Cable car to roll again in replica
Escalating expenses lead to raise in bus fares for some AC Transit riders

Escalating costs have caught up with the riding bargain long offered by the District, causing directors to reluctantly raise bus fares to meet expenses.

An "across the board" increase of five cents a ride on all adult transbay travel was approved by the Board of Directors after lengthy study. The change in fare structure will take effect July 1.

The rate for East Bay tokens also will be raised, to four for $1, instead of the present five for $.1. Ticket books for East Bay riding also will sell at the new rate. Both tokens and ticket books will continue to be sold as a convenience to riders wishing to have exact fare ready.

Some cash fares

The present local cash fare of 25 cents will not be changed. Youth fares also will remain the same. Zone charges will not be affected.

Transbay riders who purchase commute books will pay $1 more for a 20-ride book, but still will receive a discount below the cash fare. Commute book fares will represent 50 cents a ride for the central zone, while cash fare for the same zone will be 55 cents.

Twenty-ride books for other zones similarly will be increased $1.

The new fare structure was approved to help meet an estimated deficit of $1,111,780 projected for the 1969/70 fiscal year.

The action discontinued a long-established rate. A 20-cent fare has been available for bus riders in the East Bay for the past 16 years. The hike also is the first increase over 50 cents for cash-paying transbay passengers since 1953. During the same period of time, consumer prices nationwide have risen almost 40 percent.

Projected budget

Expenditures for the coming year are estimated at a record high of $21,862,680. The bulk of expenses, $16,611,900 or 76 percent, is attributed to labor costs. Included are added payroll hours due to a projected increase in mileage, the 20-cent increase in hourly wages given workers June 1 and provisions for cost of living raises July 1 of this year and January 1, 1970.

Changes in fare are expected to generate an additional $903,678. The remaining net deficit of $208,102 would be met from the District's surplus account, leaving available a net surplus of $410,000.

The fare increase still leaves AC Transit's rates among the lowest in the nation's major transit properties.

Cable car bus to join fleet

A cable car bus will be built by AC Transit to boost revenue—and to give residents a chance to enjoy the breezy, cherished transit of 80 years ago.

Authorization for preparation of specifications and advertisement for bids was approved by the Board of Directors after a canvass of potential users indicated high potentials for a replica of the East Bay's first "wire railroad."

The cable car bus will be patterned after the original car operated on Broadway and San Pablo Aves. by the Oakland Cable Railway Co. 1886-1899.

The unique vehicle will be available for charter operation and special activities, including short sightseeing tours. It is planned for use at conventions, some athletic events, as a shopper special, during political campaigns and for social activities.

Its bright colors, attractive design, historical authenticity and charm are expected to attract groups who will look upon the ride as part of the enjoyment and excitement of "getting there."

The replica, to be built at a cost estimated under $90,000, will carry 25 seated passengers and will have inside and outside seats—including one facing forward, in keeping with the original design.

Although original blueprints reportedly were destroyed by fire, the District is looking for early designs by the builder, Hammond Manufacturing Co., of San Francisco. The San Pablo Road was one of two cable car lines which operated in the East Bay before electric power.

Photographs of the car have been supplied by Louis L. Stein, Berkeley historian, while Roy E. Graves, author and historical collector, recalled the color scheme and details of decoration.

Support sought for public transit

The fare box, property taxpayers and Federal government no longer can pick up the whole tab for public transit systems.

Alan L. Bingham, general manager of the District, emphasized that point in speaking before the Oakland Chamber of Commerce transit committee, at an "all AC Transit" program.

"Finding ways to meet today's escalating costs and expenses is one of the gravest problems facing the transit industry," Bingham told business leaders.

"Transit properties across the country are faced with adjustments in fare structures to meet rising costs," the general manager said.

"The State legislature is being urged, he added, to provide a mass transit fund similar to that provided for highways. Such financial assistance should be on a continuing and on-going basis, available to all who operate transit," Bingham declared.

"Transit properties in the Bay area, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit System, have joined together in seeking State consideration of a balanced transportation system.

"The community could well put its strength behind these efforts," Bingham said.

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Heroic driver

AWARD—Driver Richard P. Pracht receives community service citation from General Manager Alan L. Bingham. At left is Dale Goodman, transportation superintendent at Emeryville Division.

Bus driver Richard P. Pracht, 48, operator at Emeryville Division, has become the first District employee to receive a new community service citation for preventing the assault of a school girl by a hooded assailant.

Pracht appeared before the Board of Directors at the May 28 meeting to accept the award from General Manager Alan L. Bingham. He was commended by directors and received a standing ovation, the first in District memory.

The driver was credited with alertness and bravery in aiding the girl, who had been thrown to the ground and held with a six-inch knife at her throat. The man ran off when Pracht backed up his bus to investigate. The driver had glimpsed the struggle from his empty bus after depositing youngsters at a school.

At the board meeting, he also received poignant thanks from the girl's father, who told directors:

"Thank God you have a man working for you who wanted to be involved. The man had a knife at my daughter's throat. If your driver hadn't stopped, her body might have been found that night and her murder would have been headlines on the front page. All I can say is thank you."

Pracht, who lives at 609 East 23rd St., Oakland, has been driving since Oct., 1962.

Green light for service improvements

Service improvements, approved by the Board of Directors, include:

• First direct transbay express service between San Francisco and University of California campus, starting Sept. 8.
• Inauguration of midday express service on Line 34C between Castro Valley/Oakland via MacArthur Freeway on Mon-

Operation "Bright Eyes"

All "new look" coaches will travel with headlights on during daylight hours as a safety test program. Richmond Division coaches already are rolling with "bright eyed" look; other new buses are being rewired to take part in operation.

days and Wednesdays, starting Aug. 11.
• Extension of Line 59-C-Broadway Terrace to new terminal on Skyline Blvd., starting June 9, to accommodate residents and students.
• Operation of Line T-Treasure Island buses to new terminal on 11th St., near-side of Broadway, Oakland, effective June 8.
• Extension of service on Line 93-San Lorenzo Village to San Lorenzo Park on Tuesdays only, for senior citizens.

The board also agreed to renew a special service contract with Sherwood Forest residents to carry students to classes in El Sobrante, pending outcome of annexation proceedings.

What the Editors are saying about transit

Tribune Editorial Page

It appears that inflation has finally caught up with one of the best bargains in the Eastbay community—AC Transit District bus fares.

Transit district directors are being urged by their budget committee to increase bus fares July 1 in order to meet an anticipated $1 million budget deficit.

The present local cash fare of 25 cents would not be changed nor would children's rates. But tokens would no longer sell for the discount rate of five for $1. They would be available at four for $1, or 25 cents each, the same as cash fares.

And transbay fares from the Eastbay to San Francisco would rise by five cents to 55 cents for individual trips and 50 cents for commuters.

At 20 cents a ride today, an AC Transit patron is paying the same basic fare in effect since 1953. Since then, of course, the district's essential costs—labor, equipment and maintenance—have skyrocketed. Nationwide, consumer prices are up almost 40 per cent over the 1953 level.

The only options—aside from fare increases—available to the district are either increased property taxes or reduced services.

Inflation has already taken its well known toll on the property taxpayer. And, the taxpayer who also prefers private to public transportation has regularly felt the effects of inflation elsewhere—in higher automobile purchase prices, registration fees, maintenance costs and parking charges.

He could rightfully protest that no further subsidy of AC Transit costs should be asked until a realistic fare increase is shouldered by bus riders.

It is generally agreed that the present level of AC Transit service is no more than just adequate. Most regular bus patrons would quite likely prefer the proposed fare increase to any shift to a less-than-adequate level of service.

Unhappy as any cost increase is, it seems AC Transit Directors have little choice but to at long last raise bus fares.

Unlimited horizons for bus transit

A bus rapid transit system, using conventional coaches traveling in exclusive bus lanes, could handle 27,000 seated passengers an hour, according to engineers from General Motors Research Laboratories.

The high volume system, as described by Jerold W. Scheel, senior research engineer, would result in 530 buses traveling in one lane in one hour.

Other future transit possibilities, outlined for the Board of Directors by William M. Spreitzer, head of transportation research, included "Dial-a-Bus," aerial capsules traveling on a guideway and a high speed pallet system, for all types of vehicles.

Spreitzer also described automated dual mode bus systems, in which a coach would serve as a conventional bus in neighborhoods, then take to automated guideways to travel at high speed to destinations.
Buses offer "magic carpet" tour

Residents, as well as visitors, were getting a "magic carpet" introduction to the charm and atmosphere on the east side of San Francisco Bay this month as AC Transit began its summer sightseeing tours.

The tour leaves Jack London Square in Oakland daily, except Mondays, at 1 p.m. and will operate through Sept. 1.

The schedule includes a photo-taking stop at Sather Gate in Berkeley, as well as a walk around the roof gardens at the Mormon Temple.

A shoreline drive from Berkeley Marina to Oakland has been added, to give visitors a sweeping view of the three bay bridges, Alcatraz, Angel Island and the skyline of San Francisco.

The routing includes sites in Oakland, Alameda, Piedmont and Berkeley—ranging from homes and gardens to hilltop churches, the Coliseum complex, Mills College and rapid transit district con-

TOUR PREVIEW – Oak Knoll Hospital patients receive welcome as tour guests.

Wages go up for District workers

Fatter paychecks were taken home by 1,485 employees on June 1, as wages went up for all District workers.

The pay hike for 1,057 bus drivers increased 20 cents an hour, placing them among the highest paid operators in the nation.

With a new base wage of $3.91 per hour, plus a nine cent cost of living benefit, operators were taking home $4 per hour. The basic wage is exceeded only by transit properties in New York, San Francisco and Chicago.

Other union employees also received the 20-cents per hour hike. Hourly wage for Class A mechanics advanced from $4.49 to $4.69 an hour, including cost of living allowance.

Non-union employees, who were also extended the same benefits by the district's board of directors, received an equivalent increase of 5.99 percent.

It is estimated the increase in wages to district employees will total $728,468 during the next fiscal year.

A new cost of living allowance will be made on the first pay day after July 1 and a third adjustment is due with the first day pay after January 1, 1970.

Workers shared a $1 per employee increase in District paid medical plan coverage earlier in the year, boosting the District’s payment per worker to $18 a month.

In addition, some 850 bus drivers, with two or more years of service, became eligible on the first of the month for replacement of uniform shirts.

Revenue, riding show gain in April

Business activity was brisk during April, with passenger revenue and the number of riders carried showing an increase on East Bay and transbay lines. Fare box revenue totaled $1,285,347, up $61,580 or 5.03 percent over April, 1968. Revenue on East Bay lines totaled $713,637, up 3.19 percent over year ago income of $691,574. On transbay lines, revenue totaled $573,210, an increase of 7.49 percent compared to the same month in 1968.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 3,669,912, up 22.6 percent over the tally of 4,517,709 made in April, a year ago. East Bay riding showed an increase of 14.4 percent while transbay riding continued to grow, with a boost of 44.1 percent.

Commute book sales for April totaled $233,264, an increase of 13.9 percent over year-ago sales of $204,637.

Operation costs during the month totaled $1,523,373, up $96,153 or 6.74 percent greater than year-ago expenses of $1,427,220. The District operated 2,084,884 miles of service, an increase of $45,905 miles or 2.25 percent more than mileage of 2,038,979 operated in April, 1968.

Total income of $1,773,022 was sufficient to cover operation costs, depreciation and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of 0.20 percent.
At an adjourned regular meeting May 28, the Board of Directors:
- Authorized advertising for bids to furnish 160 mobile radios and related equipment, on motion of Director Coburn.
- Approved advertising budget for 1969/70 fiscal year, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Approved service changes and renewal of Sherwood Forest school bus contract for 1969/70, on motion of Director Bettencourt. (See story, Pg. 4)
- Approved financing of new buses and accounting procedures in connection with surplus equipment, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted resolution authorizing execution of agreement with Bank of America relating to purchase of new coaches, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Established salary of General Manager at $24,000 per year, effective June 1, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized advertising for bidders to furnish a cable car bus, on motion of Director Bettencourt. (See story, Pg. 3)
- Adopted resolution authorizing execution of agreement with Bank of America relating to purchase of new coaches, on motion of Director McDonnell.

At an adjourned regular meeting June 16, the Board of Directors:
- Adopted recommendations of Finance Committee, approving operating estimate for 1969/70 fiscal year and increasing adult fares, on motion of Director Rinehart. (See story, Pg. 2)

C. M. Baca, 56, took off on vacation this month after a traditional coffee and cake retirement party at Seminary Division. A mechanic "A", Baca had worked at Seminary since 1947.

Before leaving on a trip, Baca received his 20-year retirement pin from Glenn Ashmore, maintenance superintendent. He plans to travel through Colorado, Wyoming, Texas and New Mexico before returning home to 1306 Seminary Ave., Oakland.

Fellow workers presented him with binoculars as a "happy journey" present.