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Transit-Times

Bottleneck swallows commuters
75 percent of commuters arrive late

People may be used to the morning traffic jam at the Bay bridge toll plaza, but AC Transit would like to do something about it.

Because of the tie-up, 75 percent of District buses are running late during peak morning commute hours, Alan L. Bingham, general manager, told the Board of Directors this month.

During the height of the commute, between 7 and 8 a.m., 86 percent of buses are late, he added.

Riding continues despite fare increase

East Bay bus passengers have upset a historic transit tradition.

Despite an increase in fares, AC Transit riding held almost constant, reversing the customary downward plunge in patronage after a fare hike.

People have kept on riding, with transbay lines even showing a slight gain, according to Alan L. Bingham, general manager. East Bay lines nearly held their own, with a patronage decrease of less than one half of one percent.

The District raised adult fares five cents across-the-board on transbay lines last July 1 to meet escalating costs. The rate for East Bay tokens also was raised from five for a $1 to four for $1, ending a 20-cent riding bargain enjoyed for 16 years.

A total of 25,774,572 passengers rode AC Transit buses during the past six months—only 42,900 less than the number of riders in the same period a year ago. The District actually had projected a passenger loss of 271,000 riders, Bingham said.

Farebox revenue was 9.2 percent higher than revenue of $7,153,550 collected in the same period in 1968, as result of the fare hike.

Transit experience has shown a substantial riding loss can be expected when fares are raised. Continuing service improvements, including more freeway commute operation, may have helped to reverse the historic pattern, Bingham observed.

The survey showed 17,551 other vehicles on the bridge during the two-hour period. Buses represented two percent of the traffic, but carried nearly 50 percent of commuters, Bingham observed.

HOW BIG IS A BUS?—Blind children get a concept of size as they feel front of a bus under direction of instructor Stan Hodge.

Bus class teaches mobility skills

A great treat is a chance to feel the engine in the rear of the coach—and to start the motor themselves.

The sequence of bus travel skills, starting with concept building and concluding with a solo run, are illustrated in a film made by the county school department for use in teacher training and parental understanding.

The film already has been shown around the United States and in Australia and is due for more traveling—further, even, than the AC Transit bus which played a starring role.
Our 'Stockholders' Write

We...recommend that G. L. Jacobs be commended for his excellence in driving. He is dependable and courteous, and exercises alertness and caution. Mr. Jacobs excels in his ability to maneuver a vehicle well in heavy traffic and in meeting his schedules. His excellent control and handling of a bus affords smooth, comfortable, and relaxing commutes from Oakland to Treasure Island.

Signed by 22 passengers

I wish to recommend and compliment driver H. G. Gross who was careful to drive close to curb to let me off, ... I use a cane—have a broken back and broken hip. Am 80 years old... Some drivers stop in middle of street and when unnecessary, I was driving in 1966 and understood some of their trials.

Hazel P. Anderson
Berkeley

It is delightful for me to take the opportunity to tell you your bus driver (L. E. Kinney) has been most helpful. He was driving an F bus to San Francisco from Berkeley when he stopped half way on the street for me when I saw him running after it. Such cooperation I wish you to know is well appreciated and I do not want it to go unnoticed...

Robert Liu
Berkeley

...called your Transit Information. I don't speak good English... but a woman answered and gave the most minute advice to what bus to take at what time and the price of the fare... Each of the drivers have been most courteous and called my stop... I had looked upon going as a terrible ordeal... It has turned into a trip of pleasure.

Mrs. Ellen Battan
Richmond

I waited for the bus to arrive. The bus was behind a camper and after crossing Garvin, speeded up to pass the camper... I knew I was stuck. The driver was not looking at the Burdick Ave. stop and could not have seen it if he had. I waved frantically, but it continued on... he was not late and there was... no need for this haste...

Elsie L. Waloff
Richmond

(We are sorry our operator passed you up. He has been cautioned and re-instructed to be more observing and to operate in proper traffic lane to make necessary stops.—Ed.)

I left an envelope of important papers on a No. 31 bus... When I called your office about them I was connected with Mr. Bill Pete in your yard at Richmond. Within 15 minutes Mr. Pete had located the papers for me. Please pass along my thanks to him.

William Doyle
Financial Editor
Oakland Tribune

More buses needed for rider growth

AC Transit plans to buy another 30 new buses to accommodate the growing number of passengers switching from cars to public transportation.

To attract more riders—and keep the ones who already find public transit convenient and economical—the District board of directors approved advertising for bids for additional large, 102-inch wide buses.

Fifteen of the buses would be delivered early this fall, with an option for another 15 early in 1971, to accommodate growth in transit riding before the Bay Area Rapid Transit District commences operation.

Total cost of the 51-passenger buses, including two-way dispatching radios, is estimated at $1,100,000. Extra options are planned, including an experimental smog kit, special equipment to quiet engine noise, route destination signs for the rear of the coach and an automatically controlled ventilation system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation will be asked to help with the financing.

Acquisition of additional equipment will permit assignment of 25 new coaches to keep pace with growth on existing lines, Alan L. Bingham, general manager, told the board. Five buses would be delegated for new service.

Fleet requirements

Of the 700 buses currently in the fleet, 628 are required during peak hours, leaving only 72 as spares and for maintenance, Bingham said.

With new equipment, five older buses would be retired for use for parts, bringing the fleet to 725. Bingham estimated by Aug. 30, 1971, when BART is supposed to begin operation, the AC Transit's peak hour needs will have grown to 637 buses, leaving 68 coaches as spares.

Transit veterans taken by death

Death has come to a number of veterans, who contributed to development of transportation during the era from trains and street cars to modern buses.

The oldest, Julius Briner, 79, of 1660 84th Ave., Oakland, entered service on June 10, 1913, and was pensioned April 1, 1946, as a rail operator. He died Nov. 3, 1969.

Another old-timer, Howard L. Leek, 83, of 341 Sybil Ave., San Leandro, entered service Nov. 8, 1911, as an invoice clerk. He later worked as chief clerk, assistant storekeeper and storekeeper, before he was pensioned from Purchases and Stores May 1, 1954. He died Jan. 20, 1960.

Albert Richardson, 75, of 724 Masonic Ave., Albany, had spent 36 years in transportation when he was pensioned Aug. 1, 1962, as a transportation supervisor. Richardson, who died Dec. 24, 1969, commenced work at Western in 1926, transferred to supervisor in 1942 and was superintendent at Division 5 in 1947. He returned to supervisor in 1948.

Edgar Klipel, 65, of 2156 41st Ave., Oakland, pensioned June 1, 1960, from the automotive department as a service employee A, died Oct. 16, 1969. He entered service March 1, 1923.


William Green, 69, of Junction City, Ore., a bus driver at Emeryville Division when he retired Aug. 1, 1964, died Nov. 1, 1969. He started work on the street cars in 1944.

Transit of the past

FANCY TROLLEYS — Center entrance street cars were pride of the 1920's. Car above was photographed at end of the line, Piedmont and Crocker Aves., in Piedmont. The Line D car rolls through Berkeley's Cragmont area at a time when 50-foot lots sold for "$95 up."

What a great idea it must have seemed to kids of 50 years ago. Gum machines on the center posts of street car windows, to provide a chewing good time!

Railfans and old-timers share fond memories of the 700 class, center entrance street cars, which clanked so valiantly up East Bay hills.

The cars were built in 1917, according to Vernon Sappers, Oakland rail historian, and featured mahogany paneling — as well as the gum machines. Somehow, the gum failed to survive as a transportation attraction.

The cars, designed for steep grades, operated on Line A-Piedmont, Line B-Oakland Ave. and Line E-Park Blvd.-Lakeshore Ave. until 1929, when they were transferred to the D line in North Berkeley and No. 4 Shattuck Ave. line.

Less than a year later, they went to the shop for rebuilding into one-man cars. They remained in service until 1948, when the last street cars rolled into the car barn, supplanting by buses. In the meantime, they fulfilled the purpose of much of early transit—turning real estate developments into prosperous ventures.

And gum chewers into riders.

Business on upswing during December

Business activity was brisk during December, with passenger revenue and the number of riders carried showing an increase for the month, compared to December a year ago.

Passenger revenue totaled $1,327,969, an increase of $183,091 or 15.99 percent over year-ago revenue of $1,144,878. On East Bay lines, revenue totaled $747,861, up 14.13 percent over fare box revenue of $655,268, collected in December, 1968. Transbay revenue was $580,108, up 18.48 percent over year-ago revenue of $489,610.

Commute book sales totaled $245,757, an increase of 25.8 percent over sales of $195,395 for the same month in 1968.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 4,342,485, up 4.09 percent over the year-ago count of 4,171,728. On East Bay lines the riding total was 3,146,854, an increase of 3.58 percent compared to the total of 3,038,089 for December, 1968. Transbay riders totaled 1,195,631, up 5.47 percent over the tally of 1,133,639 for December a year ago.

Operation costs during the month came to $1,590,080, an increase of $135,499 or 9.32 percent over year-ago costs of $1,454,581. The District operated 2,096,856 miles of service, an increase of 86,734 miles or 4.31 percent above mileage of 2,010,122 for the same month in 1968.

Total revenue of $1,855,561 was sufficient to cover operational costs, depreciation and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding increase for the month of 1.29 percent.
Actions of the Board

At a regular meeting Feb. 11, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized increasing security insurance coverage to $50,000, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Appointed Touche, Ross & Co. as auditors for 1969-70 fiscal year, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized General Manager to develop specifications and advertise for bids for 15 new large buses, with option to purchase an additional 15 for later delivery, on motion of Director Rinehart. (See story, Pg. 5).
- Approved route changes, extensions, and increase in special service fares, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Rejected bids for furnishing equipment for computerized data system and authorized General Manager to prepare new specifications and advertise for bids, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

Service improvements Scheduled for March

Outpatients and employees at Oakland Naval Hospital will have “doorstep” bus service starting Sunday, March 1, with extension of Line 56-Mountain Blvd. to the new hospital facility.

Other service improvements include:
- Reversal of terminal loop of transbay Line F at Solano and San Pablo Aves., Albany, to eliminate hazardous turn.
- Extension of transbay Line T further into housing area at Treasure Island.
- Consolidation of El Sobrante Line 69-A with Line 69-B for four block area on Rollingwood Dr., between Fordham and El Portal Drs.

Toll Plaza delay

(Continued from Page 2)

cent of the people making the crossing. The District already has scheduled earlier buses for commuters to assure their getting to work on time, Bingham said. But earlier operations not only is an inconvenience for the rider, it adds to District operating costs, he pointed out.

“The situation is becoming almost intolerable as complaints from commuters increase,” Bingham reported.

“Bridge officials are very sympathetic to the problem and are attempting to find a solution,” he added.