What the Editors Are Saying About Transit

San Francisco Examiner

Subsidizing the Muni Railway

OPPONITION to higher Municipal Railway fares by the Downtown Association is based on sound evidence. We oppose higher fares too, for many of the same reasons.

The evidence has been developed by expert studies, here and elsewhere, of the effect of increased fares upon both traffic and transit patronage.

An increase from the present 15 cent fare to 20 cents would cost the Muni 10 million passengers a year. A 25 cent fare would cost an additional 10 million riders.

The 20 cent fare would theoretically dump 15,000 additional automobiles daily into San Francisco's already traffic-glutted downtown streets. We say "theoretically" because it would be a physical impossibility to get 18,000 more cars into the streets. Parking facilities, curb space and traffic lanes all are now utilized to maximum capacity. More traffic would substitute immobility for movement.

The problem goes deeper when it gets into the intangibles. Traffic congestion discourages shoppers. The volume of shoppers determines the vitality of downtown stores.

We think it would be unrealistic to try to make the Muni system support itself on fares. Mass transportation is in the same general area of necessities as police, fire and other public services. The subsidized public services are those essential to health, safety and the general welfare. Transit is indubitably one of these.

The picture in San Francisco may well change in the next few years, with coordination of the Muni system and Bay Area Rapid Transit. In the meantime, higher Muni fares would aggravate and multiply downtown traffic problems.

Passenger Shelters

Authorized by Board

Erection of three passenger shelters in San Leandro and Hayward has been authorized by district directors, in line with long-range plans to provide weather protection for East Bay riders and transbay commuters.

The board directed the general manager to proceed with the project of erecting open shelters at Davis and Douglas Sts. in San Leandro and at Fargo St. and Washington Ave. in Washington Manor.

A Hayward shelter also will be built, provided a suitable location agreeable to city officials is determined.

Preliminary discussions concerning the shelters already have been held. Specific plans now will be submitted formally to city representatives.

The shelters will cost a maximum of $350 each.

Season Fares Hit New All-time High

Holiday shoppers and clear, nippy weather helped the district to break another revenue record in December - the second month in a row passenger fares have topped previous totals.

Passenger revenue on East Bay and transbay lines on Dec. 6 hit $47,213, first time the district has climbed over the $47,000 mark in its three year history. Special bus service to the racing meet at Golden Gate Fields in Albany added to the "purse" for the day.

On November 1, the district broke its previous record when fare boxes took in $46,996.

'Candy Cane Express' Greets Residents As St. Nick Rides Again

Christmas packages came larger than ever this year—as large as an AC Transit bus, which was turned into a "Candy Cane Express" to add to East Bay yuletide festivities.

The bus, painted and decorated to resemble a Christmas gift, was made available to business centers for special activities. When it wasn't serving as Santa's sleigh on these assignments, it operated in regular service on major trunk lines in the East Bay, giving patrons a chance to enjoy a festive ride.

It was the first time in memory that a bus — or any other form of local transportation — was transformed into a Christmas decoration and the reaction of riders was surprise—and delight.

The district had to work almost as hard as the traditional St. Nicholas to turn the coach into a "wrapped gift" as a greeting to residents, after the AC Board of Directors approved the suggestion.

But it had one advantage—its own "St. Nick"—Nicholas P. Alevizos, superintendent of the Richmond division, who has been playing the part of Santa Claus every December for over 30 years.

"St. Nick," who was hardly out of his red and white suit and freshly curled whiskers during the month, added the "Candy Cane Express" to his other Santa Claus appearances, nearly earning as widely-traveled a reputation as the fellow from the North Pole.

To transform the bus into a rolling gift, the vehicle was first sprayed white at district shops. Then a red ribbon was painted over and around, "tied" with a cut-out bow. A "Holiday Greetings" card was painted next to the bow, and another "greetings" sign was painted on the rear of the bus. A St. Claus was painted on the front and instead of the usual destination sign, the bus carried a special label: "Candy Cane Express."

Inside, the coach was garlanded with greens, decorated with bows and ornaments. It also had a sign wishing "Merry Christmas to our patrons."

The transformation was handled by maintenance workers Robert Epperhart, Ernie Passarella, Molen Barnes, John Rutherford and Lorentz Fulop.
Passenger revenue held to an even keel in October, amounting to $1,126,530 for the month. This was an increase of .03 percent over the same month in 1962.

The number of passengers carried on local and transbay lines during the month totaled 4,834,888, a gain of .68 percent over October, 1962.

The transit industry nationally continued to operate in the red, with a 1.64 percent decrease tallied in preliminary October figures. Among the major transit properties, only the New York City Transit Authority reported a noticeable increase, with surface lines up 5.5 percent and rapid transit lines up 1.2 — a total increase of 2.4 percent. San Francisco Municipal Railway was up 1.8 percent over October a year ago.

Commute book sales for AC Transit continued on the upswing, totaling $185,807 for the month, a 2 percent increase over the same month in 1962.

Total income for October totaled $1,334,771 and was sufficient to cover operating expenses of $1,068,278, plus equipment renewal and bond debt service. Miles of scheduled service were 1,999,293, an increase of 316 miles over October, 1962.
Wage Increase Adds to Holiday Cheer

Automatic wage increases added holiday cheer to approximately 1400 AC Transit employees, boosting checks in December and January.

Some 950 bus operators and other union employees received their wage boost Dec. 1, under a contract negotiated a year ago. At that time their wages were raised from $2.69 to $2.81 an hour. This month's increase provided an additional 10 cents for a new hourly rate of $2.91.

A third 10 cent raise is scheduled for Dec. 1, 1964.

Other union employees got the same 10 cents per hour increase, except for mechanics, dispatchers and parts clerks, who received a 15 cent an hour hike. Class A mechanics now have an hourly wage of $3.47.

Some 175 supervisory personnel and office employees receive their automatic 3.56 percent wage increase Jan. 1.

New Workers Join Transit District

A special "hello" was in order this month as the following new employees joined AC Transit ranks:

**General Offices**

Claims: Spencer W. Strellis, 6621 Gunn Drive, Oakland, attorney.
Treasury: Donald Richard May, 2411 22nd St., San Pablo, vault clerk.

**Emeryville Division**

Transportation: Janice Ten Bosch, 4018 Allendale Ave., Oakland, junior typist clerk.


**Richmond Division**

B. D. Winters, 2279 Park St., Pinole; J. H. Helfin, 5114 Panama Ave., Richmond; L. E. McClellan, 1526 Liberty St., San Pablo.

**Driver Pensioned**

Michael Burns, 605 Cornell Ave., Albany, retires Jan. 1 after almost 35 years of service. He started as a streetcar operator in 1929, switching to buses in 1948.

**Seminary Division**

Maintenance: Roland J. Eckhardt, Jr., 376 Park St., San Leandro, and Lewis H. Smith, Jr., 521 Patterson Blvd., Pleasant Hill, service employees.

Bus Operators: W. J. Pedranti, 4433 Michael Ave., Fremont, G. P. Moore, 28426 Huntwood St., Hayward; C. D. Smith, 1425 94th Ave., Oakland; P. B. Pontrella, 870 Tennyson Rd., Hayward, and J. A. La Brensz, 29519 Dixon St., Hayward.

**Route Maps Posted on Buses to Aid Travel**

AC Transit's popular route map, colorful as well as informative, has been posted on all district buses, to help riders make the best use of their transportation system.

The recently up-dated map, which shows operations of East Bay, transbay and express buses, is being displayed on a card 56 inches long so it can easily be seen and read. It includes an invitation: "Let's see the East Bay" and information on where the free "guide for going places on AC Transit" can be obtained.

May I express appreciation for services rendered by two of your drivers (W. D. Norman and E. A. Ruckman) ... after my mother and I boarded the E bus for San Francisco ... I discovered I must have dropped my glasses in getting out of my car. We started to get off ... the driver gave us transfers and said to tell the next driver so we wouldn't have to pay another fare ... we were walking back and heard a toot and it was another bus ... the driver (Ruckman) had been told by Mr. Norman he would see us. He picked us up, I found my glasses ... then we waited for Mr. Ruckman to return ... these men are exceptional ... for taking such a personal interest in their riders.

Miss Elizabeth Winslow Berkeley

* * *

This week I took my first ride on one of your buses, riding the R bus from Hayward to San Francisco. It was a most enjoyable trip and the simplest way to get there that I have found. The driver (J. J. Ostle) was very friendly, courteous and very accommodating. Many who got on were pleased to greet him. I hear increasingly often many kind comments about the bus system ... I wanted to add my favorable vote too.

Mrs. C. E. Christensen Castro Valley

The enclosed petition has been signed by 112 passengers on the 91-A Line ... some are high school students ... some are adults ... the majority ... are students at California State College at Hayward ... we all have one thing in common, however, this is our love and admiration for (driver) GENE GRECC ... we realize some drivers have more seniority than Mr. Gregg and maybe we are being selfish by asking to keep the same driver, but we need him. He has greatly enriched our lives.

Doris Downey Hayward

* * *

You have one bus driver who is most kind to older ladies ... I'm one of them. He (G. M. Goodman) drives up to the side so it's easier to get on ... without a cranky look ...

Mrs. Joseph Graff Alameda

* * *

I had an occasion to ride on a bus driven by (P. D. Coleman) from San Francisco to Oakland with a very tight schedule to catch a plane from Oakland Airport. Once aware of my tight schedule, he did everything safely possible to see I made the proper connections to catch a second bus in time to reach the airport ...

Dan McKinnon San Diego

AC Transit is proud to reprint below a few of the many letters of commendation received during the month - letters unsolicited from residents of the East Bay who are owners of the transit system. Letters were selected at random to represent the quality of courtesy, service and safety demonstrated by AC personnel in their most important relationship with our customers.
At an adjourned meeting November 27, 1963, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to execute agreement with State for bus parking area at Transbay Transit Terminal, on motion of Vice President Coburn.
- Approved repainting bus in Christmas decor for holiday promotion, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Declared opposition to proposed increase in size of 21 x 88-inch "queen" advertising panels on exterior of buses, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

* * *

At the regular meeting December 11, 1963, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized construction of three passenger shelters at a maximum cost of $350 each, on motion of Director Warren.
- Retained Lybrand, Ross Bros. & Montgomery to perform audit for 1963-64 fiscal year, on motion of Director McDonnell.

Drivers Extend Own ‘Merry Christmas’

A special “Merry Christmas” was extended by bus operators to passengers again this year through greetings cards made available by the district.

The cards, printed in green on white paper, showed Santa Claus and his relaxed reindeer "hitching" a ride on the top of an AC Transit bus. The card extended “Season’s Greetings ... and a safe and happy holiday season to you ... your operator.”

Some 18,000 cards were given to the drivers so they could personally hand the greeting to passengers, especially those who have become familiar patrons.

District buses also carried a holiday message, but with a different flare. The illustrated posters, with a blue background and pink and green touches, invited residents to “Do your Christmas shopping by bus.”