Transit Plan Gains Wide Acceptance; East Bay To Vote On Program Oct. 20

Widespread acceptance by East Bay citizenry has met the Transit Improvement Program for the East Bay since its completion two months ago.

The program to revitalize East Bay transit and replace Key System in the area is receiving the support of civic, labor, management, business, home improvement, fraternal, educational and taxpayer organizations.

This was the report this month of A. H. Moffitt, Jr., general chairman of the Citizens Committee for Better East Bay Transit.

The committee is sponsoring the $16,500,000 transit bond issue, to be voted on by East Bay citizens Oct. 20 as Measure A.

Moffitt reported to the Transit District Board of Directors that community leaders representing a cross-section of political, social and economic interests are rallying to support the bond measure.

"Our activities to obtain the support of the nearly 400,000 voters in the district have been met with enthusiastic endorsement and assistance," Moffitt said.

The citizen leader said that East Bay residents, so desperately in need of 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

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A Fare-box Bond Issue

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 before the voters by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District.

The difference—of vital importance to all property owners—is one of tax support.

When voters must consider school or municipal bond measures, they may be certain that funds to redeem such bonds will be collected from the customary source—the taxpayer.

The transit district, on the other hand, will have at its disposal revenue not available to school districts and municipalities. Sources of this revenue are the fares which riders will pay when they travel on the system, conservatively estimated at approximately $11,289,000 per year.

Engineering and financial studies have determined that this revenue will be sufficient to pay all operating costs, retire the bond issue and replace equipment without an increase in fares or the imposition of additional taxes.

This means that property owners of the East Bay, who already carry a sizeable tax burden, may be assured the transit district bonds will be repaid from the fare box and not from the pocketbook of the taxpayer.

As we have said, the difference between school and transit district bonds is basic; it is a difference that voters should bear in mind when they go to the polls Oct. 20 to weigh the district’s program to expand and improve public transit operations in the East Bay cities.

Cities Endorse Transit Improvements

Early approval of initial transit improvements for their respective communities has been voiced by Alameda, Berkeley and San Leandro city councils.

Directors of the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association also were among the governmental agencies announcing early approval.

Most of the suggestions advanced by the various city administrations early this year were already incorporated in the Transit Improvement Program.

Several additional suggestions, however, were proposed by members of the San Leandro City Council last month during a special work session with representatives of the transit district staff.

At the request of the council, the district will give consideration to improving cross-town service among several residential areas and the business districts.

Areas affected would include San Lorenzo Village, Washington Manor, Mulford Gardens, Bay-O-Vista, the central business district and the Bay Fair Shopping Center.

William J. Bettenourt, transit district director representing the San Leandro area, assured the Council that a thorough study of the proposed improvements will be undertaken by the district during the immediate months ahead.

East Bay Unites To Support Mass Transit

Renovation; Citizens Work For Large Vote

(Continued from Page 1)

which to live," he said.

"This program for improved transportation is tremendously important for the residents of these cities."

Moffitt noted that the program will "assure the public transportation we need to protect business, residential property values from the severe, damaging effects of traffic stragulation."

It also will provide "long-awaited relief for many residents who depend upon public transportation or would use the service if improved," he added.

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

Businessmen Told of Transit Values

The ability of customers to freely enter the central business district is the greatest single force affecting business profits and the longevity of a prosperous and healthy business core.

John R. Worthington, transit district general manager, told a meeting of the Oakland Lions Club this month that if potential customers are obstructed by traffic congestion, slow public transit and inconvenient parking, they will go elsewhere.

Businessmen expend great effort and expense to attract customers to their goods and services, he said.

"But unless the prospective customer can travel downtown conveniently, safely and comfortably, this effort and expense has been wasted."

"There is no greater, single dynamic force affecting business profits than customer accessibility."

The transit official noted that two-thirds of the entire downtown Los Angeles business district has been taken over by streets, freeways and off-street parking lots, and that business has become "stagnant."

"This problem does not appear to be as acute in the East Bay as in Los Angeles—today," he said.

"But with each passing year, this problem of increasing immobility will compound itself into destructive proportions unless we can develop and agree upon an adequate solution in the very near future."

"It is our hope that the entire business community will join hands with us in helping to make a system of adequate public transit a reality," he said.
Public response to the newly-designed city transit coach on display in the East Bay cities has been highly enthusiastic. Nearly 3,000 persons inspected the new air-conditioned Transit Liner during the first three days in the area, and its reception was “remarkable,” according to John R. Worthington, general manager.

Worthington reported to the board of directors that those viewing the streamlined coach were “enthusiastic and clearly indicated they are anxious to see this type of transit vehicle in service in the East Bay.” A group of East Bay city and county officials who traveled aboard the bus during a special demonstration expressed their belief that the new coach would be a boon to public transit riding, Worthington added.

“In all of my 40 years in the transit business, this is the first time I have stepped into a new transit coach that I felt was of first-class quality.”

The new coach, which makes a complete break with the past, is the first completely new bus design in nearly 20 years. In addition to all-new styling, the new models have greatly increased visibility with large "picture windows," fluorescent lights, lower entrance step, wide seats, and improved air-ride suspension, providing a major advancement in travel comfort.
What the Editors Are Saying About Transit

Improvement of East Bay Mass Transit Held Essential
Reprinted from the Hayward Daily Review:

BARELY A MONTH remains until the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District’s proposed $16,500,000 bond issue comes to a vote.

Every study thus far made indicates that this area, along with the balance of the district, will benefit if the bonds are passed. Transit service will be greatly improved.

New bus lines will be extended into San Lorenzo Village, Palma Ceia, Schafer Park, and as far south as Decoto. The plan contemplates service to Valle Vista, Alta Vista, Fairway Park, El Rancho Verde. Express routes with more frequent service between Hayward, San Leandro and Oakland are part of the plan.

Much of the District’s equipment will be new and streamlined, with peak hour needs augmented by existing buses to be purchased from Key System.

They base their estimate on fares that will come from better service, plus the district’s exemption from somewhat more than $1,000,000 annually in taxes and franchises now paid by Key System.

Traffic congestion and parking constitute one of our major and worsening social irritations. A mass transit system that offers convenience, economy and comfort will thin out the number of private automobiles on our freeways, streets and in our parking lots.

Until those improvements materialize, the progressive loss of patronage by Key System plus the additional influx of population and cars will increase our bumper to bumper frustration, maroon shoppers in their homes, and slow the economic tempo of the region. The transit district’s bond issue should be approved. We are growing too fast in population, number of homes, stores and industries to take a chance on being immobilized in our streets.

Merchant-sponsored Buses Prove a Success

SPRINGFIELD (Mo.)—A merchant-sponsored shuttle bus system is being extended in Springfield to a full year after a successful six-month trial period.

The two 31-passenger buses, furnished on a lease basis by the City Utilities transportation department, cover a 1.3 mile, 13-stop loop in the city’s downtown shopping area.

Shoppers may ride the buses as often, or as long as they wish—whether or not any purchases are made at the participating stores.

More than 150 merchants, property owners, and professional people underwrite the $1,300 monthly cost of the service.

Passengers now total 2,000 to 2,400 a week, showing a gradual, steady growth except for upward spurts during the Christmas and Easter shopping seasons.

Freeway Plan Crippled Without Transit

East Bay taxpayers face the danger of spending close to a billion dollars on new freeways that will be hopelessly inadequate even before they are built.

This was the warning of William H. Coburn, Jr., transit district director who recently addressed members of the Berkeley Lions Club on the subject, “Transit Improvement and Community Progress.”

“Automobiles fighting for room on the freeway network of the future will be doomed to a creeping paralysis if public transit does not carry a share of the travel load,” he said.

The transit official said that engineering recommendations for new freeways recently made for Alameda County, for example, are based in their entirety on the key assumption that many travelers on the new freeways will be carried by express buses.

“And it is easy to see why the engineers must make this assumption,” Coburn added.

He explained that if only four out of every 100 vehicles on a freeway are public transit coaches, a freeway can effectively carry twice as many people.

“Instead of four freeway lanes, a small percentage of public transit vehicles gives us the equivalent of eight lanes,” he said.

“Without transit,” Coburn said, “we could expect that our future freeway program would have to be substantially expanded—costing perhaps a billion and a half dollars instead of the $878,000,000 now proposed—a capital outlay we could scarcely afford.”
At an adjourned regular meeting September 10, 1959, the Board of Directors:
• Adopted an ordinance calling a special election October 20 to vote on a $16,500,000 bond issue to purchase operating facilities, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

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At an adjourned regular meeting September 15, 1959, the Board of Directors:
• Established compensation for election precinct workers of $12 for officers and $13 for inspectors, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Awarded sale of tax anticipation notes totalling $200,000 to Oakland Bank of Commerce as low bidder at a net interest rate of 2.896 per cent, on motion of Director Copeland.

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At its regular meeting October 7, 1959, the Board of Directors:
• Received a report from A. H. Moffitt, Jr., general chairman of the Citizens Committee for Better East Bay Transit, on activities of the committee. (Details, Page 1.)

Transit Riding Up Second Successive Month

For the second successive month, the number of passengers carried by transit companies during July exceeded traffic total for the corresponding period in 1958.

Preliminary figures for July, according to the American Transit Association, show an increase of 0.77 per cent over July, 1958. The final tabulation for June showed a rise of 1.62 per cent from last year.

The increases recorded for June and July are in contrast to an unbroken string of minus signs going back to January, 1947.