Fast airport transit link study underway
Service to airport under study

AC Transit has agreed to participate with other agencies in a study on how to build a fast, sophisticated transit link to Oakland International Airport. The study will include service between the airport, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system, Coliseum complex and adjacent Port of Oakland facilities.

It also will cover transit to the airport from other East Bay areas which will not be served effectively by a BART-airport link.

System type

The feasibility study will include type of system, its funding and who would operate the service.

A management task force from the agencies has recommended a $290,000, two-part program to develop the service plan—considered one of the most important projects in East Bay transit. The government would be asked for a federal grant covering two-thirds of the cost, with the rest to be made up by agencies involved.

First part of the study would concentrate on system type, how to pay for it and method of implementation. The second phase would consist of preliminary engineering for the proposed system.

Research has indicated Oakland Airport will be the major regional airport by 1980 and fast public transit will put it at the doorstep of much of the Bay Area, including San Francisco.

Alan L. Bingham, general manager, told board members he believed a spur to BART would be a logical answer to directly and most effectively serve the airport and the large numbers of air travelers it can expect to attract.

Highly efficient methods of handling baggage should be devised, he said, so passengers can board a plane in New York and travel speedily to downtown Oakland or San Francisco, with only one local change—from plane to BART. Luggage should be waiting when the passenger arrives at the final BART station.

Agencies involved in the proposed study include AC Transit, BART, Coliseum, Inc., City of Oakland, County of Alameda and Port of Oakland.

Wages go up with new Cost of living benefits

Wages for 1380 bus drivers and other union employees went up seven cents an hour July 6, as a result of the District's second cost of living adjustment.

Non-union workers received an equivalent boost of 1.79 percent.

The new allowance is expected to total $250,626 for the next fiscal year.

With the adjustment, 1048 bus drivers, now making $4 an hour, moved to a wage of $4.07. Class A mechanics, with the new benefit, have a wage of $4.76 per hour.

Another cost of living benefit is scheduled for the first payroll period after January 1, 1970.

Wages and fringe benefits to bus drivers, including the new allowance, cost the District an average $6.42 per hour, according to Alan L. Bingham, general manager.

During the past two years of continuing escalation in family expenses, he added, comparison indicates that AC Transit wages have kept ahead of cost of living increases, resulting in a net increase in real take-home dollars.

Involvement

THE COVER—Sunderland Aerial Photograph shows landscape for significant planning—a high-speed transit system to link BART rails in foreground to nearby Coliseum complex, Port of Oakland industrial developments, motel and hotel facilities and Oakland International Airport in background.

The bus driver not only is the traveler's friend. The two-way radio system has made him the eyes, ears, and voice of a protection service for citizens.

The District has found that while others may hesitate about involvement in community problems, drivers voluntarily are playing an alert, courageous role in protecting residents.

In Oakland, operators twice have prevented assaults. In San Leandro a radio report alerted police to juveniles taking money from a purse.

In Hayward there was a report of a possible fire. In Berkeley, a call prevented a burglary. In Alameda, a report from a driver stopped a fight.

Sometimes, involvement comes in pairs.

Actions of E. B. Westcott, 37, Emeryville Division driver, saved a woman from possible assault one night and resulted in the arrest of a man wanted by police in two cities. On the following night, he protected his passengers from possible shooting and turned youths involved over to authorities.

Westcott had stopped his bus in East Oakland to let off a passenger when he spotted a man inside a laundromat, holding a woman around the neck. The woman screamed as the man started dragging her toward the door.

As Westcott radioed the District's central dispatching headquarters to notify police, the man saw him and released the victim.

Westcott was able to report the route of escape and later, radioed in the assailant's license number. The suspect, wanted for questioning in the rape of a blind girl in San Francisco, was captured a few blocks away.

In the same area, on the following night, a group of youths jumped on Westcott's bus after grabbing items in a liquor store and slapping the owner's wife. The owner, following with a gun, warned Westcott not to move the bus or he would shoot.

The driver directed passengers to "hit the floor," then blocked the man's entrance at the doorway. Police, alerted by central dispatch, grabbed the youths and disarmed the owner.

Few communities have escaped an incident, according to Alan L. Bingham, general manager.

Another operator, E. L. Luttrell, 31, has been commended for thwarting the burglary of a pharmacy in Berkeley. He observed the robbers and put in a call, which brought police to the scene. Four men were apprehended.

Fight stopped

In Alameda, operator Samuel D. Totten reported a youth with a pipe about to hit a service station employee. His report brought authorities, who found it an argument—and stopped it in time.

Reports, logged daily at central dispatch, prove people frequently become ill—but help is no further away than a call. Children get lost—and often are found by bus drivers.

"While others hesitate about involvement in community problems, bus operators voluntarily are protecting fellow citizens. There's no apathy when it comes to involvement," Bingham pointed out.
Commuter knits away for 70,000 miles

It's 600 miles to a sweater — and the size doesn't matter.

That's one of the figures revealed by Mrs. Fred Culmer, 3107 Birmingham Dr., Richmond.

Some people read; some people look; Mrs. Culmer knits and purls. Seven years of commuting on transbay Line L buses has resulted in over 25 outfits.

Mrs. Culmer figures her needles have clicked away for 70,000 miles while fellow passengers — men in particular — keep track of her progress.

She estimates she gets 800 miles to a dress, 1,000 miles to a coat and 400 to a shell. Mrs. Culmer considers herself a "resident tourist" and knitting doesn't keep her from enjoying bus-eyed views every day.

Mrs. Culmer began her knitting after she saw an expensive mohair coat in a Berkeley store and couldn't afford to buy it. She decided to knit her own and did.

A fellow rider watched for a while and finally asked Mrs. Culmer to teach her to knit.

Mrs. Culmer complied, so there's now another passenger clicking away on her own wardrobe.

There's no problem what to wear when Mrs. Culmer travels with her husband, west Contra Costa YMCA aquatic instructor. She mixes and matches a variety of skirts, shells and coats, "squishes" them in a suitcase and is ready to go — no worry about wrinkles.

Senior citizens ask lower fares

Investigation into lower fares for senior citizens continued this month, pending determination of impact of such action on system revenue.

More than 125 senior citizens, who appeared at a committee meeting of the board of directors, were told by Alan L. Bingham, general manager, he hoped there is "economical feasibility for a reduced fare program."

"We all recognize it is essential to encourage use of public transit and make it as economic and convenient as possible," Bingham said.

"We hope to recommend reduced fares, but we have to feel confident in the economic results."

Senior citizens have claimed if fares are cut in half, added riding would increase revenue rather than reduce it.

"Data so far is not conclusive that revenue would remain the same because of twice as much riding," Bingham added.

"A current Chicago Transit Authority study, supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, will be our best source of information to date."

"This report, expected early next year, will give AC Transit some guidelines as to the effects of special reduced fares on riding and revenue," Bingham said.

William J. Bettencourt, chairman of board's project development committee, told the assemblage determination also would have to be made as to what other avenues are available to make up any losses that could occur.

Dan Helix, field representative for State Senator Nicholas C. Petris, D-Oakland, asked that fares be reduced for a year during non-peak hours as a test.

Mrs. Isabel Van Frank, chairman of the East Bay Council of Senior Citizens Groups, in asking for a 10 cent fare, said she thought experiences in other cities had no relation to what would happen here.

"We can offer no guarantee," she said, "but you could try it out for a year. It's important for the elderly to get out, even if the operation causes a deficit."

District awarded computer grant

AC Transit has been awarded a federal grant of $180,242 by the Department of Transportation to participate in a computer project aimed at upgrading the nation's transit industry data processing capabilities.

The District is one of two properties selected by DOT to test the merits of a new computerized total management system.

The project would demonstrate the use of the latest in electronic equipment and computer programming to collect, analyze and report information relating to the maintenance and servicing of buses and the management and control of inventories in the purchasing and storage of parts and equipment.

The District's present computer operations include payroll and general ledger accounts, claims records, and equipment depreciation and mileage data.
Sightseeing in style
District tour makes fashionable news

The District's sightseeing tour became a "stylish adventure" just before start of the summer activity when it was featured in the fashion section of the Oakland Tribune.

The tour bus received full front page attention, forming the background for a "typical young family," reading a leaflet on the sightseeing jaunt.

A story proclaimed it was "stylish to tour the towns" and carried assurance the tour "has not one dull mile."

Operator Dean Mann drove the models to different sites to take photos for "typical young family," reading a leaflet on the sightseeing jaunt.

Walter Oeding off to greener pastures

"Ask Walter" no longer will be a familiar phrase on the District property.

Walter J. Oeding, after 37 years in transportation and 20 years as an executive secretary to presidents and general managers, is retiring.

He's purchased a home near Cloverdale and expects to enjoy busy freedom, away from turning wheels.

Oeding, 59, has logged time and experience in a variety of posts.

Presently executive secretary to Alan L. Bingham, general manager of AC Transit, he served in the same capacity to the late J. R. Worthington, the district's first management head.

He also was secretary to Glen L. Stanley, Edwin C. Houghton and Jesse Haugh, presidents of Key System Transit Lines, and to William P. St. Sure, general manager of the Key System.

Oeding is the son of the late Frank J. Oeding, who worked 37 years for Key System before his death in 1944.

"The depression was snapping at my heels and when I was offered a job as information clerk in December, 1931, I took it," Walter recalls. He later was put in charge of information and PEX, where he met his wife, Ruth. Over the years, Walter also has worked in the public relations, operating, treasury and executive departments.

He's a Civil War buff, a tinkerer at electronics and among other projects, plans to photograph the old stagecoach road from Mendocino to Lake counties.

Walter will take off on vacation this month, before retiring officially Sept. 1.

The maintenance department earned another "first in efficiency," by rigging a canvas-curtained dressing room in the bus, so models could change clothes while traveling.

The tour is operated in cooperation with the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

Employees and retired workers have been invited to use their pass book tickets to take the tour on days when seats are available.

The tour continues through Labor Day.

Passenger revenue shows gain in May

Fare box revenue showed an increase during May, boosted by continuing growth in transbay riding. Total number of passengers carried declined slightly in the month, although transbay travel held its own.

Passenger revenue for the month totaled $1,284,485, an increase of $22,221 or 1.20 percent over revenue of $1,262,264 for May, 1968. Revenue on East Bay lines totaled $715,593, down 1.11 percent compared to year-ago revenue of $716,346. Transbay revenue totaled $568,892, an increase of 4.21 percent over the May, 1968 total of $545,918.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 4,657,483, down 1.20 percent compared to the tally of 4,714,020 made in the same month, a year ago. East Bay riding was down 2.01 percent, while transbay riding was up .97 percent.

Commute book sales for May totaled $218,543, an increase of 8.4 percent over year-ago sales of $201,663.

Operation costs during the month totaled $1,579,723, up $47,431 or 6.57 percent over year-ago expenses of $1,532,292. The District operated 2,103,686 miles of service, an increase of 4,152 miles or .20 percent more than mileage of 2,099,534 operated in May, 1968.

Total income of $1,798,422 was sufficient to cover operation costs, depreciation and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of 2.19 percent.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting June 25, the Board of Directors:

- Adopted resolution authorizing the filing of a grant application with U.S. Dept. of Transportation for funds to further computerize District’s data gathering and processing procedures, on motion of Director Rinehart. (See story, Pg. 5)
- Approved recommendations of Project Development Committee relating to a plan of study for the development of transit service to Oakland Airport, on motion of Director Bettencourt. (See story, Pg. 2)
- Authorized execution of joint exercise of powers agreement with participating agencies in airport transit study, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

IN MEMORIAM

Elmer P. Hersey, 59, popular operator on Line 87-Maxwell Park, died suddenly June 24 at the end of one of his runs. He had worked out of Seminary Division since 1948 and made his home at 2220 109th Ave. An early Key System motorman, Hersey started work in 1937.

Stewart H. Lloyd, 71, of 5160 Claremont Ave., Oakland, who entered service in 1924 at Western Division and transferred to Emeryville in 1947, died May 25. He retired in 1962.

Frank M. Ramos, 96, of 18616 Crane Ave., Castro Valley, pensioned Aug. 1, 1948, as a rail operator, died May 26. He started in 1908.

John F. Green, 57, of 1225 81st Ave., Oakland, died May 19, six months after he retired from the maintenance department. He entered service in Sept., 1945.

Robert A. Wilson, 83, of Felton, who worked as a rail operator from 1925 until retiring Nov. 1, 1948, died April 19. He worked at Central.

Carl M. Nielsen, 82, of 2016-38th Ave., Oakland, pensioned as a rail operator, died May 9. He started at Central Division in January, 1916.

District road-call record improves during month

District maintenance men celebrated a new high for miles per road-call repair service on equipment during the month of June. The new record is 17,414 miles per road-call, an increase of 2,116 miles over the previous high.

Emeryville Division, with the best individual record, won coffee and doughnut treat.