First Bus Service To Pill Hill
Gratitude for Pill Hill service

Passenger enthusiasm, and gratitude of the hospitals and medical facilities, greeted first bus service to Oakland’s “Pill Hill” this month.

As of May 5, some 2,500 employees in the area now have transit access to Merritt, Peralta and Providence hospitals — not to mention the innumerable patients served.

Lines 59 and 76 - Broadway Terrace-Montclair reroute from Broadway via Hawthorne Ave. and Summit St. to

THE COVER—Providence Hospital Administrator Stanley Volga, at left, boards first-day bus servicing Pill Hill. He is accompanied by Associate Administrator Peter Bigelow and Sister Veronica, Coordinator of Sisters.

Regional ID card for handicapped
Born of historic joint efforts

Handicapped persons will use the same identification card to receive reduced fares on most, if not all, Bay Area transit systems under a historic example of coordination among the region’s transportation properties.

Participating in the coordinated efforts are AC Transit, BART, Golden Gate Transit, S.F. Municipal Railway, Santa Clara County Transit and San Mateo Transit.

Both the handicapped and senior citizens are entitled to discount fares during non-peak hours if new federal operating subsidies are utilized by the transit systems.

The amount of the discount and the hours of use may vary from system to system. But a coordinated implementation plan and certification process, making use of one Bay Region Transit Discount Card, now is in the process of finalization with July 1 targeted as start-up date. Participating properties plan to start handling phone inquiries June 2.

Eligibility for the handicapped will be certified by physicians or through appropriate agencies and organizations and will be handled by the applicant after receiving a package of instructions and an eligibility form.

Once the form is signed, the applicant will come into the transit agency, have his photograph taken and receive the transit discount card.

Offices will be leased on the sixth floor of the Latham Square Building in Oakland to process the cards.

Senior citizens and the handicapped will pay 10 cents, without zone charges, on AC Transit in the East Bay.

Transbay service will cost 30 cents from the central district, jumping to 35 cents for the second and third districts and 40 cents from the fourth district.

District faces challenging expansion, 28 communities now being serviced

Expansion into new areas is providing AC Transit with one of its greatest challenges since the District went into business in 1960.

The bus system now is serving 28 communities, more than double the number it was serving when operations started up last September 1 after a two month strike.

Not only is growth taking place at a rapid pace, much of the service is different, giving employees experience in a multi-mix of transit.

Since 1960, AC Transit has provided traditional bus service in 11 East Bay cities plus across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco.

This pattern of service was changed when bus lines were shifted and rerouted to serve BART stations. With the beginning of BART operations to San Francisco last fall, almost every bus line — 98 in all — were providing connector service to one or more BART stations.

Just the beginning

And that was just the beginning.

Since last September, AC Transit has:
— Inaugurated experimental Dial-A-Ride service in Richmond.
— Inaugurated interim local bus service on a contract basis in Fremont and Newark, after residents voted to annex the District.
— Began plans to implement a combined fixed route and Dial-A-Ride system voted by Fremont and Newark to link a 69-square mile service area to BART stations, shopping centers and other facilities.
— Began express bus service in suburban areas of Contra Costa and Alameda counties under contract arrangements with BART, providing access from train stations to communities without train service. Fourteen cities are involved in the network.
— Began meetings with representatives of some of the same communities for initial local bus service to be provided on a contract basis.

The transit system’s service area meanwhile has increased from 175 square miles serving a population of 1,068,315 to 588 square miles, serving 1,392,966. A fleet of 800 buses are in service.

East Bay up

Meanwhile, with the drop in transbay bus riding has come another change in the overall transportation pattern.

East Bay riding — which had been declining — is showing steady growth, reflecting an increase in the number of people who are using the bus to get to BART.
Fare zone elimination studied

A survey concluding this month will help determine whether traditional zonal charges could be eliminated.

The overall study, held May 1 and 7, is expected to update an estimate made in 1973 that the District would lose $245,000 in revenue annually if fare zones were eliminated.

The survey concluding this month will expand the program to another four coaches. Drivers are being asked to observe reactions and results.

HEAVY HINT—Continuing with a program of dissuading passengers from smoking on buses, the District has installed an experimental red "No Smoking" light on one bus and soon will expand the program to another four coaches. Drivers are being asked to observe reactions and results.

Express buses and transbay lines are not involved in the survey.

The action was prompted by assaults on drivers, including Operator D. F. Hess on April 20 as he was making a fare zone collection at 73rd Ave. and MacArthur Blvd.

Hess, of Castro Valley, suffered a fractured jaw when he was jumped by several men as he made his way back through the bus toward his seat.

As a result, officers of Division 192, Amalgamated Transit Union, asked for the fare boundary to be moved to Dutton Ave. in San Leandro, which they consider a "safer neighborhood."

Passengers traveling westbound on Lines 40, 41B, 43 and 43A filled out survey cards answering where they get on, where they get off, whether they transfer and other traveling facts.

The same questions were asked of patrons moving through East Bay fare zones on other buses, including the 80 Lines from the Hayward, San Leandro and East Oakland areas as well as Line 72, which operates between Oakland and Richmond.

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Eight pensioners meet death

Eight pensioners, four of whom had transit careers of more than 40 years each, and one active driver, died during recent weeks.

Donald P. Militello, a 28 year-old driver, died suddenly March 15. A resident of Hayward, Militello's only known survivor is his grandmother. He started with AC Transit July 2, 1973.

Retired mechanic Wayne Dorothy, 67 at his death March 3, worked from Dec. 29, 1944, to Oct. 1, 1971. He is survived by his widow, Elsie, of San Ramon.

Harry W. Grimes, whose driving career spanned more than four and one-half decades from Sept. 22, 1924, to Apr. 1, 1969, died March 15. He was 82.

Kassing, who was 71, is survived by his widow, Carolyn, and a son. Virgil P. Ruckman, a bus driver whose career stretched from Sept. 22, 1924, until his retirement on Apr. 1, 1969, died Feb. 25. He was 74.

Ruckman is survived by his widow, Bessee, of Oakland.

Harold F. Rensburg, 60 year-old retired driver, died April 19 after a long illness. He worked from July 17, 1945, to October 1, 1979. He is survived by his widow, Evelyn, of Fallon, Nevada; a daughter, Brenda and sons, Mallon, Tony and Harold Jr.

John F. Bushell, 92 year-old retired dispatcher, died May 1 after suffering heart failure. He worked from April 26, 1911 to January 1, 1948. He was preceded in death by his wife, Agatha and is survived by a son, John F. Bushell Jr. and two daughters, Marie Peterson and Doris Kroetch.

Volunteer drivers sought

Laney College is in the market for volunteer bus drivers, aged 60 and over.

Interested persons should contact Josephine Dudley at Laney Tower, Suite 514, 900 Fallon St. or call 834-5740, extension 447.
MIKE MILLS, reporter for KRON-TV, gets a chuckle out of winner Reed Onate's shyness during an interview. But if anyone should know that a picture's worth a thousand words, Reed should.

Winning art entries chosen

Dial-A-Rides buses in Richmond last month sported the colorful results of an art contest staged jointly by the Richmond Art Center and AC Transit.

In addition to public display of their works, winners in three categories were awarded scholarships to the class of their choice for either the summer or fall program at the Art Center.

Categories were selected on the basis that they included the people most likely to avail themselves of Dial-A-Ride transportation. Included were entries into Children, Teen and Seniors' divisions.

Winners were five year-old Reed Onate, of 2176 Broadmore Ave., San Pablo, whose drawing of a smiling young man and cheerful dog captured the judges' winning nod.

Teenager Pat Fulco's painting of a juggling clown was judged outstanding entry in her division. Miss Fulco resides at 4526 Barrett Ave., Richmond.

A still-life painting topped the senior category with Helen Roller, of 1329 Bonita Ave., Richmond, winning.

Although Helen Roller was unable to attend the announcement of winners, young Reed and Pat were present to be interviewed for television by Reporter Mike Mills from KRON-TV.

Second cost-of-living hike raises pay 6 cents, 15 cent jump this year

A cost-of-living allowance of six cents per hour is being paid to all hourly employees in May, in accordance with the District's contract with Division 192, Amalgamated Transit Union.

The pay hike comes on top of a nine cent increase in January, bringing the total cost-of-living adjustments this year to 15 cents. Salaried employees will receive an equivalent wage boost.

The federal cost of living index is the basis for such allowances, which have occurred 15 times since the program began in January, 1969.

Losses shown during March

Transbay lines continued to show losses when compared to March a year ago and East Bay lines dipped slightly in revenue and patronage during March.

Total passenger revenue for March was $1,334,516, down $165,095 or 11 percent below the $1,499,611 collected during March, 1974. Transbay revenue of $582,073 was down $134,650 or 18.8 percent below the $716,723 dropped into fare boxes a year ago. East Bay revenue was $752,443, down $30,445 or 3.9 percent below the $782,888 collected during March, 1974.

AC Transit buses carried 4,611,750 passengers during March, down 548,098, or 10.6 percent from the 5,159,848 carried during the month of March, 1974. Passenger losses were recorded on transbay lines, where patronage dropped 397,347 or 27.3 percent, down 1,057,830 from the 1,455,177 who rode during the same month a year earlier. On East Bay Lines, patronage for the month totaled 3,553,920, down 150,751 or 4.1 percent below the March, 1974, figure of 3,704,671.

Nationally, the transit industry indicated a decrease of 0.98 percent in total passengers carried.

Operating costs during March were $3,371,583, up $688,287 or 25.7 percent from the March, 1974 operating costs of $2,683,296.

The system operated 2,444,475 miles of service during March, a decrease of 105,479 miles or 4.5 percent below the 2,338,996 miles operated during March, 1974.

Total income of $3,599,406 left a deficit of $11,373 in meeting full bond debt requirements and operating costs.

3 year passenger revenue comparison
At an adjourned regular meeting April 23, the Board of Directors:

- Expressed appreciation to District Secretary for preparing operating grant application, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized participation in midyear APTA marketing conference, joint UMTA/APTA marketing conference and the National “Fleet Owner” conference, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized going out to bid for coin counter/sorter machine, on motion of Director McGuire.
- Authorized Sightsseeing Tours operation June 14 through August 30, upon motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized additional night service to Chabot College, on motion of Director Berk.
- Directed diversion of five evening northbound trips on Line 51-Alameda-Berkeley to the College of Alameda.
- Authorized service to East Bay Regional Park areas from June 14 to Sept. 1.

At the regular meeting May 14, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized lease for property in Newark for new Newark/Fremont Division at rental of $5,350 a month for five year period, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized leasing space in Latham Square Building for distribution of Bay Region Transit Discount Fare, on motion of Director Bettencourt. (See story, Pg. 2)
- Authorized purchase of camera for Discount Fare center, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Agreed to extend Richmond Dial-A-Ride service into Point Richmond, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized going out to bid for lightweight trousers for bus drivers, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Authorized going out to bid for bus stop poles, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized lease for General Manager, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized leave for General Manager, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Adopted new tariff for handicapped and senior citizens, on motion of Director Rinehart. (See story, Pg. 2)
- Approved media budget of $263,350 for advertising, 1975-76 fiscal year, on motion of Director McGuire.

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