More wheels-to-rails links realized

AC Transit and BART joined this month in inaugurating a new era in East Bay mass transit coordination by signing a formal agreement strengthening inter-system transit services.

The pact followed successful efforts of an ad hoc committee of AC Transit and BART directors to hammer out a mutually acceptable policy leading to added linkage of service. AC Transit representatives were Board President Ray Rinehart and Directors William Betcencourt and Roy Nakadegawa. Acting for BART were Directors Margaret Pryor, Robert Allen and Wilfred Ussey.

Specifically, BART is contracting for more than $10 million in services, including $7 million for express buses and over $3 million for new metropolitan feeder routes and continued night service (previously earmarked for curtailment) connecting BART with many East Bay neighborhoods.

The nine new feeder bus routes will bring new commuter services to industrial areas of Richmond and Hayward, plus specially-tailored bus conduits increasing service availability between BART stations and parts of Albany, north Oakland, Piedmont, western Alameda, and the Eastmont Mall area of East Oakland.

These feeder routes are scheduled to make convenient transfer connections with trains at various BART stations. As an important bonus, it will help address the user-access problem at BART stations where travelers now face serious parking problems. Also, augmented service to BART substantially improves availability of transit along many East Bay streets. (see story, pg. 4)
Major service adjustments take place

Major adjustments in AC Transit bus routes — including the implementation of new services in many East Bay communities — have gone into effect. New bus service in the Oakland area includes:

- Local Line B-2 BART feeder shuttle service between Trestle Glen and BART/19th St. Station, replacing current Line B transbay bus service during all non-commute periods.
- Local Line C-2 BART feeder shuttle service — with much improved 15-minute midday frequencies between buses — linking Piedmont and Piedmont Ave. with BART/MacArthur Station. This route replaces Line C transbay service midday, weekday evenings and weekends and holidays.
- Local Line E-2 BART feeder service linking the Claremont Hotel area with BART/Rockridge and BART/MacArthur stations during all non-commute periods.
- Line 62 midday BART feeder service linking Ballena Bay and western Alameda with BART/Lake Merritt Station and Laney College.

Revamp of discount fare card program gets Board’s OK

A face lift for the regional Transit Discount ID Card, plus a revamping of the program which provides discounted fares to elderly and disabled bus riders, got the green light from AC Transit's Board of Directors on August 22.

The new cards — re-titled "Regional Transit Connection Discount Cards" — provide reduced fares on AC Transit and all other public transit systems in nine Bay Area counties to citizens 65 or older and to the certified disabled.

Under the revised program, persons who qualify for reduced fare identification cards will be expanded to include: veterans with disability ratings of 50 percent or higher; those denied a California Driver License for specified medical reasons; and visitors to the Bay Area (for up to six months) who have valid Trans

Discount identification from their home towns.

Transition to the new system requires re-registration of all current "Bay Region Transit Discount ID Card" holders. The transition period begins Oct. 1 and will continue through Feb. 28, 1985, to provide ample time for current holders to secure the updated card, which will be issued free upon surrender of the old cards. Those getting a card for the first time, or securing a visitor's card, will pay a $2 administrative fee. Cards are valid for three years.

General Manager L. A. Kimball assured the Board that a major outreach campaign will be mounted to contact all senior centers and other appropriate locations to make convenient arrangements for reissuance of the ID cards.

AC Transit’s Board of Directors has officially recorded its opposition to Proposition 36 on the November ballot, which could further cripple bus operations.

"The sweeping proposal reportedly was devised to simply 'revise' provisions of Proposition 13, the 1978 Jarvis-Gann Property Tax Initiative," General Manager L. A. Kimball reported to the Board during a regular meeting September 25.

The original Proposition 36 virtually eliminated the power of AC Transit's Board of Directors to adjust property taxes to offset increasing costs of providing bus services.

Now this new proposition would establish tight new strictures on 'fees' for public services. And transit fares are included in the definition of 'fees'.

Proposition 36 would limit increases in 'fees' to changes in the cost of living — presumably the Consumer Price Index — for the previous twelve month period. Because of the unpredictable variables, AC Transit cannot predict accurately the dollar revenues that would be generated by any nominal increase in fees for services rendered.

"Every fare increase drives an unpredictable number of patrons away from the system," Kimball stated. "Since we cannot project actual dollar returns with any precision, meeting the limitation by matching revenue increases to the CPI would be virtually impossible."

"Should the financial need exceed revenues expected from a fare increase based on the current-low CPI fluctuations of the prior twelve months," Kimball noted, "Proposition 36 would require a two-thirds vote of the District's electorate. Given the obvious impracticalities of holding elections for relatively minor fare adjustments, it seems probable that 'fees' for transit services could not be increased in proper increments to meet revenue needs."

"It seems quite likely that this measure would force AC Transit to meet rising operating costs by adopting annual fare increases in odd, arbitrary amounts... " Proposed as infrequently as possible, to meet pressing financial needs."

Line DB buses offer another transbay commute option

AC Transit's Line DB — connecting BART and the East Bay with high-tech employment sites in the Palo Alto area — began service September 10.

Buses operate via the Dumbarton Bridge at 30-minute intervals during weekday commute periods.

The service connects BART/Union City on the east with Stanford Industrial Park and the Palo Alto Transit Center on the west.

In other inter-system links, Line DB makes connections with Santa Clara County Transit, SamTrans, and CALTRAIN. The AC Transit service is funded by Metropolitan Transportation Commission for a one year demonstration period, with hopes for permanent status.

Line DB backer, Assemblyman Byron Sher (D-Palo Alto), spoke at inaugural ceremonies.
Facilities improvement

Federal funding approval gives impetus to upgrading sites

AC Transit’s system-wide facility improvement program received a substantial lift with last month’s verification of a total of $37.7 million in federal aid, which will help to fund the capital projects aimed at rehabilitating two operating yards and building a new division. The aid also will serve to ease some of the strain on the District’s operating budget.

Of the total, about $24 million will be applied to rebuilding two veteran bus yards, virtually from pavements to rooftops. These are Seminary Division, East Oakland, from which some 335 buses operate; and Emeryville Division — almost unchanged since the 1930s — which fields about 240 buses.

Another $5.6 million will help fund a new operational facility, behind the Hayward Airport, to house a fleet of 250. This site also will absorb the maintenance and dispatching activities currently conducted in a satellite division in Newark and the training function now located at Seminary Division.

“This assurance of full funding of three modern operational facilities is a big boost to AC Transit,” says General Manager L. A. Kimball. “Streamlined, up-to-date facilities for maintaining and dispatching the bus fleet will yield more efficient service to bus riders and the general public.”

Announcement of grant approval was made by Alfred A. Dellibovi, deputy administrator, Urban Mass Transit Administration, who capped his Oakland visit with an inspection of AC Transit sites now under construction or soon to be.

The funding package also includes some $7.8 million to help with the System’s operating expenses.

Verification of funding for the operating divisions occurred just as AC Transit was gearing-up to celebrate official opening of the new $21 million Central Maintenance facility on East 14th St. and 105th Ave. in Oakland. The ultra-modern new complex, where all future heavy-duty maintenance work will be performed, is scheduled to open October 26.

Featuring the newest technology for in-chassis diagnostic assessment of running gear and expected to enhance greatly the effectiveness of the System’s long-standing preventive maintenance program, the nine-acre site houses 150 employees, including Purchases and Stores.

The warehouse and maintenance structure covers nearly 200,000 square-feet and includes 23 service bays in addition to the diagnostic center.

“This is the greatest single step forward in maintenance procedures since our District began operations back in 1960,” Kimball points out. “It truly prepares us to maintain our fleet into the decades to come.”
FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

UNIFORMLY CHIC — Bus drivers Cheryl Washington and Charles Galinsky model trendy new uniforms being considered for adoption by the District. These colorful new garments were designed by Gwen Marie McCane of Oakland and executed, for experimental purposes, by Angelica, a San Jose-based fashion house. Cameraman Lou Calderon recorded the prototype fashions for the benefit of Channel 4 news viewers. Refinement of design details and selection of materials continue pending official adoption of an updated uniform, after which the District could go out to bid.

ACTIONS HONORED — AC Transit Driver Gerald Shaw and Highland Hospital personnel were honored by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors September 11 for efforts in saving the life of seven-year-old Jesse Fagerhaugh, victim of a stabbing on an AC Transit bus in June. Speed in getting the boy to the hospital quickly and Highland’s emergency services are credited with saving his life. Those honored included (from left) Tom Miller, Highland Medical Director; Shaw; Willie Mae Thompson, Alameda County Health Agency Care Services; and Mary Davis, Highland Director of Nursing.

BIKES INVITED — Herman Lawrence (foreground) and Kevin Frye, Maintenance, check prototype bus rack — built at the Emeryville yard — which will be installed on a dozen Line T buses. Line T was selected to test the two-bike, front-loading racks because of its frequency of service, access to the Alameda and transbay cycling areas, and capacity to accommodate cyclists. The year-long demonstration project, which grew out of planning sessions between AC Transit staff and the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, will assess feasibility of bikes-on-buses for possible expansion to other routes.

PLAY-OFFS — One forfeiture failed to stop Newark Division’s team which bounced back, into second, before late September play-offs. Other District players were pictured in the July-August issue.
Woska assumes new post as District resources manager

William J. Woska, former Director of Personnel for City of San Mateo, has been named human resources manager for AC Transit. A graduate of California State University, Sacramento, in Psychology and Sociology, Woska also earned a degree from Lincoln University College of Law, San Francisco.

A native of Sacramento who previously held personnel administrative posts with County of San Diego and City of Sacramento, Woska assumed his duties with the District August 20. He will oversee a department whose staff operates within the following areas: man-

The retirement round-up

- Jesus Aguirre, Jr., Driver, Emeryville Division, 24 years.
- Remo Benedetti, Driver, Richmond Division, 38 years.
- Alden R. Blick, Transportation Supervisor, 32 years.
- Dudley L. Choate III, Driver, Newark Division, 11 years.
- Gabe Davis, Sr., Driver, Seminary Division, 18 years.
- Milton Hadden, Driver, Seminary Division, 18 years.
- Amy Martinez, Driver, Newark Division, 18 years.
- Donald E. Michaels, Driver, Newark Division, 21 years.
- Harold J. Senst, Driver, Emeryville Division, 19 years.
- Carey B. Walker, Driver, Seminary Division, 22 years.
Actions of the Board

At a regular meeting July 11, the Board of Directors:
• Approved ‘Negative Declaration’ related to initial environmental study of proposed new General Office facility in downtown Oakland, on motion of Director McDonnell.

At an adjourned regular meeting July 25, the Board of Directors:
• Adopted service changes and new AC/BART transfer (see story, pg.4), on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

At a regular meeting August 8, the Board of Directors:
• Awarded contract for Seminary Division soundwall and site lighting to Stacy and Witbeck, Inc., and West Bay Contractors-Engineers, Inc., on motion of Director Fajans.

At an adjourned regular meeting August 22, the Board of Directors:
• Authorized travel of two to Colorado to evaluate specified Neoplan 26-foot coaches for District needs, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Awarded contract for Seminary Division parking structure to C. Overaa & Company, on motion of Director Berk.
• Adopted resolution authorizing filing of federal grant applications, on motion of Director Fajans.
• Authorized General Manager to enter agreement with BART to provide bus services (see story, pg.3), on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Adopted fare and policy for new AC/BART two-way transfer, on motion of Director Fajans.
• Authorized General Manager to enter agreement with Crain & Associates for onboard survey and passenger analysis; authorized new Regional Transit Connection Discount Card Program (see story, pg.4), on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
• Approved bicycle rack project on Line T (see story, pg.9), on motion of Director Shepard.