Passengers take part in System survey
I have been a faithful rider of AC Transit for over 10 years, and you are to be commended for the finest system in the nation. Over the years I have ridden with a good many drivers, and I must say that most of them are good. Earl L. Deets, however, stands tall above all the rest. He is excellent. His composure behind the wheel is superb — never nervous. He is easy on the gas and on the brakes.

Believe me, it is a pleasure to ride with him every morning.

G. F. Ryan
Oakland

I boarded the bus in front of Capwell’s on my way to Park Boulevard. I had no idea where I was going to get off; in fact, I was frightened and confused. Your driver, William Palmer, was so kind and understanding in showing me where to go.

It’s nice to have nice people helping the public. I am an elderly lady who rides the buses almost every day. It’s the mode of transportation I have to depend on.

Noma L. Hoffman
Oakland

I wish to commend Carl Moore for his skillful dexterity in safe handling of his bus. He averted a crash on University Avenue, Berkeley, by turning out of the lane ahead of him and getting into an open lane. There otherwise might have been an accident.

Elinor Martin
Berkeley

On behalf of all the children of Sequoia Nursery who had the pleasure of experiencing the AC Transit bus coming to school last week, we thank you! Your extra effort made it a truly delightful time for the kids that they will not soon forget.

Mothers of Sequoia Nursery School, Oakland

Customer Services Supervisor Lorie Gonzales and Clerks Robert Kearney and Ernest Montgomery are the recipients of written praise from a pair of seniors who received new “Regional Transit Connection Discount Cards” last month through AC Transit’s ongoing outreach program.

Kearney and Montgomery were applauded by the letter-writers — Licta Konizeski and her sister Alice Jansson — for “service above and beyond the call of duty” during discount fare card processing January 8 at San Leandro’s Friendship House. The two clerks were characterized as “Smiling, patient and kind to all our repetitive questions, mistakes, and clumsy flummery.”

Gonzales also received accolades for helping initiate “this excellent program” and for helpful responsiveness during a number of telephone conversations.

The seniors’ praise extended outward to encompass other AC Transit employees:

“We have never encountered an unpleasant or discourteous bus driver, male or female, either,” the letter concluded.

Transit dollars

Directors focus on backing Foran Bill

In line with its recent past history of seeking stable, secure sources of operating and capital funds, AC Transit is now backing passage of State Senator John Foran’s SB 290, introduced January 30, which promises to provide some of those badly needed dollars by way of greater gas tax revenues.

The bill sponsored by Foran (D-San Francisco), Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, calls for a five-cent-per-gallon increase in the gas tax paid by Californians, thus garnering an estimated extra $590 million in annual revenues to support transit and street/highway improvements.

AC Transit’s advocacy of SB 290, which Directors have decreed to be the focus of the District’s legislative effort during the remainder of this year’s session of the state legislature, is the latest chapter in a years-long saga seeking relief from shrinking transit funding.

That saga began in 1978 when California voters passed Proposition 13, which drastically decreased the property tax revenue which previously had provided 40% of total funding for the District’s two-county bus service.

During this difficult financial period, AC Transit passengers had to assume a larger share of the costs of service, resulting, since 1978, in a 140% increase in the adult basic fare (now 60 cents). Those past fare increases have allowed the District to meet its state-mandated 33% farebox recovery ratio.

The current base fare could rise again — by as much as 30% — with implementation of transit funding cuts proposed February 4 by the Reagan administration. If approved, such cuts would delete another $6 million of already scarce AC Transit dollars, requiring a raise to an estimated 80-cent basic adult fare and possible service adjustments/personnel cut-backs.

AC Transit’s recent attempts to brighten this worsening financial picture include December Board resolutions urging both state and federal officials to recognize the adverse implications of reduced transit funding. With Foran’s bill offering specific hope for relief, however, Directors have decreed even more active legislative advocacy. This includes lobbying among legislators representing East Bay constituencies and seeking support of SB 290 among local elected officials; business and community leaders; and passengers within the District’s 750-square-mile service area.

The stakes in maintaining certain levels of service are particularly high because so many AC Transit passengers have no other mobility options. Included among the ranks of those totally dependent on bus service are many elderly, handicapped, low-income, and school-age passengers.

Broad survey will assess Bay transportation corridors

One important element of the District’s current research and planning effort — the transportation corridor assessment project — moved ahead a step with approval by the Board of Directors of a contractor to carry out the $100,000 study.

Part of a larger-scale study aimed at planning AC Transit services up to the year 2000, the corridor assessment survey will evaluate all existing and potential major transportation corridors within Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Included will be trends in employment and residential growth, changes in people’s travel patterns, and projections of travel demand during the last decade and-a-half of this century.

The project has been 80% funded by an Urban Mass Transportation Administration planning grant. A Berkeley firm, Cambridge Systematics, Inc., was chosen by the Board to head the research team.
Recruitment effort Attracts candidates For part-time ranks

AC Transit's invitation to would-be bus drivers drew a crowd to the Oakland Coliseum's Exhibition Hall in February to file Applicant Information Cards.

Human Resources Department had announced, via bus posters and other ads, that the District was "Looking for people with driving ambition." Respondents were men and women, 25 or older. During the three-day period, their aim was to get on the eligibility list from which all future part-time bus drivers will be hired.

Next step is entry of Applicant Information data into the computer, which will make random selections for new hires. Those selected will be called in to file employment applications, undergo entry examinations, and then, if successful, go into training.

Human Resources estimates that up to 18 applicants may be hired each month to offset normal attrition in the bus driver ranks. Once on the job, part-timers get first chance to fill vacant full-time drivers positions and may apply for any posted vacancy for which they qualify.

Staff additions and promotions take place

Past weeks have been marked by the appearance of newcomers to the System and promotion of veteran employees.

New safety coordinator Raymond Cambra worked in safety, security, and engineering positions in Algeria and Libya, among other locations, during his nearly 40 years of experience. Most recently, he was with the Public Utilities Commission and San Francisco MUNI.

Cambr graduated from LaSalle University with a bachelor's degree in Industrial Management-Safety.

Warren Cormier, AC Transit's new quality control supervisor, joined the District's staff following eight years at Gillig Corporation of Hayward, where he was quality control manager and production supervisor. He also worked for Mack Trucks of Hayward, where he served as an industrial engineer.

Gary Schmidt joined the District as electronics shop foreman, following nearly ten years experience with Motorola, including working with AC Transit as a coordinator on the installation and implementation of the radio communications center in Emeryville.

Wayne Onizuka was named assistant superintendent, Seminary Division, February 1, transferring from his position as acting labor relations representative in Human Resources.

Onizuka began his transit career as a driver and also worked as a transportation supervisor and a personnel analyst.

Racing fans “saddle up” For horse track season

TRACK TREKS — Bay Area horse racing fans “saddled up” via AC Transit buses when the thoroughbred season opened February 5th at Golden Gate Fields. There are direct bus connections to the Albany site for a $1 one-way fare for local riders and a $2.25 one-way fare for riders who board at the Transbay Transit Terminal, San Francisco. East Bay boarding locations for Line 94 include BART Berkeley and North Berkeley stations. Buses leave two hours before post time, with return service after the fifth, seventh, and final races.

Two transit retirees die: Gave 63 years of service

Harry L. Hovland, 94, who retired in 1956 after 30 years of service with AC Transit's predecessor organization, died January 25 in Sebastopol. He had retired as a Key System train operator.

Hovland is survived by his widow, Ruby.

George Effinger, 69, who was a Mechanic AA when he retired in 1978 after 33 years of service, died February 13 in Castro Valley. Effinger spent about three decades of his employment tenure at Emeryville.

He is survived by his widow, Helen, and two children: Gordon and Susan.

Juan Perez is the new division chief of labor relations, Human Resources Department. He assumed his duties here on February 11th.

A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Hastings Law School, Perez previously was assistant director for Labor Relations for the California Youth Authority and is a member of the American Arbitration Association.
FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

INFO EXCHANGE — AC Transit representatives joined with others from across the country in a two-day conference on the subject of Affirmative Action, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE). General Manager L.A. Kimball (right) was among local transit executives who welcomed attendees and provided input geared to be helpful to DBE and WBE firms who seek contracts from public transit agencies. Other AC Transit people (above) who contributed to the January 28-29 American Public Transit Association Minority Affairs Committee event included Sandy Privett, Donn DesBoine, and Cynthia Dorsey (second, third, and fifth from left, respectively).

AWARD WINNER — Senior PBX/Information Clerk Florene Brennan received special recognition in the first part of 1985 for receiving the most commendations from customers during the preceding 12-month period. She has been with the District since February 11, 1974, when she joined AC Transit as a PBX/Information Clerk. Ceremonies honoring her for outstanding courtesy and efficiency were held in the Telephone Information Center January 23.

Three more enter 25-year safe driving ranks

SAFETY CIRCLE — Operators (top, left to right) Carl E. Swanson, Clarence H. Tinsley, and Eddie A. Haffer received recognition last month for having completed 25 years of safe driving. The veteran drivers have a combined tally of traveling safely more than three million miles while carrying more than six million passengers. They are, respectively, the 55th, 53rd, and 54th AC Transit drivers to reach the quarter-century mark in safe operations. Swanson also is shown (below left) with wife Wadie, and children: Michael, and Faye Amey, who works in Maintenance, Seminary Division. Tinsley (above) accepted his pin from Robert J. Shamoon, assistant general manager for operations; while Haffer (above left) posed with his plaque and participating spouse Virginia. The January 24 ceremonies were held in the office of General Manager L. A. Kimball.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting January 23, the Board of Directors:

- Adopted resolution amending a prior one relating to ground lease agreement for the General Offices facility, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted resolutions authorizing filing of application or claims with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for half-cent sales tax revenues, net toll bridge revenues, State Transit Assistance Funds, and Transportation Development Act funds, all for Fiscal Year 1985-86, on motion of Director Wiggins.
- Approved award of contract for Maintenance buildings, Hayward, to S. J. Amoroso Company, Inc./Verrett Construction Company, on motion of Director Wiggins.
- Approved award of contract for Transportation building, Emeryville, to C. Overaa & Company, on motion of Director Wiggins.
- Approved policy position regarding distribution of BART Sales Tax funds, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized General Manager to enter agreement with Richardson Security Company for mobile patrol security services, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Adopted resolution relating to standards and training of District-employed peace officers, on motion of Director McDonnell.

At an adjourned regular meeting February 6, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized travel of Board members and staff representatives to attend March 10-13 Legislative Conference of American Public Transit Association in Washington, D.C.; and travel of Board and staff to attend April 20-24 APTA Western Conference in San Antonio, Texas, on motion of Director Wiggins.
- Adopted policy position concerning California Senate Bill 290 (see story, page 3), on motion of Director Wiggins.