito and parts of central Contra Costa County including Walnut Creek. Robert K. Barber, president of the district and incumbent of Ward I, filed to run for director at large, which is being vacated by Director Clair W. MacLeod.

Candidates filing for the vacancy in Ward I were William H. Coburn, Jr., 58 Ninth St., Berkeley, and John T. Muldowney, 19741 Louise Court, Castro Valley, salesman, and Clyde W. O’Callaghan, 17049 Via Cielo, San Lorenzo, a Southern Pacific switchman.

San Mateo Rd., Berkeley, an attorney; Richard J. Mitchell of 1170 East Elmont Avenue, Walnut Creek, professional engineer, and Thomas G. Paulson, 2811 Brooks Ave., El Cerrito, realtor.

Filing for the two positions of director at large, in addition to Mr. Barber, were Col. Robert M. Copeland, incumbent director of 80 Norwood Ave., Kensington; Eugene P. Cadenasso, account executive of 80 Vernon St., Oakland; Herbert B. Kincaid, jeweler of 1815 Hopkins St., Berkeley, and Edwin C. Perrin of 5834 Moraga Ave., Oakland, a newspaperman. Mr. Barber, an attorney in San Francisco, resides at 262 Yale Ave., Kensington.

Other candidates are as follows:

Ward II — J. Howard Arnold, 1058 Pomona Ave., Albany, incumbent, and Neal Higgins, 1785 Live Oak Ave., Concord, industrial training director.

MacLeod to Retire; Cites Plan to Improve Transit

Clair W. MacLeod, East Bay civic leader who led formation of the Transit District and served as its first president, will retire from the board the end of this year.

MacLeod, a practicing attorney in San Francisco and former mayor of Piedmont, said the demands of business together with other public responsibilities forced him reluctantly to leave the board.

Long concerned over transportation problems of the Bay Area, MacLeod also is a director and president of the five-county San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

MacLeod is the only member of the transit board not seeking re-election.

In announcing he would not seek re-election, he said he has devoted his “best efforts” to the formation of the two-county district for more than five years.

“With the presentation of the bond issue to the public in November, the people of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties finally will have the opportunity to provide themselves with better public transportation,” he said.


Ward V — Paul E. Deadrich, 2348 Second St., Hayward, incumbent; Marvin T. Maynard, 19741 Louise Court, Castro Valley, sales manager, and Clyde W. O’Callaghan, 17049 Via Cielo, San Lorenzo, a Southern Pacific switchman.
District Plans New School Bus Service

A plan that would allow school districts to maintain adequate standards of school bus transportation and at the same time provide them with substantial tax savings is being developed by the Transit District.

The plan, as conceived by John R. Worthington, general manager of the District, would relieve school districts in Alameda and Contra Costa counties from a large part of the financial burden of providing transportation to school children.

Under a simple but unique arrangement, the Transit District would operate special bus routes as requested by the school districts, and collect a 5 or 10 cent fare. The difference between collected revenues from the service and the costs of operating would be made up by the school districts.

Costs Distributed

"Our program would allow school districts to transfer some of the cost of the service to those who use it," Worthington points out, "yet the fares would be sufficiently low so as not to represent a financial burden for the parents whose children use the service."

At present, school districts contracting for school bus service must pay the entire expense. Otherwise, private carriers must obtain a certificate from the State Public Utilities Commission and then charge a fare high enough to cover all operating expenses without school support.

The service could be started with the beginning of the school year in September, 1959, providing the Transit District would operate special bus routes as requested by the school districts, and collect a 5 or 10 cent fare. The difference between collected revenues from the service and the costs of operating would be made up by the school districts.

The plan depends upon approval of the $18,900,000 bond issue to purchase equipment and other facilities at the Nov. 4 election.

Letters have been mailed to school officials and nearly every parents' club and PTA organization in the District, advising them of the availability of the Transit District school bus service.

The Board of Directors of the Transit District has given the school bus program its full support, and has advised Worthington to begin discussions with East Bay school districts regarding individual transportation needs and other details of the proposed service.

New ACT Bulletin Gives Facts on Transit Plan

Critical traffic congestion and additional millions spent for freeway construction will be required if public transit continues along its downhill road in the East Bay.

Population in Alameda and Contra Costa counties is rising at a tremendous rate. By 1965, streets and highways will become seriously clogged unless more people ride public transit.

Riders cannot be expected to return to public transit, however, until its services are revitalized, speeded up and expanded, and made attractive, comfortable and convenient.

The Transit District has readyed for action a major transit acquisition and development program which it believes will draw people back to public transportation.

These prospects are revealed in an information bulletin, issued by the District, which answers a series of questions about East Bay transit needs. Copies are available at the District offices.

In announcing the new bulletin, John R. Worthington, general manager, said the District feels a "great obligation to inform people of the East Bay about the District's transit program so vital to the future of the two-county area."

Air-Conditioning Tops New Bus Comforts

A new kind of air-conditioned motor coach will provide people with pleasant rides, plus faster and more convenient service, should turn the tide on dwindling East Bay transit patronage.

Air-conditioning, which has proven a success on long-haul bus service, will be used for the first time on the Pacific Coast by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District for transit and suburban travel.

New equipment for the East Bay also will include wider and deeply upholstered seats with arm rests, bright and colorful interiors, greater spacing between seats, overhead storage space for bundles, special window design to permit maximum outside vision for each passenger, a substantially improved airglide suspension system which insures a smooth ride, and fast acceleration.

Charles E. De Leuw, internationally recognized transit engineer whose firm recently completed a mass transit plan for the District, believes this new approach to encouraging public transit riding will reverse today's downward trend in the number of riders using existing East Bay transportation facilities.

A 5 percent drop in Key System riders over the last two years can be fully "offset by the increase in traffic which we predict will result from the substantially improved transit service recommended," De Leuw said. He predicted another increase of 3 percent in riders during the second year of district operation.

"Increased patronage which will inevitably result from the vastly improved service proposed will improve the financial picture from year to year," he said.

Crippling traffic congestion on streets (Continued next page)
Transit Needed Now

Rapid Transit District Supports ACT Plan

Major East Bay transit improvement plans of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District have been endorsed by the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

Directors of the five-county rapid transit district adopted a policy statement that stressed the complementary nature of the two districts and underscored the fact the two districts should work together for improvement of public transit.

The rapid transit district aims to provide a regional system of interurban rail rapid transit. The function of the two-county district is to provide greater service and improved express and local bus transportation in the East Bay. The district also will provide intercity express bus service until the five-county high speed rail system is in operation.

Engineers of the two-county district firmly believe that new buses of advanced design and riding comfort, plus new and improved service that is planned by the district, will reverse the downward trend in East Bay transit patronage.

"It has been evident for some years that a public transit operation capable of attracting riders will not be provided by existing private companies," Worthington said.

Worthington said that with passage of the bond issue, the two-county district could be in operation by the middle of next year.
Plan Acceptance
(Continued from Page 1)

“The Morning News believes that the program of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District is sound — more than sound, it is vitally essential — and urges voters to give the bond issue better than the two-thirds majority it requires for passage.”

Senator Breed recently told the Board of Directors of the Transit District that East Bay citizens demanding better transit are in their “golden hour.”

“Right now people of the two East Bay counties have the chance to vastly improve their public transportation and make their communities a better place in which to live,” he said.

“This program for improved transportation is tremendously important for the residents of these counties.”

Sponsored District

Breed, who is retiring from the State Senate after 24 years of public service, has long been identified as one of California’s foremost authorities on highway legislation. He sponsored the legislation which permitted residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties to establish the Transit District two years ago.

Breed said he accepted the citizens committee appointment with a “firm conviction that East Bay highways must be augmented by an up-to-date and progressive transit operation that the people will ride if our cities and surrounding communities are to prosper.

“Public transit facilities have critically deteriorated over the past years,” he observed.

State PUC to Determine Value of 276 Key Buses

The State Public Utilities Commission has agreed to set a price on specific Key System properties the transit district seeks to acquire.

The commission denied all of Key’s objections to a district petition which asked the PUC to fix the value of 276 postwar Key buses, division terminals in East Oakland, Emeryville and Richmond, and other minor property and equipment.

The district’s petition passed over some 300 gasoline buses owned by Key because of their obsolescence.

Hearings Planned

Commission engineers are expected to take several months to compute the property values. Then a public hearing will be held. Both the district and the company will be able to present testimony about the accuracy of the engineers’ evaluation.

Once the PUC fixes the just compensation after the hearing, the amount is not subject to review or change in court. Key System may, however, force a court decision on the district’s power to condemn the privately owned company.

Transit directors have announced they will go to court to condemn the specific Key properties if the company refuses to sell voluntarily.

Appraisers employed by the district’s engineering consultants have valued the 276 Key buses at $3,300,000, and the land, buildings and other Key equipment, at $3,800,000.

Severance damages to Key System also will be included in the PUC valuation.