AC Transit joins project to
Connect outlying areas to BART
Balanced Transportation: How Do We Attain It?

The Bay Area appears committed to establishing a balanced transportation system, but until there is a better distribution of the composite dollar spent on transportation that balance may not be easy to attain.

By definition, a balanced system is one which provides adequate public and private transportation opportunities that allow people to move freely and quickly about their appointed rounds. At present, that system is heavily weighted in favor of the automobile in the Bay Area.

With the advent of BART and the present squeeze on gasoline supplies, there has been a shift toward greater use of mass transportation. But the bulk of the transit dollar is expended on the auto.

According to Joseph P. Bort, a member of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, auto expenses, on a per capita basis, amount to $700 a year for every man, woman and child in the Bay Area.

However, only $60 is spent on mass transit for each San Francisco resident, and in Alameda County the per capita transit expense drops to $30 while in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, the figure is but $5 a year.

For a better use of the transportation dollar, less should be spent on the auto and more on other modes of travel.

How can this be accomplished? It seems simple enough to suggest that people get out of their cars and into the trains, buses and streetcars. But that is a solution that has been extolled with little success for years. Indeed, most major bus lines (AC Transit is a notable exception) have seen the number of passengers decline in recent years.

There are at least two schools of thought on how to develop a greater dependency on mass transit. One is to put penalties on auto owners for using their cars. Such penalties would include increased gas taxes, higher bridge tolls and bans on where autos can travel or park. The other school is to encourage the motorist to forsake his car by providing cleaner, less expensive, more and more readily available transit services.

It has been suggested that the funds accrued from penalties imposed on motorists be applied toward improving mass transit benefits. That's fine so long as the penalties are not oppressive and the services are indeed upgraded and utilized.

But little purpose is served if the cost of operating the auto goes up as well as the amount of money spent on mass transit, without an offsetting drop in the number of autos on the road and an increase in transit riders.

Let's face it, auto travel today is still the most convenient way to get from one place to another, despite traffic congestion and high costs. And most people prefer it.

Greater state and federal subsidies are needed to help mass transit provide the kind of benefits and amenities to attract riders: low fares, comfortable and clean vehicles, frequent and swift services and widespread routes.

Transit agencies to work together on Express bus service for outlying areas

AC Transit and BART directors have agreed to work together to provide bus service from outlying areas to BART in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.

A joint agreement, approved by the AC Transit and BART boards of directors, calls for AC Transit, as an independent contractor, to own, operate and maintain the 32 buses to be used in the service.

BART will reimburse AC Transit for its costs and also will establish the routes, levels of service, fare structure and marketing program— with the advice and counsel of AC Transit.

Separate systems

The express bus system and any local systems would be separate.

AC Transit directors also authorized the filing of an application with the Federal government for a grant to help cover the $2.5 million cost of new buses and other capital expenses.

BART directors already have authorized establishment of express bus routes from BART stations to Pinole, Martinez-Pittsburg-Antioch-Brentwood, Alamo-Danville, and Dublin-Pleasanton-Livermore—all areas outside AC Transit's service district, but within BART operational boundaries.

BART originally planned to own the buses, but ran into roadblocks on its application for Federal funding.

Having AC Transit as the owner and applicant for the buses is expected to facilitate approval of the project. BART previously estimated the bus extension project at the $2.5 million figure, but that figure now will be reviewed and updated before the grant application is made and the buses purchased on the bidding procedure.

The BART board specified that it wants buses with handicap facilities, at an estimated cost of $89,000 each. The bus was priced at $50,000, with the handicap lift at $15,000.

The buses would have high-backed, reclining seats, air conditioning, plus capabilities for one wheelchair. The buses would seat about 40 riders each, depending on alteration for the wheelchair.

Both transit systems have agreed to make every effort to expedite implementation of the new service. BART previously expected to begin the bus extension with the start of transbay service. However, procurement of the buses, with the handicapped facilities, may take up to a year.

NEW JOB—Mrs. Doris Goelz, a 12-year veteran of AC Transit's PBX Information Center, has moved into a new job as training supervisor. In her post, she is responsible for training new employees and instructing older operators about lines and services. Involved are 27 full and part-time telephone operators.
District copes with fuel shortage, anti-pollution rules

Present and new riders accommodated; Steps taken to acquire needed fuel

Despite the fuel shortage, AC Transit can continue to operate all present bus service and accommodate new riders through November, and possibly to the end of December.

Federal fuel allotments, plus reserves on hand, will meet the District's needs for a few weeks, but the allotment has to be increased to continue the present level of bus service beyond that time.

However, the Office of Petroleum Allocation in Washington, D.C., reported that bus companies will get all the fuel they need for the next two months. The extra fuel, according to the report, would be subtracted from future allocations.

Steps have been taken to boost the allotment, with the first move being the filing of an application with the regional Oil and Gas Division of the U.S. Department of the Interior for an increased allotment. Meetings are continuing with State and Federal officials and with fuel suppliers in an attempt to insure an adequate fuel supply.

Under the allotment system, fuel was being delivered on the basis of what the district used in the same month in 1972.

District management does have under study numerous ways to deal with the fuel shortage if it is not eased.

Bus lines are being analyzed one by one to see what reductions can be made which would cause the least amount of public inconvenience. The study includes the possibility of eliminating all charter operations and specials to sport events.

Buses already are scheduled to operate at a maximum of 50 miles an hour on freeways and on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

A restriction of 55 miles an hour on use of supervisory automobiles, except in cases of emergency, has been imposed.

Stepped up enforcement was ordered on regulations restricting bus engine idling time and on a "lights out" policy when district offices are secured daily.

Riding on AC Transit buses, meanwhile, has been steadily rising since June, with transbay riding up more than ten percent and East Bay riding up more than five percent when compared to the same period a year ago.

On a week-by-week basis, October patronage is up four percent from October last year, and 3.7 percent above September of this year.

Bus needs would triple if EPA Pollution controls are enforced

AC Transit will need nearly three times as many buses, and new sources of funding to pay for their operation, if newly announced Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pollution controls for the Bay Area are enforced.

The district projects an additional 1500 buses will be required to handle the expected riding increase. These would be in addition to the 812 buses now owned.

AC Transit's estimates are based on a 20 percent reduction in private vehicle miles traveled because of reduced auto usage which would result from parking restrictions in downtown areas and higher parking fees.

AC Transit would expect to carry more than twice as many riders as today.

The EPA curbs would increase bus riding by nearly 200,000 adult commuter trips each day. The district now carries 186,000 riders per day.

Fuel requirements would increase another 10,500,000 gallons of diesel per year above the 5,500,000 now consumed by the fleet. An additional 3200 people would be needed to operate, maintain and direct operations. The district now has 1650 employees.

AC Transit's annual operating costs, now estimated at $29 million, would be boosted another $25.6 million.

About 52 percent of the district's operating costs are paid for by revenue from the fare box. Other sources of funds include local property taxes and the State sales tax on gasoline.

"Additional sources of income obviously are essential if we are to hire more people and pay for operating considerably more service," General Manager Alan L. Bingham has pointed out.

Built into the EPA program are sources of revenue to underwrite additional expenses, including surcharges on parking.

"We do expect to work with Bay Area planning agencies, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, to finalize what will be needed for this region -- including exclusive bus lanes," he said.

Bingham said the district now is going out to bid for another 42 buses, seating 42 passengers each, with an option for an additional 78 coaches.

The number could be increased, he said, if developments warrant. Buses with larger seating capacities also are available, he declared.

Exclusive lane across bridge sought

As a top priority, AC Transit will pursue establishment of an exclusive bus lane across the entire San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in an effort to improve the mass movement of people.

The District Board of Directors, earlier this month, directed management to renew efforts to obtain the exclusive lane across the entire bridge to provide the type of fast, express bus service essential in transporting the growing number of public transit users.

In making a motion to direct staff to undertake the project on the highest priority, Director Roy Nakadegawa of Berkeley said many people caught in a massive traffic jam on the bridge the night of November 5 wondered why there wasn't some way to keep buses moving across the span in a lane of their own, instead of being halted by a pile-up of cars.

Nakadegawa said the lane should be established in both directions and is a top need, in the face of the present energy crisis and cleaner air program.

Regulations released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency specified establishment of 45 miles of exclusive lanes within the Bay Area.

Buses now carry more than half the people who cross the bridge during the commute peak. The use of buses on the bridge is growing about ten percent a month, keeping up with increased patronage.

The matter is to be actively pursued with the State Division of Bay Toll Crossings and other appropriate agencies.

An exclusive lane through the toll plaza was instituted by the Division of Bay Toll Crossings in April, 1970, and expanded to include car pools in December, 1971.
Transit bus drivers, particularly, ended up in a good mood, joking with each other and trading experiences. ACTransit drivers handled a bad situation in good humor. Despite the hassle, many passengers were delayed two hours or more in one of the worst jams in memory.

Rains cause massive tie-up on Bay Bridge; hundreds delayed in one of worst ever jams

The rains came early in the month and caused all sorts of miseries, including an all around traffic snafu on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge the night of Nov. 5.

Travel on the bridge was at a complete standstill during the commuter period and riders were delayed two or more hours in getting home.

Buses were unable to leave the Transbay Transit Terminal, buses were unable to get in. Would-be passengers jammed every space. Thousands waited . . . and waited . . . and waited. It was the worst jam in recent memory.

Long, long lines

At one point there were at least 250 people in line for the L bus to Richmond, according to a story in the San Francisco Examiner. The lines to pay telephone booths also were long as stranded passengers tried to reach their families to say they would be delayed.

Bars were crowded, as many decided to relax instead of fume. Some stayed in town for dinner. Supervisors were held over; some westbound passengers got off buses on the ramp and walked the rest of the way, to get to destinations in San Francisco.

It was a stormy, disagreeable night but, despite the hassle, many passengers ended up in a good mood, joking with each other and trading experiences. AC Transit bus drivers, particularly, were complimented for their attitude in handling a bad situation in good humor.

Problems, caused by rainy weather, began early in the afternoon when two trucks jackknifed on the eastbound lanes of the bridge. Before that was completely cleared up, a car rammed into the rear of a Greyhound bus and burst into flames. That did it. Other accidents—none of them involving AC Transit buses—brought traffic on the bridge to a stop. Things were not back to normal until 9:15 p.m.

Buses were put into service on the east side of the bay to get schedules back on time. Sideline service was extended to accommodate late arriving passengers.

Despite the stormy weather, AC Transit buses throughout the area were involved in only seven accidents, all of them relatively minor.

Operator, pensioner die

Driver Harris E. Fulbright and pensioner George A. Umble died recently. Fulbright of a brain tumor and Umble in a fire in his home.

Fulbright, 50, died Oct. 11, ending a transit career which began Dec. 31, 1962. Fulbright lived in Oakland and is survived by his widow, Active, and two daughters, Arlenia Banks and Linda Fulbright.

Umble, 72, died Nov. 10. He was a driver from May 2, 1936, until his retirement Jan. 1, 1969.

He is survived by his widow, Bertha, of Berkeley, and a son, George R.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting October 30, the Board of Directors:

- Awarded contract for furnishing bus transfers and identification checks to Globe Ticket Co., on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted resolution in opposition to Proposition 1 on the Nov. 6 ballot, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

At a regular meeting November 14, the Board of Directors:

- Awarded contract for bus washer shelter, subject to meeting of specifications, on motion of Director Copeland.
- Referred responses to bid invitations for fuel contract to management for evaluation and recommendations, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized management travel to Washington, D.C., to discuss fuel needs with government officials, on motion of Director Copeland.
- Authorized participation in Transit Data Summaries Group meeting, on motion of Vice President Fujii.
- Directed management to investigate exclusive lane for buses on the Bay Bridge, as a priority project, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Adopted agreement with BART relating to AC Transit operation of express bus service to rapid transit stations in portions of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, on motion of Director Berk. (See story, Pg. 3)
- Authorized filing of application for Federal grant to aid in financing purchase of new buses for BART express bus extension, on motion of Director Berk.
- Approved minor service adjustments on lines 83 and 86, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized testing of 19-passenger Mercedes-Benz coach, on motion of Director Berk.

Safe-driving goal topped

By all three divisions

All three of AC Transit's operating divisions bettered the safe-driving goal of 13,250 miles-per-accident during October.

The best record was scored by drivers at Seminary Division with a 15,671 mile mark. It was the fifth month in a row Seminary drivers had topped the goal.

Emeryville Division drivers drove 14,221 safe-driving miles per accident while Richmond Division went over the top with 13,535 miles.