NEW BOUNDARIES

Initial District Transit Operation Will Exclude Central Contra Costa County

Most of Contra Costa County will be excluded from the proposed operational area of the Transit District just as soon as the law allows.

John R. Worthington, district general manager, told a meeting of Contra Costa county and city planners in Richmond recently that the only areas of the county that would receive transit service in the immediate future would be El Cerrito and Kensington.

"An average of only 40 per cent of the voters in Contra Costa County favored the recent transit bond issue, as compared to 62 per cent in Alameda County," Worthington noted.

Bond Election

As a result, directors of the Transit District have indicated they favor the exclusion of Central Contra Costa County from voting on a future bond election, and have pressed for legislation to make this possible.

The transit official reviewed provisions of an amended bill introduced by Assemblyman Jerome Waldie of Antioch and already passed by the Assembly and Senate that would allow the District to set up a special service zone (Details, Page 6).

“This zone will include all of Alameda County that currently is in the District as well as El Cerrito and Kensington in Contra Costa County," he said.

The Waldie bill (AB 752) also makes it easier for cities such as Richmond and San Pablo to enter the District, and liberalizes the manner in which other areas of Contra Costa County could totally withdraw from the District, he pointed out.

“But we are not going to wait until the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and city councils request exclusion from the District," Worthington said.

Special Service Zone

"Just as soon as the Governor signs the bill into law, we will move to exclude most of Contra Costa County from the next bond issue by establishing the special service zone."

“This is necessary in order to fix our operational boundaries and proceed immediately with the planning for the bond measure," he said.

Under the new provisions of the Waldie bill, 10 per cent of the voters in Richmond or San Pablo could request annexation to the District and its operations zone. Annexation at present can be requested only by city councils. An election in the area seeking annexation must be held following approval by the transit Board of Directors."
East Bay Cities Begin Extensive Review of Engineering Plan to Improve Local Transit

Engineering plans prepared for the Transit District last year by De Leuw, Cather & Company are currently undergoing close study by each of the city councils in the East Bay. Upon request of the District, city council members have directed their planning and engineering staffs and commissions to thoroughly review the transit proposal for suggested changes and improvements.

William J. Bettencourt, transit director from San Leandro, told the San Leandro City Council recently that the District is anxious to receive the comments and suggestions of East Bay city councils before redrafting the transit plan in preparation for a bond election.

"It may be, for example, that you and your staff, having a more intimate knowledge of your area, might see the need for a particular line to operate on a different street," Bettencourt said. "You might determine in your judgment that a particular line should operate more frequently. There may be need shown as a result of your studies for additional services not proposed by the engineers.

"Once we have this information from your City Council as well as from the others to whom we are appealing for assistance, we propose to substantially revise our program and then return with our plan to submit it to you for approval."

Bettencourt expressed confidence that with greater community participation and more opportunity in which to acquaint the people with the revised transit program, the next bond issue will be soundly endorsed by the required majority vote.

Similar appearances have been made by Directors John McDonnell before the Oakland, Piedmont and Emeryville City Councils, Robert K. Barber before the Alameda, Albany and El Cerrito City Councils, Paul E. Deadrich before the Hayward City Council, and William H. Coburn before the Berkeley City Council.

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 will also place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy.

What the Editors Are Saying About Transit
Reduced Fares May Be Essential to Expand Transit Riding
Reprinted from the Baton Rouge (La.) Morning Advocate:

Traffic experts are practically unanimous in agreement that the only practical solution to the increasingly serious traffic problem faced by every city, including Baton Rouge, New York and all the others, is greater use of public transportation.

There is a limit, they argue, to the construction of through-ways and parking lots and garages—that is, when everything downtown has been torn down to make way for wider streets, larger intersections, and bigger parking areas, people no longer will have any reason to come downtown.

The public has not been very cooperative, however. Millions of us insist on driving our cars downtown instead of riding the bus, the commuter train, the street car or subway. As a result, public transportation systems almost everywhere have been expanding very slowly or even cutting back their services at a time when the need for fast, economical transportation has been increasing rapidly and the national traffic jam has been getting worse.

The City of Philadelphia is now trying a novel and interesting solution to the problem. It is trying to reverse the trend of shrinking services and higher passenger fares for public transportation systems.

The public transportation agency in one section of the city has reduced its fares sharply and at the same time considerably extended its services, hoping that this action will attract enough additional riders to make the operation profitable. The city government is standing by to make up losses the company may suffer while the plan is being given a fair trial.

So far, the losses have been fairly large, but 15 per cent more riders are using the system and the company and city hope for an even larger gain.

If this scheme does produce the necessary volume of traffic to give the company a fair profit with the lower rates and expanded service, the transportation trend of a decade will have been reversed, in one city at least.

Other cities throughout the nation will be watching.

Public transportation agencies that have struggled so desperately with the problems of declining traffic and rising costs since the peak business of World War II will be skeptical. Many public officials will be fearful of the public subsidy feature and will point out that even a temporary subsidy might become habit-forming.

But it seems reasonable to expect that as the traffic jams grow more serious and the difficulties and expense of downtown driving in big cities grow greater, a turning point must come.

Downtown Shopper Mall Proposed at Columbus
COLUMBUS (Ohio) - Establishment of an exclusive bus lane this Spring on a main thoroughfare is a highlight of a plan to make an eight-block section in the heart of Columbus' downtown area into a shoppers' mall.

The plan, to take five years to complete, features the banning of all private automobiles from the proposed mall area. Shoppers would be transported by buses.
TRANSIT ROUTES—Map shows service proposed by engineering consultants for Alameda, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont. Routes and operating frequencies are being reviewed for suggested changes and improvements by more than 100 East Bay organizations before the transit plan is revised for a new bond issue.
Transit District to Consider Electric Trolley Bus Service in Revised Engineer Study

An engineering study to determine the economic feasibility or desirability of operating electric trolley buses in addition to diesel buses has been authorized by the district Board of Directors.

Up to $1,000 was approved for the study following a suggestion by Director J. Howard Arnold that the District should convert and operate about 80 per cent of the route miles now covered by Key System with electric trolley coaches.

Arnold proposed that approximately 300 used trolley buses could be acquired by convincing a major corporation to buy the buses and then sell them to the District on a lease-purchase basis. This, he said, could be a way of getting into the transit business without the need of a bond issue.

Since the District was formed in 1956, however, the Board of Directors has held to the policy that the District should get into operation only by way of a bond issue, thus giving residents the opportunity of voting on the transit program.

In earlier reports, General Manager John R. Worthington has indicated the various cities in the District may oppose overhead wire installation above their streets necessary for electric trolley operation. Worthington also indicated a system of electric trolley buses would be more expensive than an all-diesel bus operation, and would not be as feasible.

Legislature Gives Approval To Changes in Transit Law; Bill Waits Governor Signing

The State Legislature has stamped final approval on a bill revamping the law governing the Transit District.

The bill, known as AB 532 and introduced by Assemblyman Jerome Waldie of Antioch, is awaiting signature by the governor.

Principal points in the measure are as follows:

- Permits establishment of a special transit service zone within the Transit District. A bond issue to finance equipment would be presented only within this area.
- Makes it easier for areas of Contra Costa County to totally withdraw from the District.
- Provides for the issuance of general obligation and revenue bonds in special service zones upon approval by a majority of voters.

Standing committees of the Board of Directors were appointed by President Robert K. Barber as follows:


Program Planning—Directors Paul E. Deadrich, chairman, and J. Howard Arnold and Barber.

Administration—Directors Bettencourt, chairman, and Barber and McDonnell.

Public Information—Directors Copeland, chairman, and William H. Coburn, Jr., and Deadrich.

New Street Work to Help Speed Transit

Early widening and other improvements on 40th Street are being planned by the City of Oakland to help speed mass transit between North Oakland and the West Oakland industrial areas as well as San Francisco.

Bids for a contract to widen and improve the cross-town arterial between Broadway and Yerba Buena Avenue soon will be awarded.

The project will cost an estimated $400,000, according to City Engineer John A. Morin, and is part of a track removal-land trade agreement between the city and Key System Transit Lines.

The city will pay for removal of the old Key tracks on 40th Street as part of the improvement project.

In return, Key has given the city the transit right-of-way between Broadway and Howe Street for future continuation of the 40th Street artery to Howe Street.

The new four-lane divided roadway with stacking lanes for cars turning at intersecting streets is expected to substantially improve travel time on transit routes using the thoroughfare.

Widening of the transit right-of-way between Broadway and Howe Street into a four-lane street is not expected to be completed until next year.

The unpaved right-of-way, formerly used by transbay trains, has become a transit bottleneck, requiring buses to detour to 41st Street. The grade on 40th Street between Broadway and Yerba Buena Avenue will be repaved and also widened to four lanes for fast, cross-town artery.
At its regular meeting April 1, 1959, the Board of Directors:

- Heard a report by the General Manager on the status of current bills in the Legislature affecting the Transit District. (Details, Page 6.)
- Received a report from the General Manager that a majority of the homeowners in the Trestle Glen district are satisfied with the present transit bus routing in their area, according to results obtained in a recent opinion survey.
- Heard a report by the General Manager on new models of city transit coaches soon to be in production.
- Received a report from Director Deadrich, chairman of Committee on Program Planning, that recommendations concerning additional engineering studies should be forthcoming in May.
- Approved salary increases for clerk-stenographer, secretary and legal secretary, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to attend regional conference of American Transit Association in Vancouver, B.C., May 4, 5, and 6, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt.
- Authorized directors so desiring to attend the Vancouver meeting, on motion of Director Arnold.
- Adopted statement of policy governing purchases of supplies and equipment, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt.
- Referred to Committee on Program Planning a proposal by Director Arnold to include operation of electric trolley buses in district transit plan, and authorized up to $1,000 for engineering studies, on motion of Vice President Bettencourt. (Details, Page 6.)

Off-Street Terminal Considered For Berkeley

Transit improvements for the Berkeley area currently under review by the Berkeley Planning Commission include establishing an off-street transit terminal in the downtown area.

In a recent appearance before the Berkeley City Council, Transit Director William J. Coburn said that selection of location for the terminal should be a joint effort on the part of the city, merchants, transit district and other interested organizations.

The terminal would contain several miscellaneous shops and business firms associated with a terminal operation in addition to such conveniences as a waiting room and parcel lockers, Coburn informed the Council.

Transit Times
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District
700 Plaza Building
Oakland 12, California