Maintenance move approaches: Old site sees its waning days
What the Press is saying about transit

San Francisco Chronicle
Transportation: No. 1 Worry

It is not surprising to read that transportation was ranked as the most important problem of the region in the latest Bay Area Poll. It is somewhat surprising, however, that majorities said they would favor increasing taxes to provide solutions, including higher fuel taxes to support both highway improvements and better public transportation.

The transportation problem is glaringly evident almost any morning or afternoon on the streets leading to and from the Golden Gate Bridge, on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge itself or on the Bayshore Freeway. Although we have no statistical proof, we believe that commutes are becoming longer, particularly for persons who live in the East Bay or down the Peninsula and drive to San Francisco. Other routes or intersections throughout the region are either at or near that same point.

Many battles remain to be fought before some of the MTC projects reach the construction stage. The poll indicates, however, that there is great concern about the present state of all forms of public and private transportation. The implication is that the various government agencies which are involved should get on with the job.

The poll, conducted by the Field Organization for the Bay Area Council, was made public only weeks after the adoption of a new regional master plan by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the governmental agency which apports state and federal transportation funds. The poll will be welcome news to the commission since it indicates that there is public support not only for measures to improve regional mobility but also for raising the massive sums of money which will be required in the next two decades. The MTC's shopping list will cost an estimated $2.82 billion.

Maintenance outlook '84
New procedures, plant promise challenge

"It's easy to forget what an exciting and interesting job we are involved in when you're dealing with the day-to-day demands of keeping the buses on the streets," says Acting Maintenance Manager Frank Johnson. "But truth is, this is an era of tremendous challenge and change."

To put it another way: there's a lot more to maintenance than merely pumping 150,000 gallons of diesel fuel into thirsty buses each week - though that, in itself, is no mean task! Johnson points to current programs and pending plans that will meld to help improve an already impressive maintenance record.

"We want to increase productivity — to get our cost per mile down. We need improved fuel economy, longer vehicle life, and we must make every Maintenance worker a more cost-effective employee," Johnson says.

"For instance, we want to improve our fleetwide average of 4.1 miles per gallon of fuel consumed, and current transmission tests may help us accomplish that goal.

"We're experimenting with two European transmissions — the Voith and the ZF — a electronically-controlled, retarder-equipped, and lightweight," Johnson explains.

"We will evaluate 15 of each type in service to determine if they can provide more miles per gallon and better mechanical reliability." The 30 test transmissions are being installed in new Gillig buses — part of 134 coaches the District will receive soon from the Hayward manufacturer.

"At the same time," Johnson says, "we are testing five Allison transmissions to see if these American-made components can provide smoother shifting, reduced fuel consumption, and better reliability."

An important aspect of the on-going preventive maintenance program is obtaining and recording of accurate mileage data, now gathered manually. Under a proposed program, automatic mileage monitors — electronic mileage-counters on every bus — would be linked by radio to the District computers, thus giving Maintenance daily mileage reports on each bus to facilitate the timely scheduling of maintenance and safety inspections.

In a different area, extensive experiments demonstrate that electric brake retarders significantly reduce maintenance costs and improve brake-shoe life. Thus, it's now AC Transit policy to specify these retarders as 'standard equipment' on all new buses.

While carrying out present activities and planning for implementation of proposed programs, all hands also are involved in preparing for the move to a new Central Maintenance facility in East Oakland, refurbishing of Emeryville Division shops, and opening of a new operating division yard in Hayward.

Of great significance in the new Central Facility move is a state-of-the-art Maintenance and Materials Management Information System (MMMIS) which will be a key tool controlling operations in the plant. Material/inventory management, cost control, and monitoring of vehicle performance are some of the MMMIS characteristics which will yield dollar-saving benefits to the District — and East Bay bus riders — for decades to come.

To keep the Maintenance personnel in step with the new technology and procedures, two career advancement courses are underway — one in diesel supervision, the other in management. Both classes are part of an on-going program in personal professional improvement.

Meantime, day-to-day work of some 330 Maintenance personnel goes on — (Continued on Page 5)
System offers “Welcome Aboard” to Navy people Via Line 42 extension

Alameda Naval Air Station's population increases dramatically when “the fleet’s in,” and the District’s new service linking the facility with downtown Oakland and other transit connections is expected to aid shore excursions by providing wider-ranging mobility within the entire Bay Area.

Effective April 1, Line 42 buses launched extended service, especially during late night and early morning hours, to and from the Navy facility’s Pier 3. The link to downtown Oakland offers the opportunity to extend trips via transfer to AC Transit’s mainline bus routes, including 24-hour transbay service; to BART trains via the 12th Street Station; and to “Regional Transit Connection” service throughout the greater Bay Area.

On weekday and Saturday evenings, Line 42/NAS service will operate from about 4 p.m. until 2:40 a.m. More limited Sunday night schedules will run from about 10 p.m. until 2:40 a.m.

AC Transit’s mission in Line 42 maneuvers is to “pipe aboard” its buses growing numbers of Navy personnel, dependents, and civilian workers.

Retirement round-up

- Robert L. Byrne, Mechanic AA, Maintenance, Seminary Division, 33 years.
- John N. Rutherford, Upholsterer, Maintenance, Seminary Division, 25 years.
- Lewis H. Smith, Jr., Mechanic AA, Maintenance, Seminary Division, 20 years.
- Jacob L. Snyder, Driver, Seminary Division, 22 years.

Davis, former R&P Director, dies

E. Sam Davis, 89, who retired in 1973 as Director of Research & Planning, died April 21 in Anaheim. His retirement had ended one of the longest careers in public transit history, spanning 58 years.

He had joined the System’s predecessor, Key System Transit Lines, in 1953 as Schedules Director, becoming R&P Director when AC Transit became operative in 1960.

Surveys will gauge riders, non-riders

The District expects to execute a contract by late May for two market research surveys to provide guide-lines for service planning/promotion efforts scheduled for this fall.

The proposed “Rider Survey” will spot-light why current riders use AC Transit — and why they do not make greater use of it. Also, it will allow riders to suggest creative solutions to problems they perceive with service design and availability.

Additionally, this survey would help the District better understand riders’ current sources of transit information with the aim of determining types of communication and media which might be more effective.

Concurrently, a qualified contractor is being sought to execute a “Latent Demand” survey, assessing the potential for promoting increased ridership within the current service area and in adjacent suburban areas of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The objective: to identify those segments of the population which should be likely candidates for conversion to bus usage.

Requests for proposals for each of these projects were made available to potential consultants at the end of April.

Maintenance tasks multi-level

(Continued from Page 3)

most of it undramatic but absolutely necessary to keep the 850-bus fleet rolling. For instance, the Department is working with manufacturers to identify durable, bright new materials for the bus interiors.

“We are launching a repainting program, too, which will involve 300 buses over the next two years. And we’re preparing to test new 26-foot coaches in service on more lightly-patronized suburban routes.”

In viewing the overall picture, Johnson says, “There is so much going on, it’s hard to itemize everything. The bottom line is that it keeps the buses rolling.”
I am going to tell you about the bus of the future.
I was going out to work and I saw a bus outside my house. This was no bus I had ever seen before. It was black and small. I said, "What are you doing on my lawn?"
"I am going to pick you up," said a robot. I was stunned when he said, "Do you want to go to Earth?"
I said, "I am on Earth." "No you aren't. This is the year 2299. Nobody lives on Earth anymore." Than I said, "Take me to Pluto." The robot said, "OK, I love going to Pluto." Then I woke up.

Adam Bonner

Once I was in the year of 3000 and I was in the bus. It had a robot man driving in the front. There were lots of strange people in the bus. If people wanted to open the window all they had to do was push a button and it would do it by itself. There were hundreds of machines in the bus too! They were for lots of stuff like for doing automatic things. We were driving along until the driver pushed a button and we were off to the moon!

Paul Wilkinson

When I grow up I'm going to be a bus driver. In the front of the bus will be a robot with buttons all over him. There will be automatic seats that will go up and down. I will see all different kinds of computers.

Jamie Walker

I was on a bus. The bus was made in 1999. It was going to the moon. I was about to crash but wings popped out of the doors. As soon as it landed I wanted to go home. In one second from when I said that... ZOOM! I was home in a flash.

Jesse Wilkinson

The bus will be different colors from now. The man will be automatic. He will have a magic bus. He will take me to the sky. I will look up and see the stars. I will stay there 100 years. It will be nice to look up there and think of my future.

Charmin Roundtree

The bus will have black seats. The buses will say no smoking. The bus driver will have to wear red. My bus will have a bed and a toilet too.

Shontia Barbee

When I grow up in the year 2001 I think buses will look like spaceships. I will probably take the bus to Venus and I can do some exploring. The buses will have wheels so they can go to places on Earth, too. There will even be stores so that when you get bored you could go get something to get you relaxed. The bus will be enormous.

Nathan Randy Burks

If I had a bus in the future no one would have a bus like mine. It would have all kinds of buttons and it would be red, white, and blue. My bus would talk to people.

Melissa Bellinger

If I was a bus driver I would want it to drive by itself and go 3000 miles per hour. Each day 500 people would get on the bus. The bus would even have a name. His name would be Ray and he could talk, too. At night I would get out of the bus and I would tell him to turn into a camper with one bed. In the morning he would wake me up at 5:30 and we would watch cartoons. The people could get on the bus for free.

Prince Robinson
Two operators enter ranks of 25/30-year safe drivers

Stephen C. Stathis' achievement — the ninth driver with 30 years of safe driving — was marked April 25 by General Offices ceremonies. Stathis says the path to such a feat lies in "liking your job, liking the organization, and being surrounded by good people." This San Francisco native, posing with wife Norma and General Manager L. A. Kimball, displays the diamond ring presented him for the mile-stone.

Driver Ralph Rubin receives quarter-century safe driving award from Superintendent Mo Gross, Emeryville Division; then joins wife Patricia in cutting commemorative cake. The New York native's recipe for bus driving safety: "Be careful, concentrate, be cool, calm, and collected."

The way we were...April, 1964

Vignettes of AC Transit activities of the past, as gleaned from previous issues of Transit-Times.

- 30 new buses, costing approximately $810,000, were ordered to bring the fleet of new equipment to 340 — more than half the number of coaches in service.
- The last 28 gas-powered "Mack" buses were slated for replacement by these new models, which would end an era in East Bay "motor coach" history.
- The District published a "bus adventuring" booklet, describing and illustrating a scenic and horticultural tour of Berkeley, accessible by regularly scheduled bus routes.
- Richmond Division drivers celebrated the previous month's feat of having bettered their safe-driving statistics for the third month in a row. The drivers had tallied 13,872 miles per accident (compared to the District's established goal of 12,450 miles per accident).
- Almost half the drivers had signed up to compete in a "Bus-O-Rama" to test their skills in solving simulated problems reflecting those encountered in day-to-day driving duties.

New Employees

AC Transit welcomes these new workers

James Breton Maintenance Seminary Division
Daniel Dawson Maintenance Emeryville Division
Eugene Dorsey Maintenance Emeryville Division
Curtis Geranen Maintenance Seminary Division
Ken Lee Maintenance Emeryville Division
Daniel Scales Maintenance Richmond Division
Gustavo Vasquez Maintenance Seminary Division
Valerie Williams Maintenance Emeryville Division

BABY BIRD DOE
Dispatcher J. D. Anderson, Newark Division, took this misplaced parakeet under his protective wing following its being found on a Line 22 bus March 28 by Driver John P. Underwood. The bird's predecessors to enliven the inventory in Lost & Found have included a baby alligator, a bearded (in a child's lunchbox), and a frisky black and white puppy.
Farebox recovery

For Ray Rinehart, President of the Board of Directors, it is a matter of "looking ahead and recognizing there are things outside the District's boundaries which might eventually affect us — and affect us dramatically."

Rinehart refers to legislation introduced in Sacramento or Washington, D.C., which applies to other transit properties or projects, but which could ultimately involve AC Transit.

"The Directors must be alert to what is going on in Congress and at the State Capitol in Sacramento," he says, "and we must exhibit courage and conviction by taking stands when and where it's appropriate."

Private competition

Rinehart refers to Assembly Bill 2410 as another example. On the surface, the bill appears to point to Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) and the Los Angeles area. AB 2410 says that private operators, such as taxis, jitneys or bus companies, must notify public transit agencies of proposed new service in the public transit system's area, and a public meeting for review of the effects on the public transit system should be held before any such license is granted.

"This clearly could have implications for us," Rinehart says. "We obviously would want to have some input into how private operations would affect us if they began running service in our area. Therefore, we are supporting SCRTD on this measure."

Another proposal which directly impacts AC Transit financially is Assembly Bill 2504 by Assemblyman Johan Klehs of San Leandro. This measure, if passed, would exempt transit systems from California State sales tax when leaseback agreements are made between private financiers and public transit agencies. If approved, this bill would mean a savings of $30,000 to AC Transit. The Board has officially supported AB 2504.

Rinehart says, "It is both our legal and moral responsibility as elected officials to be aware of these types of issues. And it is our duty as policy makers for AC Transit to take a stand on legislation which involves AC Transit — whether that involvement is direct or indirect."

Legislation: why we take a stand

Our 'Stockholders' Write

I want to let you know what a pleasure it is having (S. J. Jones) as my driver home at night. Our driver is the type who, in getting ready to leave the San Leandro BART station, will wait a few minutes if a train is just pulling in (believe me, it is appreciated, as the trains are sometimes a couple of minutes behind schedule, and the 81 does not run often).

He will wait at a bus stop when he sees a regular passenger hurrying for the bus. Drivers like ours make bus riding a pleasure.

Polly Whitbeck
East Bay

Need better enforcement of "no eating/drinking" rule on buses. This should include gum!

Not only are some gum chewers loud (cracking); gum is left on seats, railings, handles, etc.

K. Clement
Albany

Why can't bus drivers stop near the curb? By stopping so far from the curb, it is very difficult to board or disembark, especially for older people or people with shopping bags. Also, such a policy makes it possible for an accident to occur should a passenger fall.

Ann Egenberger
San Leandro

I do want to put your attention to Carole Horon ... one of your most outstanding drivers. She is courteous and kind and thoughtful. She does enforce the laws of no smoking and eating on the bus. She is always on time, and her smiling attitude is, for me, a good start of my working days.

I think the good drivers should be recommended. I use many buses and made up my mind to let you know about the very outstanding ones.

Ida Tielenburg
San Leandro

I was riding the U Line; the driver (T. D. Wright) was very polite and helpful.

When you're new to an area, it's very nice to have a driver that is helpful. I feel AC drivers are always polite.

John Jorgensen
Martinez

Have generally found your drivers to be a great bunch!

I've not used the bus for quite a while and am now on crutches. They've been most accommodating.

M. O'Grady
Albany

I would like to compliment AC Transit on two drivers (Adriane Knox and Carl Moore).

Adriane and Carl are a credit to AC Transit. They are courteous, helpful, cheerful, and excellent drivers.

Sabra Kelly
Hayward
An adjourned regular meeting March 7, the Board of Directors:

- Approved contract award to Keystone Batteries for furnishing auto batteries in conjunction with RTA joint procurement, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to issue Request-For-Proposals for plant protection and security guard services for new Central Maintenance and Stores facility; scheduled public meeting for review of Five-Year Plan, Fiscal 1985-89, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized General Manager to transfer 4.7 acres of property on Highway 4 to Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, subject to specified conditions, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Approved contract award for parking structure, Hayward Division site, to C. Ovraa & Company, on motion of Director Fajans.
- Approved resolutions authorizing the following: transit vehicles sale/lease-back and transfer/lease agreements; issuance of specified revenue and tax anticipation notes; and filing of applications for federal grants, on motion of Director Fajans.

At an adjourned regular meeting March 21, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to advertise and seek bids for furnishing driver uniforms and for bus tire rental and service, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Adopted resolution of congratulations to Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on groundbreaking for Guadalupe Corridor Light Rail Project, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized participation of specified organizations in Phase II of Request-For-Proposals process relating to new General Offices facility; declared support of California Assembly Bills 2504 and 2410, on motion of Director McDonnell (see story, pg. 10).
- Authorized General Manager to file grant application for demonstration funds to subsidize express bus service between Richmond and Martinez during Fiscal 1984-85, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.