Public Invited To Help Redraft Transit Plan; New Legislation Is Authorized

Amendments Creating Special Service Zones Prepared For Introduction Into Assembly

Compromise legislation that would retain Contra Costa County areas in the Transit District, but defer service to them until it is wanted is being drafted for introduction into the State Assembly.

Transit district directors voted this month to proceed with their bill after an unsuccessful attempt to reach still further compromise with the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

The district-sponsored measure is designed to continue the present district intact but to provide transit facilities only for areas desiring the service at the present time.

Areas within the district but outside the operations zone would retain the right to vote for election of directors and would be subject to a tax limited to 1 cent.

That money would be used to finance continuing studies as to changing needs of the district and thus facilitate extensions of service to the outside areas when they desire service in the future.

General Manager John R. Worthington emphasized that the ultimate aim of providing adequate transit service for the two counties requires the acquisition of routes, equipment, personnel and terminals.

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Revised Transit Plan To Be Ready In 3 Months; Civic Groups Urged To Assist

A substantially revised plan to provide the East Bay a public transit operation more of its citizens will ride, is expected to be completed by the Transit District in the next three months.

More than 100 civic, business, industrial, property owner and taxpayers' associations have been invited by the District to help in drafting the revised transit program. The organizations represent an estimated 20,000 business firms and individuals.

The District also is seeking the assistance of City Councils in each of the East Bay communities to review the transit plan prepared for the District last August by De Leuw Cather & Company.

Several public hearings also are being considered as part of what should prove to be one of the largest surveys as to public sentiment ever conducted in the area.

The transit plan under review was the basis for the $16,900,000 bond issue that narrowly missed receiving a necessary two-thirds majority last November.

General Manager John R. Worthington told the Board of Directors at its February meeting:

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An Editorial

Proof of the Pudding

ASSURANCES the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District can provide the East Bay with a first class transit system the public will ride, and at no cost to the taxpayer, emanate from a source far more reliable than idle wishful thinking.

These promises of a revitalized and self-supporting transit bus system, dedicated to greater speed, convenience, service and the use of top-flight equipment, are rooted in the practical operating experience of existing transit companies.

A striking example is the public transit system in Nashville, Tenn. Six years ago the company threatened bankruptcy. Today, the reorganized system flourishes.

Many of the improvements promised here by the Transit District were largely responsible for the successful comeback of the Nashville system and its ability to stay so deep in black ink.

And what has Nashville done to revitalize its public transportation? It has furnished exclusive transit lanes at rush hours on the streets so there is no crawl through traffic. Its passenger stops protect patrons from all kinds of weather.

This system even provides free strollers for mothers who need to take their children on downtown shopping trips; it provides free rides for youngsters bound for swimming lessons in the summer; special Sunday schedules deposit weekly churchgoers at church doors within 10 minutes before start of the morning service.

Another new wrinkle—"Stop and Shop" service — permits passengers boarding buses downtown to layover for shopping at outlying neighborhood stores. "Club Coach" service, slow to catch on but now a solid money maker, picks up regular suburban customers at their doors in the morning and whisks them downtown, with no stops.

Such practices are not aimed solely at enabling the Nashville transit system to operate at a profit. The far more important aims are to keep automobiles out of the streets and highways. Nashville is proving how the use of public transit can be so increased that it both diminishes congestion and pays its own way in the bargain. We are satisfied with a similar progressive approach by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District will produce like results here.

Barber Issues Call For Richmond, San Pablo To Enter District; Suggests Joint Studies

A proposal that representatives of Richmond and San Pablo and the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District get together to discuss future transit planning was made recently by Robert K. Barber, president of the Transit District.

Barber, speaking before members of the Richmond Democratic Club, declared:

"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."

"It is essential that the cities of Richmond and San Pablo eventually become a part of the Transit District, he said.

"Some day, all the major population centers must come together in attacking the common problem where they are to where they want to go."

"If Key System has repeatedly indicated it has little, if any, interest in revitalizing its services and equipment and developing a transit operation capable of drawing people to its services," Barber said.

"We of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, on the other hand, are firmly convinced that the program we propose for the East Bay will definitely reverse the downward trend in transit riding and help to solve our area-wide traffic problem."

"Before submitting another bond issue, it is essential that we find out what the people think of the proposed improvements. We want to determine areas where the plan could be revised to more adequately serve local transit needs and to meet with fuller approval of the citizens of the District."

Both Richmond and San Pablo were excluded from the Transit District by a court decision which held absentee ballots were improperly canvassed after the election forming the District.

If the District should be successful in replacing Key System, Richmond and San Pablo might be left without any major public transportation system unless they annex to the Transit District.

Barber stressed the importance of transit to the businessman, declaring that "downtown business districts would nearly wither away if they were suddenly deprived of public transit facilities."

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"We of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, on the other hand, are firmly convinced that the program we propose for the East Bay will definitely reverse the downward trend in transit riding and help to solve our area-wide traffic problem."

The transit official said the district is striving to obtain legislation that will make it easier for areas such as Richmond and San Pablo to enter the District.

Surveys Begin On Revising Transit Program

(Continued from Page 1)

Worthington said the transit plan will be substantially revised after the comments and suggestions have been received from the public, and that the new bond issue proposals should be completed early in June.

District officials have indicated another bond issue will be submitted to the voters, possibly next Fall.
NEW TRANSIT LINES—Map shows service in Southern Alameda County initially proposed by Transit District. More than 100 civic, business, industrial, improvement and taxpayers' organizations have been invited to review routes and operating frequencies for possible changes before a bond issue is submitted to voters this Fall.
What the Editors Are Saying About Transit

Freeway Bus Lines, Park-and-ride Urged in Philadelphia

Reprinted from The Philadelphia Inquirer:

The value of the Schuylkill Expressway as an artery for high-speed bus lines serving the central city has been stressed by this newspaper ever since the highway was proposed.

Now that the Expressway has been completed to Vine Street, with connections to midcity points, the Philadelphia Transit Company has announced plans for a peak-hour bus line operating on it as part of a route from Roxborough...

The express service thus provided should substantially reduce the running time required by Route A buses, now linking the Roxborough area and downtown Philadelphia.

But Expressway bus service should not be limited to a short detour for an existing line. Douglas M. Pratt, PTC president, says that shoppers' special buses now running to the midcity from Overbrook, Bala, Wynnefield, Mt. Airy, Germantown and other districts will be routed later over the Expressway.

And, he adds, if parking facilities are provided "at suitable points along the Expressway," express buses could furnish fast, convenient park-and-ride service direct to the central city.

This type of service should produce the largest benefits because it could attract the patronage of many persons who now travel to and from the downtown business district in their automobiles. A single bus can carry as many persons as usually ride in 35 or 40 automobiles, so that a shift of motorists to the express buses for commuter travel could greatly ease traffic congestion.

Just what points along the Expressway Mr. Pratt regards as suitable for parking facilities he does not state. But it is obvious that one logical location is somewhere close to the City Line interchange, where passengers could park their cars for the day and board express buses for a fast ride to their downtown destination. Ample size to meet future demands of course, would be an essential.

City-PTC cooperation in promoting such a park-ride facility is surely indicated.

More Information?

The District can make available speakers and a 20-minute color film on transit to interested organizations. A note or phone call to the District also will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy.

Sacramento Transit Reports Net Surplus

SACRAMENTO — The Sacramento Transit Authority continued to operate on a self-supporting basis during its second year in business, according to the Authority's recently published year-end report.

Walter Christensen, chairman of the Authority, said that income was more than sufficient to cover all expenses including principal and interest on bonded indebtedness.

Self-sustaining operations were maintained despite substantial wage and salary increases granted all transit employees, Christensen said. The Sacramento Transit Authority has operated since March, 1956, with a 15 cent cash fare.

COMING AND GOING—Novel bus-only lane on Market Street in Harrisburg, Pa., allows buses to travel westbound on busy downtown thoroughfare, and restricts all other traffic to eastbound movement. Introduced on a trial basis last August at suggestion of city engineers, the arrangement won almost universal acceptance among merchants, city officials and the general public, and was recently approved on a permanent basis. Movement of buses through the area has been speeded up an average of 14 per cent.

—Photo courtesy of Harrisburg Railways Company

Faster Bus Speed In Traffic Studied Here

A study of traffic control devices to speed public transit, such as reserving one lane exclusively for buses during rush hours, is being conducted by the Transit District.

Director Robert M. Copeland proposed the study, saying that exclusive bus lanes, no parking restrictions, special bus speed limits, one-way streets and other systems are used elsewhere and may be workable here.

"Close coordination with municipal and county authorities who control the streets is essential if we are to speed up buses on our downtown streets," he said.

"Buses can save riders substantial travel time during rush hours if they have exclusive curb lanes in which to travel," Copeland said. He cited a number of communities throughout the country that have experimented with bus-only lanes and have found they speed up both public transit and the private auto.

In Dallas, Tex., for example, exclusive bus lanes increased transit speed by 23 per cent. Autos increased their travel speed by as much as 45 per cent. Buses using special lanes in Cincinnati permitted auto traffic to move 23 per cent faster.

General Manager John R. Worthington told the Board that other than what the Transit District is planning, nothing is being done here at present to make travel by bus faster and more attractive. Very little, in fact, has ever been done in this area to help facilitate the speed of transit coach travel," he added.
At a special meeting on February 4, 1959, the Board of Directors:

- Amended Rules for Procedure, establishing four standing committees concerned with finance, program planning, administration and public information, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt.
- Changed regular meeting date and location to the first Wednesday of each month beginning March, 1959, in the chambers of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, on motion of Director John McDonnell.
- Authorized study on methods of increasing speed of transit coaches through traffic, on motion of Director Deadrich.
- Authorized Director Copeland to attend meetings of the Governor's Industrial Safety Conference and American Society of Civil Engineers' in Los Angeles, on motion of Director McDonnell.

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At its regular meeting February 17, 1959, the Board of Directors:

- Heard report of progress on several proposed legislative amendments to Transit District Law and on activities of District public information program from General Manager Worthington.
- Adopted revised Rules for Procedure for the Board of Directors, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt.

Legislation To Defer Contra Costa Service

(Continued from Page 1)

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