People who care about people don't smoke on buses.

TRANSIT INFORMATION:
Oakland, San Francisco...653-3635
Hayward...582-3635
Richmond...232-5665
Fremont, Newark...767-6011
District refurbishing older coaches
In effort to save public funds

In an effort to save taxpayers' money, AC Transit is refurbishing 61 older buses in good mechanical condition for continued use on transbay lines.

With the face-lifting, the buses should operate at least another five years, according to General Manager Alan L. Bingham.

The original cost of the buses will be fully written off in the next year.

Ordered in 1960 at a price of $34,420 each, including taxes, the buses have been kept in top mechanical shape and are expected to run more than one million miles before needing a major engine overhaul. Mileage on this series of buses now averages 700,000 miles.

The District decided to go ahead with the refurbishing to help beat the inflation which has hit the bus manufacturing industry, Bingham said. Comparable new coaches of the same type now cost approximately $68,000 each — and the price is rising.

Cost $2700 each

Cost of refurbishing is approximately $2700 per coach and includes remodeling of seats into comfortable bucket types, covered in fabric.

Additional windows are being installed above the regular windows to increase the feeling of openness.

Carpeting is being attached to ceilings to cut down on interior noise.

New flooring is being installed and fare boxes are being chromed to eliminate recurring painting costs. The buses also are being repainted inside and out.

The District meantime has received delivery of 120 new Flxible buses to replace coaches built in 1946 and 1947. Bids also are expected to go out this summer for articulated buses, to be purchased by a group of transit properties, including AC Transit. The double buses, hinged in the middle for easy turning, are scheduled for use on heavily patronized East Bay lines and will seat about 65 passengers.

Flxible awarded contract
For 36 deluxe buses

The Board of Directors this month awarded a contract for 36 deluxe buses to Flxible Co. on a low bid of $71,108 per coach delivered. The only other bidder, General Motors, bid $75,144 each.

The buses, which feature large recliner type seats, will be used on bus extension service operated by AC Transit under contract to BART in suburban areas of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The buses will seat 45 passengers each.

While a Federal grant, which will pay 80 percent of costs, had not been formally approved when the directors took action, the District was given verbal authorization by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to go ahead with the contract award.
Dial-A-Ride proves to be popular
But expensive transit service

Dial-A-Ride service seems to be popular with the people who use it, but it's an expensive way to give people the convenience and security of door-to-door public transportation.

AC Transit's experimental Dial-A-Ride service in central Richmond and Santa Clara County Transit District's combined Dial-A-Ride and fixed route system share similar problems.

The cost per passenger per ride is considerably greater in personalized door step service than it is in fixed route service.

In Richmond, during the first 15 weeks, the operating cost per passenger was $4.51, according to a financial summary. By the end of the 18th week, as ridership increased, the cost was down to $3.45.

The total for the year, based on five months of operation and estimated costs for the next 30 weeks, presuming continued patronage growth, would bring the average operating cost per passenger to $3.76. During the five months, Richmond Dial-A-Ride deployed an average of 11 buses a day, with an average week-day total of 900 riders.

Door to door service

The door to door bus service is provided in a five square mile area of central Richmond.

District wide, the net operating cost per rider for fixed route service in the East Bay is between 86 and 67 cents.

In Special Service District 2, including Fremont and Newark, the cost per passenger for combined Dial-A-Ride and fixed route service is estimated at $2.83, presuming a better response and more riders per bus. Total bus requirements for both types of service, including spares, are estimated at 35.

Under present plans, Fremont would have six Dial-A-Ride zones; Newark would have two and there would be two fixed routes.

Costs compared

In Santa Clara County, 212 buses are providing a county wide, 15 city combined arterial/personalized transit service, with week-day ridership of 30,000 a day, according to a February report. Buses deployed on Dial-A-Ride carry 6,000 riders per day at a cost of $2.92 each. The cost per arterial rider is 75 cents, for a combined average of $1.19 per rider.

Continued ridership growth is expected to reduce this cost; meanwhile the system is being plagued by lack of equipment to satisfy demands on the fixed route system, with Dial-A-Ride buses being diverted to carry capacity loads on arterial routes.

Experience in Richmond and Santa Clara County is far from complete and reflects only the preliminary phase, according to AC Transit General Manager Alan L. Bingham.

Richmond is considered an important demonstration site and experience gained there will be valuable in planning service wanted by voters in Fremont and Newark, Bingham said.

Possible alternates in operating the Richmond service to reduce costs will be presented to the Board of Directors in another three or four months.

AND NOW—Car 942 today, after it was discovered buried under vines and brush on a lot in Yountville. It was one of a number of street cars sold in 1948 for "summer homes."

Car 942, where were you?

One of the East Bay's memorable street cars has turned up — of all places — in the back part of a lot in Yountville, still recognizable despite years of neglect.

When old paint was scratched off the side of the car, the number and name still were there — "942" and "Key System Transit Lines."

"The car was covered with brambles and weeds and stood undiscovered until Lawrence Carr of Napa bought the lot under condemnation proceedings and started to clear it off.

Surprise!

Several outbuildings were torn down but, when the growth was cut away from the street car, Carr recognized it for what it was — a still sturdy relic of the days when street cars clanked around the East Bay.

How it got to Yountville isn't all that strange, according to Vernon Sappers, Oakland railway historian.

When the last electric street car lines were converted to motor coach lines in 1948, the cars were sold to a dealer in San Leandro.

He, in turn, advertised the street cars as "summer homes." They were sold, according to Sappers, "from one end of the state to the other."

Sapers also said "942" was one of a series of 95 cars purchased from American Car Co. in St. Louis and delivered to Key System in 1923. The series was the first street car to be enclosed at the front and back and was considered "modern, classy and a great improvement over previous equipment."

Safe doors

The cars were known for a safety feature — the doors could not be opened until the motorman applied the air brakes. With this feature, passengers couldn't fall off the platform.

Through the years the cars bore the names of Key System Transit Co., East Bay Street Railway, East Bay Transit and Key System again before National City Lines bought out the system and added the last name. The colors also changed during the years, ending up with a green paint scheme and cream colored design on the front known to the populace as the "cat's whiskers."
Anti-smoking campaign launched

AC Transit is trying to do something positive about a difficult and constant problem — smoking aboard buses.

A new car card, posted on 748 coaches, carries the message: “People who care about people don’t smoke on buses.”

The red letters are printed against a background of smoke curling from a lighted cigarette and passenger reaction indicates it’s an eye-catching message.

One customer wrote that he liked the no smoking sign “about people who care. That’s a nice mellow approach.

Seminary drivers zero in on safe-driving record

Bus drivers at Seminary Division are threatening to set a new District-wide safe-driving record.

By exceeding their safe-driving goal for February, their string now extends through ten months in a row. The old record of 15 straight months was set by Richmond Division in July, 1971.

Seminary drivers’ mark during February was 14,326 miles per accident.

Close on their heels are drivers from Emeryville Division who, by averaging 16,607 miles per accident during February, now have a string of nine months of topping their safe-driving goal.

Wednesday, February 26, became a “red letter” day at AC Transit with records revealing it was a totally accident-free day. According to Stanley Pearce, superintendent of safety and training, such days are extremely rare, “considering the large number of equipment we have on the streets and the thousands of miles we drive every day.”

Too bad the people who don’t care don’t read either,” he added.

Other new signs, in color, also have been posted. These ask passengers to refrain from smoking, eating or playing radios while on buses.

Experimentation with a fixed microphone, to be used by operators to call attention to the smoking regulation, and a lighted “no smoking” sign also are being planned.

Possible legal action, including steps to have “no smoking” ordinances passed in all cities through which AC Transit buses travel — coupled with police enforcement of such ordinances — is being considered by a committee of the Board of Directors.

Transit veterans join ranks of pensioners

Two veteran drivers, Mario Ponchione and Jaye D. Vestal, joined the pensioner ranks recently.

Ponchione, known as “Poncho” to his friends, began his career Feb. 2, 1942, and retired effective March 1.

Shortly before he retired, Ponchione joined the exclusive ranks of drivers with 25 years of safe-driving.

Vestal started his driving career on Nov. 19, 1945, and retired effective Feb. 1. He is a resident of Hayward.

Transfer, promotions, made

The transfer of a veteran District employee and the promotion of three others was made recently.

Leslie H. Minear, formerly assistant superintendent at Seminary Division, has assumed responsibilities for AC Transit operations at the Transbay Transit Terminal, San Francisco.

Minear, 62, has worked for the District and its predecessor companies since November 18, 1930.

Three operators who have been promoted to supervisors are: Gregory L. Hunter, Richard V. Kennedy and Richard D. McVay.

January figures show losses, gains

The month of January showed losses in overall revenue and transbay patronage, but increases in East Bay ridership and revenue compared to the same month one year ago.

Total passenger revenue for January was $1,263,048, down $99,167, or 7.2 percent below the $1,362,215 collected during January, 1974. East Bay revenue, however, was $729,498, up $54,981, or 8.2 percent above the $674,518 dropped into fare boxes a year ago. Transbay revenue of $553,549 was down $154,148, or 21.8 percent below the $707,697 collected in January, 1974.

AC Transit buses carried 4,507,666 passengers in January, down 199,337 riders, or 4.2 percent from the 4,707,003 patrons of the same month last year. East Bay buses carried 3,449,870 riders, an increase of 6.4 percent, or 206,894 above the 3,242,976 passengers carried in January, 1974. On transbay lines, patronage totaled 1,057,796 for the month, down 406,231, or 27.7 percent less than the 1,464,027 carried during the same month one year ago.

Nationally, the transit industry indicated an increase of 0.6 percent in total passengers carried.

Operating costs during January were $3,429,645, up $873,367, or 34.2 percent above year-ago expenses of $2,556,278. The system operated 2,513,223 miles of service during January, an increase of 192,225 miles, or 8.3 percent above the 2,320,997 miles operated during January, 1974.

Total income of $3,615,319 left a deficit of $53,372 in meeting full bond debt requirements and operating costs.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting February 26, the Board of Directors:

- Awarded contract for furnishing bus transfers and identification checks to Globe Ticket Co., on motion of Director Berk.
- Agreed that AC Transit will offer support and cooperation to private, non-profit organizations providing transportation services to elderly and handicapped under UMTA guidelines, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized General Manager to advertise and seek bids for uniforms for bus drivers, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Granted authority to operate new Flxible bus in revenue service for two weeks test, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized General Manager to submit application to UMTA for Federal operating assistance funds of $2,668,788 for fiscal year 1974-75, and to set public hearing on the application for April 23, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Continued present senior citizen fare policy for six months, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized minor reroutings of Line 69—North Richmond, and Line 59/76—Broadway Terrace-Montclair, and deferred a proposed extension of Line 42—Piedmont for three months pending further study, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized General Manager to exercise option to purchase additional 35 passenger shelters, on motion of Director Berk.

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At a regular meeting March 12, the Board of Directors:

- Awarded contract for 36 suburban buses to Flxible Co., if grant is approved by UMTA, on motion of Director Nakadegawa. (See story, Pg. 3.)
- Authorized revisions in rules and regulations governing travel and personal expenses of directors, officers and employees, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Granted authority to file UMTA grant application relative to implementing long range electronic data processing plan, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized extension of consulting agreement with Arthur Young & Company to assist in developing request for proposal for electronic data processing equipment at a maximum fee of $18,000, on motion of Director Rinehart.