Bridge tolls reduced; exclusive lane sought to encourage transit riding

With a cost-saving toll reduction assured, AC Transit pressed for additional aid for Bay bridge commuters this month—a by-pass around the toll plaza.

Tolls for commuter buses on the bridge will be reduced to 65 cents per round trip starting April 1, saving AC Transit an estimated $91,000 a year. The District now pays $1 for a round trip crossing.

The California Toll Bridge Authority approved the reduction after hearing from State Senator Lewis F. Sherman, D-Berkeley, and E. R. “Mike” Foley, chief engineer, of Division of Bay Toll Crossings.

Sherman also asked that the District be charged on an honor system so buses would not have to stop at the toll plaza.

It then would be possible to change the bus route to avoid toll booths, saving traveling time and encouraging car drivers to switch to the bus, the legislator said.

“This minor adjustment in procedure would have a tremendous psychological effect on motorists as they see buses moving freely through the toll area,” Sherman pointed out.

Sherman said he also will push for an exclusive lane on the Bay bridge as a means of accelerating traffic and as a further incentive for commuters to make use of public transportation.

Foley told the bridge authority he and the transit district are trying to work out an exclusive lane through the toll gate area and discussions currently are underway. AC Transit also is making an effort to procure a federal grant to aid in financing the bypass.

The authority accepted Foley's recommendation for the toll reduction and deferred the matter of the exclusive toll gate until plans are further along. Foley estimated the reduction would total $110,000, with Greyhound saving $19,000 and AC Transit, the rest.

R. E. Nisbet, AC Transit attorney, told commission members the reduction would be an aid in holding the line on fares and property taxes.

"Brighten Your Day—Go AC Transit"

It's Spring—and a time to discover it's a wonderful world, to be easily explored by planned bus excursions.

An invitation to "Brighten Your Day—Go AC Transit"—will be featured by the District in a new publicity and advertising campaign beginning in April. It will encourage residents to use the bus for sightseeing and "going places", while a professional driver takes care of problems like parking and traffic.

A psychedelic flow-er in glowing fluorescent paint will highlight the invitation on billboards, car cards and king-sized posters on the outside of buses. Newspaper ads and commercials on radio and TV will carry the same message.

A new brochure, combining the conventional route map and the District's guide book to adventure, "Sunshine Trails", plus new ideas for exploring, will be issued. Another inexpensive edition of the route map will roll off the presses in the meantime, for distribution to hotels, conventions and information centers with need for bus riding data.

The "Brighten Your Day" campaign has been planned to boost midday riding and encourage residents to get out and go places—with fun and relaxation.

Bus driver's son drives off thugs

A bus driver, who has tried to teach his son "what's right", found out how well he had succeeded when Charles Rosas III, 14, was honored as an "outstanding citizen" by the East Bay Press Club.

Young Rosas, an Oakland Tribune newspaper boy, was honored for attacking and driving off two armed robbers who had knocked down and were beating a woman waiting for a bus at Foothill Blvd. and Harrington Ave., Oakland.

The youth ran to his home, got a wrench, came back and jumped on the suspects as one was beating her and the other was holding a gun at her head. The armed youth hit Rosas in the head with the gun before the pair ran off with the newsboy in pursuit. They escaped in a car.

The boy's father, Charles Rosas Jr., drives on the 80 lines out of Seminary Division. The family home is at 1925 Harrington Ave.
Transit official checks study site

The U.S. Department of Transportation has given financial go-ahead to development of a high-speed regional transit system to link Oakland International Airport and Bay Area Rapid Transit District rails three and a half miles away.

Approval of a $60,000 technical study grant to finance two-thirds of the airport access project was announced during the Bay area visit of a top government figure, Carlos C. Villarreal, dynamic administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

Villarreal was in Oakland to discuss the study and other transit programs, including feeder service in outlying suburban areas.

He met with AC Transit directors and management, was honored at a luncheon jointly hosted by the District and the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, then was taken on a tour of the BART-Coliseum Complex-Oakland Airport region.

Villarreal also demonstrated he could guide a bus, as well as direct wheels of government.

The transit official briefly drove the newly-carpeted Freeway Train as he and his staff rode the articulated bus in regular service from San Francisco to East Bay meetings.

During his visit, Villarreal termed the airport access study an important opportunity to hook up a major airport with a 75-mile regional rapid transit network, adding to growth potentials of the entire area.

With federal help assured, the Board of Control of Oakland Airport Access Task Force has proceeded with awarding a contract to Kaiser Engineers, chosen as engineering consultants.

Joining to contribute $30,000 toward the $90,000 study are AC Transit, BART, Coliseum, Inc., City of Oakland, County of Alameda and Port of Oakland.

First phase of study will recommend a potential system, how to pay for it, method of operating and interim program and additional transit needs.

Passengers guide bus to safety

Two bus passengers have received special thanks from AC Transit Board of Directors for taking over control of a bus on the Bay bridge after the driver collapsed over the wheel.

Mrs. Mary "Jackie" Marshall, 3010 Lincoln Ave., and Joel Davis Brooks, 453 Buena Vista Ave., both Alameda, appeared at a board meeting to receive Community Service Citations for "courageous and prompt action which protected fellow passengers, prevented a possible mishap and exemplified outstanding service to AC Transit and its riders."

The presentation was made by board president William E. Berk, who expressed the deep gratitude of the District for the couple's part in preventing a possible accident.

Mrs. Marshall and Brooks were among a bus load of commuters bound for San Francisco on a Line O bus from Alameda when driver L. F. "Lou" Bone, 39, 2900 Carmel Ave., Oakland, suffered an apparent fainting spell.

RIDERS HONORED—William E. Berk, left, president of AC Transit Board of Directors, presents community service citations to Mrs. Mary "Jackie" Marshall and Joel David Brooks of Alameda. They brought transbay bus to safe stop after driver collapsed.
Richmond drivers
Go over top with
New safety record

Drivers from Richmond Division climbed over the top in February, setting a new safe driving record of 20,744 miles operated per accident.

It was the first time a division has hit the 20,000 mark—considered almost beyond possibility when the safety program was inaugurated in 1963 with a goal of 12,100 miles per accident.

The "bogey" since has been gradually raised to 13,100 miles per accident.

A consistent safe-driving winner, the Richmond Division also won coffee and doughnuts in January when they tallied 18,018 miles per accident.

The previous high record was 18,817 miles, totaled in August, 1968; and 18,601 miles, reached in September, 1965.

The winner both times—Richmond.

Passenger revenue and the number of riders carried showed an increase during January, as business activity continued on the upswing.

Farebox revenue totaled $1,267,578, an increase of $76,274 or 6.40 percent over revenue of $1,191,304 for January, 1969. On East Bay lines, revenue reached $691,647, up 3.77 percent compared to year-ago revenue of $666,349. Transbay revenue also showed an increase, with a total of $575,931, up 9.75 percent over January, 1969 revenue of $524,755.

Commute book sales totaled $271,198, an increase of 16.6 percent compared to sales of $232,595 for the same period a year ago.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 4,381,227, up 43 percent over the year-ago passenger count of 4,362,395. On East Bay lines, the riding total was 3,170,116, an increase of .85 percent compared to last year's total of 3,143,535. On transbay service the passenger total of 1,211,111 was .64 percent below the year-ago count of 1,218,860.

Operation costs during the month came to $1,616,824, an increase of $94,208 or 6.19 percent over costs of $1,522,616 for January, 1969. The District operated 2,082,415 miles of service, an increase of 1.634 miles or .08 percent above mileage of 2,080,781 in the same month a year ago.

Total income of $1,800,520 was sufficient to cover operational costs and depreciation, but left a deficit of $11,976 in meeting full bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of 6.35 percent.
At an adjourned regular meeting on Feb. 25, the Board of Directors:
• Adopted resolution supporting U.S. mass transit aid bill, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Adopted report of Advertising and Public Relations Committee on meetings reviewing plans for promotional and advertising, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Authorized filing of application with federal government for capital grant for purchase of 30 new diesel buses, on motion of Director Coburn.

At a regular meeting March 11, the Board of Directors:
• Referred bids for electronic data equipment to management for study, on motion of President Berk.
• Approved attendance of staff members at sessions of Urban Transportation Management Institute, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Directed preparation of resolutions relating to use of gas tax funds for public transportation and relating to creation of Metropolitan Transportation Commission, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Adopted resolution commending former director William H. Coburn, Jr., for service to AC Transit, on motion of Director Warren.
• Moved to go into executive session, to be followed by adjournment to March 25, on motion of Director McDonnell.

William H. Coburn Jr., resigns board post
William H. Coburn, Jr., veteran member of AC Transit Board of Directors, resigned his post at the last meeting in February, after announcing he was moving to Moraga with his family. Coburn will retain his law office in Berkeley.
A native of Berkeley, Coburn represented that area and northwest Oakland on the transit board. He had served as a director since 1958 and long has been active as a civic leader.
The board has 60 days in which to appoint a successor to serve the remaining three years of Coburn’s term.