District Studies School Bus Problems

Legislative Action, Cooperation of School Board Sought to Solve Cost of Special Student Service

A solution to the intricate, but important problem of providing bus service for students at hill area schools appeared to hinge this month on legislative action and the question of who will pay the costs.

At a recent meeting between representatives of AC Transit and the Montclair-Thornhill Parents Bus Committee, district directors indicated their concern over the problem and promised some answer within the next several weeks as to the extent of school bus service that could be operated by the district next September.

The board of directors long has held the position that school bus transportation properly is a function of the district. But, in the words of Director William H. Coburn, Jr., chairman of the committee making a study of the complex problem, the district is opposed to buying special school bus equipment for narrow, steep hill streets which would be operated at a loss to the district.

If arrangements were worked out so parents and the Oakland Board of Education shared costs, Coburn said, he would favor the district providing the service.

The Oakland school board has said it will discontinue service now in effect in June and will not provide any school transportation, except to certain handicapped children.

Solution may come from a bill pending in the State Legislature, introduced by Assemblyman Nicholas Petris, which would allow school boards to pay only a portion of bus service costs. The Alameda County district attorney has ruled that under present law the board must pay all the cost or none.

Previously, parents have been contributing to school bus service, but on a voluntary basis.

10-Cent School Fare

Parents of the Montclair area have said they are willing to continue contributing to the costs or to pay the regular 10 cents children's fare if school bus lines are established by the district.

If the way is cleared for AC Transit to undertake bus service at 10 cents a ride and the school district make up whatever deficit is incurred, the final solution may hinge on the Oakland Board of Education as to whether it will make a commitment to this effect.

At stake is the transportation of 370 children in the Montclair area now riding the school's charter buses, plus the students who will be attending the new Skyline High School opening this fall.

Also involved is service to other hill area elementary and junior high schools.
What the Editors Are Saying About Transit

Oakland Tribune:

Express Appreciation

AC TRANSIT's new inter-city express system has not only improved the bustling metropolitan appearance of downtown Oakland, but it has provided the first swift transit link between Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro and Hayward.

The critical test of any transit system, of course, despite the beauty of the new and comfortable coaches, is patronage—and preliminary results indicate it will pass this test cum laude.

The basis of this prediction comes from General Manager John R. Worthington, who says that the new system has quickly drawn many more patrons than could be normally expected in a new operation. Also, since the new AC District took over from Key System, there has been a significant rise in patronage.

This is a hopeful sign. But the new express lines have added 90,000 route miles annually and $50,000 in operating costs to give the Eastbay the service it has long desired. In order to financially meet these whopping totals of miles and dollars, the system must have a quarter of a million passengers.

While this passenger load sounds fantastic, there are indications that it will be met. On the day the service was inaugurated nearly 7,000 passengers boarded the express lines. Some of these were riding commuter buses for the first time and reported the experience in glowing terms.

Not only are passengers happy with the long-awaited new service and equipment, but merchants in all the connecting areas have reported their enthusiasm also. Congratulations to the new AC Transit District and our best wishes for the future.

Bus Tokens to Match Streamlined Look

AC Transit is going to have new bus tokens, in keeping with the streamlined "new look" already illustrated by the latest equipment and uniforms.

The tokens will be the first new design for the public in 14 years, since National City Lines took over from Key System, there has been a significant rise in patronage.

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The finest feathered patron of AC Transit is a pigeon, who may also be Oakland's smartest bird.

Smart enough, anyway, to follow the district's slogan and ride the bus.

So there would be no complaints about free-loading, the pigeon, Tiny Brown, was presented with a free, life-time token from the district.

Director Robert K. Barber made the presentation of the brand-new token on a chain, handy for the pigeon to wear around her neck.

Tiny, pet of Mrs. Ellerena McDan­nold, a legal secretary, took up roof-time bus hopping as a means of getting back to her owner's downtown apartment at 1950 Broadway.

Each morning, unless it is raining, she rides down Broadway on Mrs. McDann­old's shoulder while Mrs. McDannold walks to work. Tiny heads for home, via AC Transit.

Spectators claim that if she takes a Telegraph Ave. bus by mistake, she flies off and waits for the next coach heading out Broadway.

This was news to the drivers. They apparently never heard the pitter-patter of Tiny's feet. But as a paid-up patron, Tiny can now ride inside or out—and what's more, she is entitled to a transfer.
Inquiring Photographer

Commuters Compare AC Transit to Key System, Decide They Like New Service

The Inquiring Photographer of the San Francisco Examiner asked commuters at the Transbay Transit Terminal a question of area-wide interest and came up with a surprising unanimity in answers.

The question: "Is A.C.T. Better Than Key System?"
The answers added up to "yes," with these reasons:

Mary Gilbert, bus driver, of 1257 148th Ave., San Leandro, found "even the riders seem happier now. Sure this is better than Key System. We have more and better equipment, better service."

Arch Hepburn, printer, 28525 Coleridge Ave., Hayward, who started riding the bus again after AC Transit took over, answered: "They've kept the same rates, improved the service and spread out the schedules. I'd say that's all to the good."

B. C. Sutliff, chief clerk, 1532 Fir Ave., San Leandro, said "The A.C.T. has provided more frequent service, more 'on time' performance, new improved buses and pleasant employees.

Frank von Ah, 1629 Wood St., Alameda, reported in part: 'I've noticed that the drivers are a lot more courteous, and you can almost depend upon their schedules.'

Clarence E. Willard, apartment house manager, 1806 Berkeley Ave., Berkeley: "I think the buses are much more roomy and far more comfortable and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the A.C.T. on its service. The only complaint is there are not enough buses. I think they're working on that."

John Renshaw, sales representative, 1124 107th Ave., Oakland: "All I can say is that the facilities in general have improved. . . . Their schedules are much more dependable now, too."

Harold Cunningham, printer, 461 Larchmont St., Hayward: "This line is going to make a record. They've put on more buses, more lines, more employees, all without raising fares. And I think they're going to make more money doing it. They've made the system usable for lots of us who couldn't use it before."

Mrs. Fern Jones, assistant secretary, 758 Sycamore Ave., Hayward: "The A.C.T. seems to be so much more efficient. Without raising the fares they've managed to put on a lot of new and nicer equipment. They seem to be trying to make it more pleasant for the rider, and to make his trip shorter."

Air Conditioning Sends
Crews Back to School

Maintenance crews put in some school time during the month, learning there is more to the new equipment than rolling throughout the district than the wheels that go 'round and the engine in back.

Because air-conditioning is now for the first time--standard equipment on the transbay and express buses, maintenance men were given a course in how to keep the units properly functioning.

The special air-conditioning school was set up by General Motors Corp., manufacturers of the buses, with crews from Division 2 and 3 joining in sessions at the Emeryville yard. Another two-day course followed at Division 4 yards. Some 48 men attended the school.

Customers Drop $1,000,000 in Coin Box To Make March District's Top Month

Over $1,000,000 was dropped into the fare box by passengers during the month of March, sending AC Transit into the seven figure plateau for the first time since taking over from Key System Transit Lines.

The previous high was reached in December, when fare revenue totaled $958,899, according to General Manager John R. Worthington.

The district is continuing to show a steady, healthy increase in riders, he told the board of directors.

Transbay bus travel for the month was up 8.5 per cent over last year, while patronage on local lines was up 3 per cent over March, 1960.

The new express service doubled its revenue in the first two weeks of operation, moving from $800 daily revenue at the start to more than $1200 by the end of the second week.

Worthington said the express service "is going along in pretty good shape, but revenue of at least $1500 a day is necessary to assure continued operations."

He termed "most important and satisfying" the fact that express service was not robbing parallel local lines of patronage, but was attracting new riders--most of them apparently using bus transit for the first time.

District service has been increased 14 per cent in the past three months, as result of the addition of new lines and line extensions, Worthington also disclosed.

Opposition Mounts Over Bay Toll Diversion

Opposition against Senate Bill 499 mounted throughout the East Bay this month as cities and representative organizations moved against legislation which would divert Bay Bridge tolls for use other than in transbay traffic improvements.

Already on record against the bill are the cities of Alameda, Albany, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Oakland, Richmond, San Pablo and San Leandro.

Groups in opposition include Local 192 of the Carmen's Union, Emeryville Industries Association, Alameda County Central Labor Council, Alameda County Mayors Conference, Contra Costa County Mayors Conference, Oakland Chamber of Commerce, San Lorenzo Village Homes Association and El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce.

Working with the East Bay communities in united opposition to the bill is Assemblyman Walter J. Dahl who in the past has spearheaded much of the legislation to improve public transportation in the Bay Area.

The proposed new legislation would permit the use of Bay Bridge revenues to remodel the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco so it could be used by commuter buses from San Mateo and Marin counties. The measure was introduced by Senators Richard Dolwig of San Mateo County and John McCarthy of Marin County.

Opponents point out the privately owned lines who do not pay Bay Bridge tolls would be getting a "free ride" at the expense of transbay commuters who pay the cost of the improved transit facilities.

Opening the terminal to all commuter buses entering San Francisco also would overcrowd the facility to the point of lowering the quality of transbay commuter service to the East Bay cities, according to AC Transit officials.
CAMPUS VIEW—This is a new look for most visitors, across the fountain which now fronts Sather Gate, to South Hall and the Campanile in background.

Transit Trails

U.C. Has Surprises For Trip of Month

By Virginia Dennison

The Berkeley Campus of University of California means many things to many people, but if you have never approached it as a tourist, you're missing a pleasant surprise.

The campus isn't only for students. The public can enjoy a number of exhibits, some wonderful views, a historical spot or two and a beautiful and interesting botanical garden—bursting out all over now in blooming cactus.

On Sundays, particularly, the campus will be yours. You can picnic on the grass, enjoy the sun and the splendid architecture of the Greek Theatre—or the brand new view from the Student Union, with its rooftop peek at the campus and the wide world of the East Bay.

Some of the exhibits are open on Sundays; as many, probably, as you want to sample in one day. For the others, plan a weekday or Saturday morning trip. The campus is fun and exhilarating at any time. Besides—it's educational.

This is one adventure, incidentally, where it's not only more convenient, but pretty necessary to take the bus. Automobiles are just not welcome.

A highlight of any tour of the campus is a visit to the spectacular botanical gardens at the head of Strawberry Canyon. It's a beautiful walk, of about two miles, from the Greek Theatre, along the upper side of the stadium, out North Canyon Road past Stern pool and the Strawberry Canyon recreational area.

The nearest bus point is the 51 line stop at College Ave. and Bancroft Way or the 7 line stop at Euclid and Hearst Aves. It shouldn't be missed, especially in its Springtime brilliance. It's open 9 to 4 daily (10 to 5 during Daylight Saving). Even has a few picnic tables for your use.

A number of AC Transit buses will take you to the campus, but for a convenient approach via Sather Gate, take the 51—College Ave. or the 40—Telegraph Ave. to Bancroft and Telegraph.

The striking new building off the intersection is Student Union. Look around on the way, but take the elevator to the roof garden for that wonderful view. The building is open every day at 8 a.m. except on Sunday, when it opens at noon time.

Up Bancroft, near College, is Kroeber Hall, with its anthropological and archaeological specimens. The Robert H.

AFRICAN HILL — Cactus and succulents from South Africa put on a showy display at U.C. botanical garden.

WHAT IS IT? Skull of a Synthetoceras, from the Pliocene period, keeps a resurrected eye on visitors to Hearst Mining Building on U.C. campus.

Lowie Museum, of special note, currently is concentrating on ancient Peru. It is open 1 to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

Bacon Hall, on the hill side of the Campanile, dates back to 1881 and is now enjoying its final days. Its extensive collections of minerals and ores, along with paleontology exhibits from the Hearst Mining Building, soon are to be moved to the new Earth Sciences Building. Both buildings are open 8 to 5 weekdays, and until noon time on Saturdays.

Other exhibits of interest are in Cory Hall and the Life Sciences Building, and don't miss the library, with its Drake Plate and Codex Fernandez Leal, a pre-Spanish Mexican Indian document. It opens at 1 p.m. on Sundays.

The Art Gallery currently is displaying paintings from the Whitney museum and is open 12 to 6 daily. Happy holiday!
Service Expansions
District Continues to Give Improved Transit

A number of service expansions were put into effect by AC Transit during the month, in line with a continuing series of improvements.

Direct transbay express service between the Berkeley hill area and San Francisco was increased from four to five morning trips by the addition of an express bus to the F—Berkeley line. The new schedule leaves Grizzly Peak Blvd. and Spruce St. at 7:41 a.m., arriving in San Francisco at 8:27 a.m.

Service to the Fairway Park area of Hayward on the new 32—San Lorenzo Express was increased by an additional morning trip leaving Fairway Park at 5:49 a.m. Another new trip leaves Fairway Park at 3:33 p.m.

During the afternoon and evening commuter hours, express buses leaving Grand Ave. and Broadway in Oakland beginning at 1:56 p.m. were extended through to Fairway Park.

Residents of Berkeley's Grizzly Peak area and along Euclid Ave., also received improved service through extension to the 75—Grizzly Peak line.

The extension gave residents of the hill area direct service to the downtown Berkeley business area. It also doubled the bus operations along Euclid Ave., giving riders in that district a bus along Euclid every 15 minutes.

The change takes the 75 bus from its previous terminal at Euclid and Grizzly Peak Blvd., down Euclid to Hearst Ave., to Shattuck Ave., to Addison to East Shattuck to University. Earlier service also was provided.

Extension of the 77—Piedmont Pines line also became effective during the month. The new route extended the line from Ascot Dr. and Skyline Blvd. along Skyline to Castle Dr., returning to Ascot along Melville Dr.

Evening commuter service from downtown Hayward to San Leandro and East Oakland was expanded with the addition of five extra schedules to the new 30—San Leandro Express.

The expansions, made at the request of store employees in the Hayward area, added buses at 5:45, 5:55, 6:10, 6:30 and 6:55 p.m., for the 18-minute trip to San Leandro.

The extra buses operate over the regular route to Davis St. in San Leandro, then continue westbound on East 14th St. as far as Seminary Ave.

Morning express service on the L—Richmond line was further increased from six to seven bus trips, providing more frequent non-stop express service. The new schedule leaves the end of the line at 6:57 a.m., arriving in San Francisco at 7:20 a.m.

Maintenance Superintendent Keeps Buses and Ball Team in Top Form

If you want to see a championship baseball team—and a championship manager in about equal action, take a Sunday afternoon to visit Washington Park in Alameda.

You'll not only see top flight baseball, but some top flight managing in the Casey Stengel fashion, with A. R. "Tony" Lucchesi, maintenance superintendent at Division 4, as the man behind the voice.

Quiet, likeable, efficient and one of the outstanding veterans in the transport field, Tony is equally notable in baseball circles. But with a liberal sprinkling of dynamite, according to some of the tell-tale friends who have seen him in action.

A baseball player since high school days, Tony, on the diamond, can yell, kick dirt, take on the umpire and spark his boys on to their outstanding record with the best of them. To good avail.

Since he switched from second base to management of the Southern Pacific Stores semi-pro team in 1955, Tony's boys have won the Northern California championship three times, in 1958 and 1960.

He's also had 15 players sign pro since he took over, a good indication of the caliber of the players you can expect in the Sunday 2 p.m. games.

A native of Oakland, Tony, 45, played memorable basketball and baseball at Castlemont High.

After graduation he went to work for Key System as a cleaner, turning down a chance to play pro baseball with only slight regrets. He figures this way he's had his cake and eaten it, too.

He's tallied almost 28 years in transit, taking over as superintendent of maintenance in 1946. There was time out in World War II when he served as a staff sergeant in New Guinea, the Philippines and Australia.

Tony's played a lot of ball since school days and with or against some of the best of them, including Cookie Lavagetto, Bill Rigney and Joe DiMaggio.

He also shoots golf in the low '80's and holds a bowling average of 172. He's rightfully proud of the rest of the family at 30556 Treeview St., Hayward—his wife and four children, Ronnie, 13; twin daughters Marlene and Nancy, 12; and Lynn, 6.

Tony also tells an hilarious story, according to repute, about one of the kids putting a cat in the washing machine. Worth hearing, even if it isn't true.

DUGOUT VET—Tony Lucchesi (right) gives batting instruction to player Fred Haller.
New Drivers Welcome to District Lines

The welcome mat was out this month for 18 new bus operators, assigned as follows:

Division 2
P. B. Overton, 5124 Wall Ave., Richmond; R. M. Dickinson, 685 El Centro Rd., El Sobrante; L. H. Abrao, 700 18th St., Richmond; A. C. Wisniewski, 1911 San Benito Ave., Richmond; R. J. Sterling, 1419 Bissell Ave., Richmond.

Division 3
M. O. Huff, 1089 57th St., Oakland; C. W. Brown, 3844 La Colina Rd., El Sobrante.

Retraining Course Given to Operators

Operators throughout the district have been taking a retraining course under direction of G. G. Wadsworth, safety engineer, in a move to cut down on an increasing number of accidents.

The sharp increase in traffic and passenger accidents, boosted by new equipment and new routes, can seriously affect the success of district operations, according to a personal letter sent to all the drivers from Wadsworth.

The retraining course is being given to small groups of drivers, approximately 10 at a time, throughout the district. Along with covering the basic cause of accidents, the course includes a factual demonstration with a new coach to show how the equipment differs in safety measures from older buses.

The high number of accidents caused by riders unfamiliar with boarding new equipment has leveled off, Wadsworth said, but passenger accidents due to emergency stops and sideswipe accidents are still unusually high.

Division 4
B. R. James, 556 Colby St., San Lorenzo; T. A. Bodine, 1406 41st Ave., Oakland; B. J. Loden, 50 Church St., San Francisco; W. R. Grace, 1398 Santa Rosa St., San Leandro; W. H. Butler, 1161 16th St., Oakland; J. A. Carpenter, 247 Newton St., Hayward; R. G. Wilfong, 2469 63rd St., Oakland; O. J. Fuchs, 2026 89th Ave., Oakland; C. W. Greenwood, 307 Harris Rd., Hayward; D. L. Pruitt, P. O. Box 574, Hayward; V. W. Parker, 951 Lynn Court, San Lorenzo.

Express Signs Mark Stops For Public

Start of the East Bay's first express meant extra work in all departments and an extra sign posting job for workmen, but it was paying off this month as new riders discovered the speed of direct inter-city service.

Crewmen posted red and white express signs to mark passenger stops on the four routes. Timetables also were printed on the posters to acquaint the public with the fast service.

As customers learned about the express, patronage climbed, doubling between opening day and the next and gaining in like percentages since.

Two Retiring Veterans Honored at Luncheon

Two veterans of the maintenance department were given a special luncheon as the first members of the maintenance division to retire since AC Transit took over from Key System Transit Lines.

One was John Branco, 65, who in 36 years of service worked as a track walker and ferry boat apron tender before joining the utility service crew at Division 4.

Carrying on for the family is his son, John, who works in the general unit room at Division 2.

Retiring with Branco on May 1 is Steve Pryschuk, 70, who has been a painter at Division 2 during his 28 years of service.

J. B. Rice, maintenance manager for the district, was luncheon host. Other guests included E. A. Towers, general superintendent of automotive maintenance at Division 2, and A. R. Lucchesi, maintenance superintendent at Div. 4.

Emil Scala, maintenance department business agent and vice president of Carmen's Division 192, complimented the district for "the friendship expressed by the retirement luncheon."

EXPRESS STOPS - Maintenance workers F. S. Hodge (top) and D. S. Williams post signs for new express runs.
At an adjourned regular meeting March 22, 1961, the Board of Directors:

- Approved boundaries and fares for a new transit zone in Hayward south of Tennyson Rd., on motion of Director Coburn.
- Authorized members of board of directors and staff to attend regional meeting of American Transit Association, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Approved extensions to Lines 7—Arlington Ave., 75—Grizzly Peak and 77—Piedmont Pines, on motion of Director Coburn.
- Agreed to form and content of financial reports on district operation to be submitted periodically to board of directors, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Approved appointment of Cooperative Personnel Services of the California State Personnel Board to conduct job classification and salary range study, on motion of Director Deadrich.
- Declared as surplus 189 White buses and authorized the General Manager to negotiate for their sale, on motion of Director Barber.

* * *

At a regular meeting April 5, 1961, the Board of Directors:

- Opened two bids for the manufacture of new bus tokens and referred the proposals to the General Manager for review, by direction of President Bettencourt.
- Heard representatives of Montclair area on petition for district operation of school bus service. (Details, Page 1)
- Authorized the General Manager to commit funds up to $3,000 for items of capital outlay, on motion of Director Barber.

More Information

A note or phone call to the transit district—Olympic 3-3535—will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter.