Japanese television documentary
To include Accessibility segment
What the Press is saying about transit

THE TRIBUNE

A very pleasant ride on the 40 bus

Maybe it was because of the rain. Maybe nasty weather brings out the community spirit. But on one of our last rainy days I was on the 40 bus, and I thought I had stumbled onto the set for a training film, "How to use the public transit system with a smile."

I'm serious. If you know your buses, you're probably thinking that I'm making this up or that I was hallucinating on the bus. The 40 has the reputation as the worst line for everything that makes buses undesirable.

It also happens to drive through East Oakland, the heartland of Oakland's diverse community. I know some people will think the latter statement explains the former, that the line's difficulties are attributable to the fact the route follows the artery of Oakland's black-brown-yellow-red communities. I don't share that view.

Truthfully, I've never had a bad experience on the 40. I ride infrequently. But whenever I do, I always enjoy it, impressed all over again by Oakland's rich ethnic diversity and easy mix.

And this particular rainy day, the bus was a community of chatting, smiling, courteous people. I thought I was in a mobile utopian commune. Had we driven through a cloud of laughing gas or happy dust or something?

Teenagers were hopping out of their seats to let senior riders sit down like it was a new dance. One lanky young man with still baby-smooth skin gave up his seat three times, twice to older people, once to a pregnant woman. Three times. If that wasn't enough, this young knight in a pea coat helped a young mother lift her baby carriage off the bus • • •

Across the aisle a woman in her late 20s gets up to give her seat to an elderly man. He hesitated as if his male pride might have kept him from accepting the young woman's offer. A sudden stop decided for him, tossing him gently into the seat.

Another woman passed the standing passengers, bumping someone's arm as she went by. "Excuse me," was out of her mouth before the person noticed the bump. Is this a city? Is this 1986? The polite civility all over the bus was almost unbelievable.

People were talking to each other, actually striking up conversations with strangers they would probably never see again. A middle-aged man, holding a large pane of glass, and a middle-aged woman next to him discussed the storm that blew a tree limb through his front window • • •

The bus zoomed along. The young knight was standing again, talking to a young woman who had just started going to his high school. The older woman started talking about the loss of her only son. The fact that everyone was of a different race was seemingly noticeable only to me.

It was raining. Everyone was happy and friendly on the 40. City life felt warm and rich, spiced with pleasant and interesting encounters. I felt like I was dreaming while I was awake.

(This is excerpted from a column by the Oakland Tribune's Brenda Payton.)

System seeks new funding base

New state law insuring stable sources of funding to support bus service in the years to come has been proposed by two East Bay Assemblymen — Elihu Harris (D-Oakland) and Tom Bates (D-Berkeley).

The legislation which the District is backing is modification of state law governing allocation of half-cent sales tax monies collected in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco Counties to support BART. Though the Bay Area's rail system would continue to be guaranteed 75 percent of these tax dollars, the proposal advocates dividing the remaining 25 percent equally between AC Transit and San Francisco MUNI. However, should federal operating assistance be cut substantially, AC Transit proposes that the split be made on the basis of need.

"We are turning to the State Legislature to gain a stable financial base from which we can plan future service improvements," states Linda Shepard, President of the Board of Directors.

In recent years, AC Transit has had to rely on annual discussions with MTC, BART and San Francisco MUNI to negotiate the distribution of operating assistance sufficient to support service — a situation which has prevailed since 1978, when passage of Proposition 13 severely slashed property tax support of AC Transit operations.

"All the others have stable sources to turn to," said Director J. G. "Jerry" Wiggins. "For some reason, in the regional process AC Transit ends up being treated like a second cousin; and that's particularly distressing since we serve patrons who often have no other option."

Among the economic elements proposed for incorporation in the legislation are two agreements tentatively reached in regional discussions: creation of a joint AC Transit/BART pass garnering revenue for both transportation systems; and a new arrangement for BART to reimburse the bus district for riders transferring to or from the rail system.

Additionally, the legislation would allow allocation of Bay Bridge toll receipts to maintaining transit service, rather than limiting its use to capital projects.

"We are only seeking to redistribute funds, which already are available, in a more equitable manner," according to Shepard. "We strongly believe that all three transit systems in the metropolitan Bay Area — AC Transit, BART and MUNI — must have stable, secure funding."
Board, staff share info at APTA events

AC Board President Linda Shepard (top, head of table), also an APTA vice-president, this month convened the Human Resources Committee to plan a July conference in Oakland. Taking part in APTA's Western Conference were (far left) Larry Rosenberg, district secretary/assistant to the GM; and (left) Acting General Manager Gene Gardiner, with Director Roy Nakadegawa.

THE COVER - A half-dozen video-makers brought lights, cameras and note-pads from Tokyo to AC Transit this month to tape segments of a documentary being prepared by Nihon Denpa News for airing on Asahi Broadcasting in Japan. The producers say this documentary will acquaint viewers in the Asian nation with U.S. resources (like accessible bus service) and training available to persons with mobility-impairment— as seen from the perspective of a disabled Japanese student now living and studying in Berkeley. AC Transit's James Lee (center in top photo), accessible services coordinator and himself disabled, was videotaped at his daily work, including this conference with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. The camera crew also taped bus drivers being trained in lift-operation.

Director Michael Fajans moderated a panel on the importance to transit of busways and HOV lanes at the American Public Transit Association's Western Education and Training Conference held in San Jose in mid-April.

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Internal candidates win key positions

Appointments to fill two executive-level positions were announced late this month by Acting General Manager Gene Gardiner following internal promotional recruitment.

As new Director of Operations, George Grandison will be directly responsible for overseeing those functional areas directly involved in putting buses on the street.

In her new position as Director of Administration, Michal Settles will head the District's support functions: Marketing, Personnel and Risk departments, and the Training and Education Center.

Settles joined AC Transit in 1984 as Training and Education Manager after six years with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. She has a master's degree in personnel administration from Howard University. Grandison is a quarter-century veteran with broad experience in all aspects of bus operations.

"The selections were not easy," Gardiner said. "A number of highly qualified candidates were in the running."

Staff attends sessions

(Continued from page 4)

Western Railway Museum

Shows old-time transit

Director Michael Fajans moderated a panel on the importance to transit of busways and HOV lanes at the American Public Transit Association's Western Education and Training Conference. Among attendees representing various functional areas within AC Transit were (top) Loren Ball, general superintendent, Emeryville Division; and (above) Donna Pate and Ben Davis of Employee Relations.

District participation was widespread in the workshops and panels of the American Public Transit Association's Western Education and Training Conference. Among attendees representing various functional areas within AC Transit were (top) Loren Ball, general superintendent, Emeryville Division; and (above) Donna Pate and Ben Davis of Employee Relations.

Historical displays at the Western Railway Museum, located at Rio Vista Junction 10 miles east of Fairfield on State Highway 12 (Solano County), have long attracted AC Transit employees and retirees.

Vintage buses, including some from the fleet of AC Transit's predecessors, are among the collection. Operated by the non-profit Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, Inc., the museum welcomes visitors from noon to 5 p.m. on weekends.
Future commuter bus fleet proposed

Comfortable new express buses speeding crowds of commuters via traffic-choked city streets to 21st Century employment centers: that's a projected improvement in Eastbay commute-hour travel proposed to the Alameda County-wide Transportation Committee by AC Transit early this month.

"We're talking about new coaches, complete with special amenities designed to attract commuters, which would be employed in a manner specially tailored to meet the burgeoning need for high-speed sub-regional trips," says Board President Linda Shepard.

This future commuter service would be significantly different from current local bus routes in that the buses would be limited-stop expresses, providing greatly speeded trips for riders traveling more than just a few blocks in crowded corridors.

"We're not proposing long-haul interstate service, such as BART provides," Shepard notes. "This express bus service would meet an immediate need—linking BART, new bus transit centers, and park-and-ride facilities with high-traffic employment, educational and shopping areas throughout the metropolitan Eastbay."

According to District planners, addition of this sub-regional express bus service would remove 20,000 automobiles from Eastbay highways and byways. After the initial five years of operation, projections say, some 26,000 new bus riders would be using such express service on weekdays.

The countywide committee is compiling a list of projects which might be funded should a new sales tax (being suggested for the November ballot) receive voter approval in Alameda County. AC Transit's proposed projects include purchase of up to 78 new express buses and development of transit centers focused on new park-and-ride lots.

Corridors and areas proposed for such mass transit improvements include:

- College Ave.-Broadway-Webster St., linking UC Berkeley and the College of Arts and Crafts with downtown Oakland and Alameda.
- San Pablo and Telegraph Avenues, from downtown Oakland northward.
- Foothill Blvd.-Bancroft Ave. in East Oakland and San Leandro.
- And in southern Alameda County, the Hesperian Blvd.-Ardendale Blvd.-Newark Blvd. corridor; the blossoming activity centers between BART stations along the Mission Blvd.-East 14th St. corridor; and new industrial areas in south and west Fremont.

"AC Transit wholeheartedly endorses the committee's effort to develop new transportation resources aimed at meeting 21st Century needs," declares the District's board president. "But it will take more than highway and street construction to meet fully projected peak-hour needs. Mass transit has a vital role to play in meeting tomorrow's commute-hour requirements in the metropolitan Eastbay."

According to AC Transit's planners, the proposal calls for a one-time capital program (including purchase of new buses and building of park-and-ride lots) of some $18 million (in 1986 dollars). And, the planners say, operating costs involved over a ten-year period would be some $5.7 million annually—about one-tenth of anticipated revenues that a new half-cent sales tax in the country would generate.

"We're putting this concept in the hopper with the expectation that the list of proposals may evolve considerably by the time implementation may become possible," Shepard says. "We are firmly convinced that if we, collectively, don't start developing sufficient resources now, the Eastbay, including AC Transit, will be found wanting in mobility alternatives in the coming decade."
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting March 26, the Board of Directors:

- Adopted resolutions of appreciation and commendation honoring Mayors Vance Gill of San Leandro and Lionel Wilson of Oakland, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Authorized Acting General Manager to submit required annual Financial Reporting Forms to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and adopted resolutions authorizing filing of claims to receive 1986-87 allocations of half-cent sales tax monies, and Transit Development Act/State Transit Assistance funds, on motion of Director Wiggins.

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At an adjourned regular meeting April 8, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized Acting General Manager to attend APTA's General Managers Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia July 13-16; authorized three representatives to attend the Deloitte, Haskins & Sells Mass Transit Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia June 20-21; authorized one staff member to attend the SAGE Scheduling Users Group Meeting in Toronto May 1-3; and authorized one member of the AC Transit Accessibility Committee to attend UMTA's National Workshop on Bus Wheelchair Accessibility May 7-9 in Seattle, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

- Approved four staff positions as the first phase in organizational restructuring, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Authorized submission of project proposal to the Alameda County Half-Cent Sales Tax Committee, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Scheduled public hearing to solicit input on the Five-Year Plan Update 1987-91, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

- Approved endorsement of State Assembly Bill 3003, on motion of Director Wiggins.