William Coburn Is New ACT Director

William H. Coburn, Jr., Berkeley attorney and civic leader, has been elected a new member of the Transit District Board of Directors.

Coburn represents Ward I of the District which includes El Cerrito, Kensington and portions of Berkeley and Central Contra Costa County.

His election fills a vacancy on the Board created by the decision of Director Clair W. MacLeod not to be a candidate for re-election.

The six incumbent directors who sought re-election were returned to office by substantial majorities.

President Robert K. Barber welcomed (Continued on Page 3)

Downtown Faces A Transit Crisis

The importance of convenient, comfortable and attractive public transit serving the downtown business area was emphasized by George M. Taylor, ACT administrative officer, in a recent speech before the Kiwanis Club of Richmond.

"Downtown would really wither away if it were suddenly deprived of public transit facilities," Taylor told the Richmond audience. "And it may happen in some communities—if all downtown interests do not recognize that public transit is the problem, and the hope, of all downtown.

"If public transit remains the political football it too often has become; if public transit continues to be starved and strangled—then downtown will not be coming to grips with its real problem no matter how many millions or even billions it may spend on other solutions," he said.

The transit official stressed that traffic congestion in downtown areas such as Richmond is more devastating than the mere inconveniencing of auto drivers.

"Through the damage it does to transit—and that includes the passenger as well as the transit system—traffic congestion precipitates a chain reaction which is disastrous to the entire community."

"As transit's product—the ride—is slowed down by congestion, passengers abandon it for their own cars. The congestion then grows worse, and spreads the damage to other businesses as well."

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District Studies New Transit Boundaries

Legislation directed at excluding Central Contra Costa County from voting on a future transit bond issue has been authorized by directors of the Transit District.

The board has directed General Manager John R. Worthington to meet with East Bay legislators and work out necessary amendments to the Transit District Law to be introduced into the State Legislature in January.

Working closely with Worthington will be Board President Robert K. Barber, a prominent attorney in San Francisco, and Robert E. Nisbet, attorney for the District.

No specific changes to be sought in the law were approved at the Board's December meeting.

But a report by President Barber, chairman of the Committee on Program Planning, indicated two alternatives—either liberalizing way areas can be excluded from the District or setting up a special service zone within the District.

Under the second alternative, residents living within the special service zone would vote on a future bond issue, and only these residents would be served by the District. Other areas in the District could easily annex to the special service zone at a later date.

The recent $16,900,000 transit bond issue received only a 40 per cent favorable vote in Central Contra Costa County as compared to more than 60 per cent in Alameda County.

The proposed legislation will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval before it is introduced into the Legislature.

Transit Headquarters To Move in January

Headquarters of the Transit District will be moved from the Claremont Hotel to downtown Oakland.

Directors voted during their December meeting to move district offices to the Plaza Building at 506-15th Street, effective approximately January 15.

The regular monthly board meeting scheduled for January 20, however, will be held at the Berkeley hotel.

District offices have been at the Claremont Hotel since September, 1957. Upon the recommendation of General Manager John R. Worthington, following an extensive survey, the shift was advised by Vice President William J. Bettencourt, chairman of the Committee on Administrative Planning, as a more central location with more suitable office space.

More Information?

A note or phone call to the Transit District will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter. The District also can make available speakers and a 25-minute film on transit to organizations.

Clair W. MacLeod, right, East Bay civic leader who guided formation of Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, is honored upon retirement from transit Board of Directors. MacLeod, who also is president of San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, did not seek re-election to East Bay transit post because of numerous other public responsibilities. Presenting MacLeod with a traveling bag from fellow directors are Director Robert M. Copeland, left, and President Robert K. Barber.

MacLeod Retires; Coburn Elected Director

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Coburn's election to the Board as a valuable contribution to the planning of the district's transit program.

Born in Berkeley, Coburn has been active in numerous civic, business and school affairs of the community. He is a graduate of Hastings College of Law.

Among his many civic activities, Coburn is president of both the Berkeley-Albany Bar Association and the Berkeley Exchange Club, and is a director of the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce. He formerly was vice president in charge of the chamber's committee on taxation and legislation.

Coburn has been active in efforts to secure improved local transportation, and has served on several community-wide committees that dealt with problems of improved public education and those relating to mental health.

For a short period while a resident of Albany he served on an advisory committee to the Albany Board of Education.
Transit Held Essential to Richmond Business Growth

(Continued from Page 1)

"For, as congestion grows worse, more and more people shun downtown. They refuse to brave the time-consuming, nerve-jangling traffic jams and refrain from entering the central business district, either by transit or in their own cars.

The city's core loses business to places more readily accessible. Property values deteriorate in the municipality's highest land value area, and taxes to pay for vital city services must be shifted proportionately to the home owner.

"Traffic congestion affects everyone in the city," Taylor said. "It is a community problem. Its solution is the responsibility of community leaders.

Business Responsibility

"Businessmen especially have a major responsibility, since they have the largest stake in restoring freedom of movement on streets giving access to their establishments."

Taylor said that it is not difficult to get people to say they would rather spend $75 a year coming downtown by public transit than spend $326 a year by private car.

"But they still will use their cars until public transit is made easier, more convenient, and more comfortable."

"The fact that the people did create the Transit District by their vote, and the fact that a majority did vote for the recent bond issue, can be taken to mean that the day is not far off when the District will be in operation, and will be providing transit service to any and all areas which have awakened to the need and have worked cooperatively to achieve the beneficial results which follow."

"I firmly believe that some day, all the major population centers must come together in attacking the common problem of transporting masses of people from where they are to where they want to go."

"To accomplish this, it is paramount that the Cities of Richmond and San Pablo must eventually become a part of the East Bay metropolitan transit district."

"To this end," Taylor said, "I believe it is time for us to sit down together, now that we are in the relative calm that follows the storm, to map out the long-range approaches."

Air-conditioning Boosts Transit Patronage on St. Louis Buses

St. Louis. - Air-conditioning has proved highly successful in building up patronage on buses of the St. Louis Public Service Company.

Records show that air-conditioning produced an average increase of 12 per cent in new transit customers on the lines so equipped, according to John C. Baine, president of the system.

In terms of revenue, the air-conditioned lines have produced a 16.4 per cent daily average increase during the summer months. A 10 per cent increase has been maintained throughout the year, Baine added.

Transit Times

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