As AC Transit proudly celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, the doughty Eastbay bus system also less proudly shows its age. When it took over and expanded the historic Key System in 1960, the district had the power to raise operating money through property tax increases. But Proposition 13 ended that in 1978 and left the system minus 25 percent of its previous operating revenue.

Ever since, AC Transit has scrambled to make up the gap from federal and state sources, supplementing bus fares that account for only 35 percent of its $149 million annual budget. And though fares went from 25 cents in 1978 to 35 cents, 50 cents and now 60 cents, the cost of serving AC's 210,000 daily riders still must be subsidized by a dollar per passenger per trip.

The AC Transit board of directors must find new funding formulas and operating savings to make up a projected $5 million annual operating deficit over the next five years. Its ultimate choices are already clear. It must muster the political will not only to raise fares again as a short-term source of increased revenue, but also to cut back on least-patronized routes. Raising fares and cutting inefficient routes are guaranteed to elicit patron outrage. And when two-thirds of riders come from families making less than $20,000 a year, board reluctance to move in those directions is understandable.

An increase in the basic fare from 60 cents to 70 cents and in transbay fares from $1.25 to $1.50 would bring fares in line with cost-of-living increases over the last quarter-century. Across-the-board increases would raise more revenue than fare hikes only for more affluent transbay commuters. "All riders contribute to the deficit, not just the 20 percent who are transbay riders," AC board member Jerry Wiggins points out.

Even at 10 cents more, Eastbay bus fares would still be cheaper than those in other major cities with low- and moderate-income populations. Fares are $5 cents in Los Angeles, 90 cents in New York and $1 in Philadelphia. San Francisco bus fares remain at 60 cents because the Municipal Railway is heavily subsidized by San Francisco city and county general funds, a luxury AC Transit does not enjoy.

Even with an increase, the fare box won't cover all of AC's costs. For operating subsidies, the board should look beyond its traditional sources of revenue and explore entrepreneurial opportunities. It should work to:

- Establish hour bus-only lanes on the Bay Bridge and its approaches to lure more passengers and increase farebox revenues.
- Increase Bay Bridge auto tolls to $1, with most of the extra 25 cents going to subsidize AC Transit's maintenance costs.
- Sell maintenance services to other bus companies from its modern and underutilized Oakland repair center.
- Identify other profitable markets for bus service beyond its Alameda-Contra Costa county district. 

AC Transit Directors voted to increase bus fares between the East Bay and San Francisco on January 1, 1986, and set the date for a public hearing to consider adjustments in local fares. The Board's action on transbay fares — expected to bring in additional annual revenue of approximately $750,000 — took place at a November 26 meeting.

The hearing to receive passenger and public input on local fares was set for January 22, 7:30 p.m., at Metropoitan Transportation Commission headquarters, 101-8th St., Oakland. Until the Board hears and reviews comments from that hearing, local fares will remain at current levels. Action on transbay fares came after review of information from a September 10 public hearing and of staff reports emphasizing the District's need to generate more revenue.

AC Transit bus patrons crossing the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge will pay, as of January 1, the following fares:

**ADULTS:** Zone 1, $1.50; Zone 2, $1.85; Zone 3, $2.25.
**YOUTH, SENIORS, HANDICAPPED:** Zone 1, 70 cents; Zone 2, 85 cents; Zone 3, $1.05.
**MONTHLY PASSES:** Zone 1, $54; Zone 2, $67; Zone 3, $81.

Currently, distance-based transbay fares range from $1.25 to $1.75 for adults; and from 60 cents to 80 cents for youths, seniors, and the handicapped.

Riders who now use passes for their transbay commuting have been paying at this rate: Zone 1, $45; Zone 2, $54; Zone 3, $63.

**Patrons on AC Transit’s new Line DB, which provides service across the Dum­barton Bridge, also will note a fare hike as of January 1 — to $1.50 from the current $1.25.**

Although the transit funding picture has changed drastically in recent years, three-quarters of these revenues still are dedicated entirely to BART, leaving only one-quarter available for allocation toward needs of major transit operators in the three BART counties.

Director Fajans reminded the committee of 1979 legislation (closely following passage of Proposition 13, which severely slashed the District's financial base) calling for development of long-term financial management plans to support AC Transit, BART and San Francisco MUNI. As 1985 draws to a close, AC Transit still has not had the benefit of any such long-term financial program, he stated. Instead, the MTC joins the three transit agencies in a process of protracted annual discussions producing compromises labelled by Fajans "short-term bandaid answers to our requirements." (Continued on page 5)
Richmond Division operator, Three retirees meet deaths

A driver and three retirees have died in recent weeks.

Nathaniel Greene, 49, who retired earlier this year after 22 years of service, died November 17 in San Pablo. A driver at East Oakland Division before he retired, Greene was a resident of El Cerrito.

He is survived by his widow, Sandra, and children: Yarmonica, Thomas, and Timothy.

Marcia Barrow, 27, a Richmond Division driver with three years of service, died November 9. She was a resident of Richmond, and is survived by her children—Betty, Ericka, Tommey, and Dineka—and her mother, Betty Lee Buggs.

Ralph F. Inklebarger, 69, a retired East Oakland driver who had completed 39 years of transit service when he left AC Transit in 1981, died November 7 in Hayward. He was a resident of San Leandro.

Inklebarger was among the ranks of drivers qualifying for the District’s 25-year Safe Driving Award. He achieved this milestone in 1977.

He is survived by his widow, Minnie Bell.

Frank A. Rose, 73, who retired as a Seminary Division driver in 1975, died October 25 in Oregon, where he made his home. At the time of retirement, he had completed 31 years of employment with AC Transit and its predecessor.

He is survived by his widow, Genevieve.

Safe drivers honored

WINNERS! — Edith B. Stiles (top photo), displays the patch marking her three decades of safe driving. The 30-year record has been achieved by only one other woman driver and eight men in the history of AC Transit and its predecessor companies. She launched her public transit career in the East Bay when she qualified for bus driver on Nov. 17, 1953. Glendel E. George (bottom photo), having reached the 25-year safe driving mark, receives his award from Emeryville Division General Superintendent Loren A. Ball. George started as a driver Nov. 1, 1957. Ceremonies for both drivers were December 3 at Emeryville Division.

State legislators asked to back transit funding consensus

(Continued from page 3)

“Such subsidies are barely sufficient to meet our bottom-line funding needs, let alone allowing us to engage in long-term financial planning,” he declared, noting that AC Transit’s situation is further complicated because the allocations—which make up more than 40 percent of the District’s budget—usually are established only weeks before the beginning of each fiscal year. In sharp contrast, the Director noted, funding of 100 percent of BART’s operational needs (plus some capital requirements) is virtually assured each year, and MUNI is in a relatively comfortable position of being able to count on the City and County of San Francisco for financial support.

Fajans urged the legislators to promote development of a regional consensus on the distribution of currently available finances to support mass transit operations:

“We support and endorse the concept of new starts and service extensions provided careful plans are laid and implemented, from the beginning, toward funding their continuing operation from new sources of revenues—and not at the expense of existing transit service.” Fajans declared.

“Sufficient discretionary monies are available, potentially, to maintain and add to current levels of service—and without adverse impact on major capital expansions,” he added. “However, we have not been able to persuade our counterparts to allocate adequate levels of discretionary dollars to maintain and improve the region’s long-existing transit service.”

During his testimony before the Senate Transportation Committee, Fajans (who represents AC Transit’s Berkeley and north Oakland areas) was flanked by Board Vice President Linda Shepard (who represents Fremont and Newark) and Jerome Wiggins (who represents western Contra Costa County and parts of Berkeley).
The District’s new Training and Education Center drew positive reviews from scores of officials and educators during ribbon-cutting ceremonies Oct. 25th.

“This facility stands as a monument to AC Transit’s dedication and determination to provide good transit service,” said Assemblyman Elihu Harris of Oakland. “The District is very important to the economic and social vitality of our area. Many people are dependent on mass transit, and their needs demand highly-trained transit workers.”

Hayward Mayor Alex Giuliani predicted that the Center’s output “will help answer our transportation problem.” And Assemblyman Johan Klehs of San Leandro stated: “This Center demonstrates that AC Transit is keeping a competitive edge in training employees.”

Then on Oct. 26th, a “Family Day” picnic gave employees, retirees, and other guests an opportunity to tour the Center and view its state-of-the-art educational environment.
FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

Checking for clean coaches

NEAT FLEET CONTEST — Gene Gardiner, operations center manager, is one member of a team of inspectors now making unannounced visits to divisions to check on the cleanliness of buses. This program will result in the selection, each month, of the division which produces the cleanest bus fleet during a competition for service employees which runs until June 30, 1986. Eligible service employees within the winning divisions will be competing for a series of awards which include department store gift certificates and United States savings bonds. Plaques will be posted, also, at divisions singled out for "neat fleet" honors. The program is based on the philosophy that clean buses are an integral part of service, impacting on the morale of both passengers and drivers.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE — Students from the California School for the Blind in Fremont, including Richard Bland (right) and Scott Brown (left) were part of an educational training program directed by their instructor Leanne Lauren (center) in November. AC Transit provided the coach, Driver Dave Triplett and Supervisor Ron Johnsen to assist students in learning to ride. Such an activity is part of the District's outreach policy for residents of the East Bay service area.

FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

TRANSIT TALK — Festivities connected with the October opening of the Training and Education Center brought together this group of women transit professionals — some still on the job, some retired after many years of service. They are (left to right) Driver Wilma Morgan; Superintendent "Mo" Gross; Retirees Marjorie Ezell and Reba Gauer; and Supervisor Eleanor Ehmke from 'County Connection'.

INFO SPACES — AC Transit Maintenance Department workers Cliff Snyder (left) and John Wardy (checked shirt) recently installed bulletin boards for posting information relating to a newly introduced motivational program for employees. Seven such display spaces have been placed throughout the District to carry weekly messages on policy, passenger-driver relations, self-help suggestions, and other information designed to be helpful in employees' day-to-day work. Launched in mid-November, the pilot program is a first for the District.
Facelift funded for aged Key System streetcar

The Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, Inc., has received an $8,000 federal grant to restore and preserve a 1911 streetcar once operated by Key System, AC Transit's predecessor. Car No. 352 (as it looks today, bottom photo, compared to its appearance on the streets of Oakland in 1947, top photo) will undergo renovation at the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista Junction, which is operated by volunteers belonging to the railroad association.

The vintage car is one of 60 built in St. Louis, Mo., for the Oakland Traction Company, which later became Key System, providing streetcar service along routes in Berkeley, Alameda and Oakland until the company's conversion to buses in 1948.

Following restoration, the vintage car will join the museum's more than 100 acquisitions dating from transit's bygone era.

Retirement round-up

- Mario Benassi, Machinist, Central Maintenance, 31 years.
- Irene Bieneman, Assistant Payroll Supervisor, General Office, 30 years.
- Virgil E. Bright, Dispatcher, Richmond Division, 25 years.
- Phyllis C. Fehr, Driver, East Oakland Division, 34 years.
- Harold E. Hagler, Driver, Richmond Division, 11 years.
- Charles W. Skaggs, Driver, Emeryville Division, 13 years.
- David R. Stewart, Driver, Newark Division, 17 years.
- Dorothy Williams, Ticket Seller, Transbay Terminal, 28 years.
- Richard K. Windrich, Dispatcher, Newark Division, 25 years.
- John Zorman, Jr., Driver, East Oakland Division, 39 years.
At an adjourned regular meeting October 30, the Board of Directors:

- Approved service adjustments on Lines L and 88, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized travel of Board members to Urban Mass Transportation Administration symposium on “Private Transit and the Public Sector” November 18-19 in Orlando, Florida, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

At a regular meeting November 13, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized travel of Acting General Manager to American Public Transit Association Workshop on Transit Insurance December 12-13 in Washington, D.C.; and of the Training and Education Manager to the American Society for Training and Development Conference May 18-23 in St. Louis, Missouri, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Adopted resolution supporting I-80 Corridor Study, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

Board establishes New fare structure For transbay riders

(Continued from page 3)

last year, some Directors expressed a deeper concern in regard to potential local increases, which, said Board President William J. Bettencourt, will affect “those least able to afford them.”

At the present time, local fares are set at 60 cents for adults; 40 cents for youths; and 15 cents for seniors and the handicapped. Passes providing adults a month’s unlimited rides on local routes now sell for $24.

“By raising transbay fares,” Bettencourt stated, “we feel we are impacting those who have employment and who are generally more able to absorb the increases. No Director is anxious to raise fares, but we must produce additional revenues to continue operations at present levels.”

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