**Transit trends and topics**

**Aim is to ease I-80 congestion**

AC Transit’s transbay riders may benefit in coming years from operational improvements planned for Interstate 80, according to the regional Caltrans officials responsible for that congested stretch of freeway.

In a detailed report to the District’s Board March 5, Caltrans District 4 Director Burch Bachtold described an array of improvements for facilitating the flow of I-80 commute-hour traffic—particularly of high-occupancy vehicles such as buses.

According to Bachtold, about $200 million in I-80 freeway improvements now on the drafting board includes:
- Traffic metering systems to control commute-hour access at major freeway entrances from San Pablo Dam Road south to the Bay Bridge approaches.
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) bypasses at freeway choke points in western Contra Costa and northern Alameda counties.
- Converting the shoulder of the Eastshore Freeway to an additional HOV lane from Ashby Avenue south to the interchange.

**District joins in efforts to aid homeless people**

AC Transit is joining other public agencies throughout the service area in a new partnership aimed at easing the plight of the homeless in the metropolitan East Bay.

Though the brunt of the problem falls on the area’s city and county services, District Directors have acted to address the transportation aspect of the situation by permitting public agencies to purchase discounted bus-ride tickets in bulk.

Such tickets will be distributed to the homeless, who often must travel considerable distances to reach centers which provide identification documents, welfare assistance, and employment.

Says Berkeley Mayor Loni Hancock:

> “We are facing a crisis of homelessness that is reaching Depression-era proportions. The needs of the homeless far exceed the City’s available resources.”

The System’s Board President, Roy Nakadegawa, noted, “This greater access to public transit removes one critical obstacle to alleviating the problems of the homeless. We’re enabling the cities and counties to purchase many more bus tickets — and to give their homeless much more mobility.”

Public agencies in the 38 cities and unincorporated communities served by AC Transit will receive a fifteen percent discount on bulk purchases of bus tickets to help the homeless.

Westbound traffic slows to a crawl each morning out Pinole Valley Road — or even Highway 4, on particularly bad days. Each afternoon, eastbound traffic stalls before reaching the lane reduction at Ashby Avenue and remains stop-and-go until beyond Richmond.

As AC Transit has long recognized, major HOV improvements are essential to counter these crippling slow-downs, because such congestion costs the District dearly. It takes additional buses and drivers to maintain current schedules of service, and the prospects for attracting new riders — thereby gaining greater system productivity — will be seriously diminished if conditions continue to deteriorate. The number of workers residing within the corridor is expected to exceed the projected job market, which means added commuters to other employment centers, compounding the problem.

Bachtold told the Board that I-80 improvements are scheduled to begin in early 1988 and continue in phases into the 1990s.

**Board gets briefing concerning Deficit projected for 1987-88**

Director of Finance Nat Gage “set the stage” at the February 25 Board meeting for beefing up the “Deficit Reduction Plan” to cope with a major FY 1987-88 funding shortfall — an $8.6 million deficit, according to one Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) estimate; and maybe more, if District fears prove true.

Gage reported that the total operating subsidies available for allocation by MTC to AC Transit, BART and MUNI are substantially less than had been projected last April. Much of the difference is attributable to deletion of State Transportation Assistance (STA) funds from Governor George Deukmejian’s budget, plus the unanticipated reduction in the rate of increase for sales tax revenues.

In his report, Gage also detailed the history of the State legislation which provides financial support for continuing “vital transportation services” in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco counties via a half-cent sales tax.

**Sales tax split**

Distribution of the three-county sales tax money currently is based on a formula in which BART gets 75 percent, with the remaining 25 percent available for distribution among BART, AC Transit and MUNI.

In recent years, Gage said, the 25-percent portion had been divided “about evenly” between AC Transit and MUNI, while BART continuing to receive its initial three-quarters designated by the formula.

In the allocation process conducted by the MTC, Gage noted, MTC, BART, MUNI and AC Transit must agree on (1) what constitutes “vital transit service levels” (2) what the “eligible operating expenses” for the year will be (3) what rates of increases for expenditures are forecast (4) how the funds will be distributed.

MTC’s conduct of the process also calls for a variety of adjustments and agreements which must be reached in order for individual agencies like AC Transit to receive funding, Gage stressed. Areas where agreement must be reached include levels of fares, transfers, joint passes and other local funding uses.

“Of course, the results would be balanced budgets to continue vital transit services for all three operators,” Gage said.

**Continuing deficits**

However, as a result of the allocation process continuing to overestimate fare revenues and the unanticipated erosion of other sources of operating subsidies, AC Transit has encountered operating deficits in each of the last three years, despite the fact that the District has held increases in operating costs to levels lower than the rate of increase of the Consumer Price Index.

The projected budget for AC Transit’s operation next fiscal year is $103.6 million for service in District 1 — the area from Hayward north through Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond. The bus system’s smaller operation in District 2 — Fremont and Newark — and in contract services in outlying areas of Alameda and Contra Costa counties are not covered in the allocation discussions with MTC.

Gage said talks would continue in coming weeks, but that he was anxious to provide System policy makers with background data “which will set the stage for our next discussions.”

**Gas tax, transit studied**

California’s current tax rate is nine-cents on every gallon of gas. Of this figure, 4.39 cents goes to cities and counties, with a tiny portion allotted to public transit under current distribution formula.

A study of the gas tax and transportation funding appears in the current issue of the League of Women Voters publication, “Bay Area Monitor”, which may be obtained by contacting LWVBA, 477 15th St., Suite 200, Oakland, CA, 94612.

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The well-publicized problem of working parents' child-care arrangements is a national issue with no easy answers. Now looking at the challenge from the local perspective are AC Transit's Diane Nygaard and Lucille Jackson.

Both Nygaard, operations programming and analysis manager, and Jackson, a driver, felt something might be accomplished by the District without having to wait for political decisions from Washington or Sacramento.

One result: a joint committee of District management and representatives of Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 192, has drawn up a plan for a "Child Care Needs Assessment," which the Board of Directors approved in concept this month. Next step is issuing requests for proposals to private businesses qualified to do the study and to develop a program.

"What we will be doing is identifying problems with respect to child care, assessing our employees' child care needs, reviewing the resources available in Alameda and Contra Costa County which address those needs, evaluating the situation, and suggesting action," Nygaard says.

The child care needs assessment will cost an estimated $25,000, which is being funded through a grant from the federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration, with matching in-kind services to be provided by Regional Transit Association, whose members represent the six major transit districts in the Bay Area.

Class launches program

The pilot class for a new supervisor training program was conducted February 23 and 24 in a program to teach management personnel how to operate more effectively.

Both operations and maintenance personnel are involved in developing the program - called Productivity and Supervisor Skills (PASS) - according to Jim Barlow, maintenance and training coordinator.

The initial class, made up in addition to District employees, of representatives from Golden Gate Transit, Santa Clara County Transit, SamTrans, and Central Contra Costa County Transit, included 16 hours of instruction and a four-hour evaluation session.

"We feel the feedback from this class will enable us to refine the procedures as we develop a standard program for the industry," Barlow said. The project is being developed in conjunction with Golle & Holmes Custom Education, a Minneapolis consulting firm.

"This is a good example of a public agency working with private enterprise to address a need," Barlow said.

Sensitivity is training aim

Increasing bus drivers' sensitivity to the needs and problems of disabled and elderly passengers was the motivation when Directors approved a contract this month for production of a training program by World Institute on Disability, of Berkeley.

The consultant will upgrade existing educational programs for drivers and supervisory staff with the aim of improved implementation of District accessibility policy.

"This program will build on our previous positive actions," says James Lee, coordinator for accessible services. "Additionally, we feel the package developed here will be helpful to other transit agencies, such as San Francisco MUNI. We are hopeful our training can benefit other properties.

Award of the contract followed a survey of 78 firms throughout the United States. Costs of $34,000 are covered by a grant from the state, administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Board Actions

(Continued from page 12)

- Approved for Classification/Compensation Study, on motion of Director Shepard.
- Approved award of contract to Roebellen Engineering, Inc., for construction of maintenance building, East Oakland Division; accepted Annual Financial Statements for Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1986 and 1985; adopted, subject to revision, principles and guidelines for use and accounting of Measure B funds, on motion of Director Rinehart.

Car card wit continues

With aid of arts grant

Car cards featuring entertaining commentaries on life will continue to divert the nation's transit riders as a result of a government grant.

In previous onboard postings, which began in late 1984, passengers have enjoyed such observations as:

"Aquadextrous: the ability to turn the bathtub faucet on and off with your toes."

"Blessed are the young for they shall inherit the national debt."

The National Endowment for the Arts has approved a grant of $64,420 for such contemporary offerings of the "Streetfare Journal", which is published by Winston Network - the agency which sells advertising space on the inside and outside of transit coaches, including the District's.

Other riders who will be treated to the commentaries are in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Miami and Dallas.

The grant will be used to compensate such contributors to the "Streetfare Journal" as poets and graphics artists.

Three retiree deaths reported

Robert J. MacDonald, 78, who had completed 31 years of transit employment when he retired in 1972 as an Emeryville Division driver, died December 30. He was a resident of Oakland.

MacDonald's wife, Hazel, survives, along with a son, Walter.

Alfred W. Nidever, 78, whose tenure of transit service spanned 26 years before he retired as an Emeryville Division driver in 1970, died December 11 in Richmond. His home was in El Cerrito.

Family includes Nidever's widow, Connie, and seven children: Mark, Paula, Alfred, David, Brian, Renee, and Andrea.

Ernest F. Archer, 66, a driver for 15 years prior to his retirement in 1969, died February 26 in Medford, Oregon, where he made his home.

Archer's survivors include a sister, Hazel Davis.
Staff additions, promotions are announced

STAFFING ROUND-UP — A few new faces, plus some up-the-ladder appointments, have brought staff changes. Two newcomers are Dorothy Parrish (far left), manager of training and education; and Bruce Goddard (left), manager of government/community relations — liaison to elected officials, government agencies, and civic/community organizations.

MORE CHANGES — Hank Arrington (below, mid-page) — former driver, then Personnel staffer — has assumed new responsibilities as affirmative action analyst. An Operations Center promotion went to Sylvester Mosley (below, middle right), stepping up-the-ladder to chief transportation supervisor. In Research and Planning Peter Tunnin (bottom right) joined as a transportation planner, while Ken Liu (bottom center) is a new senior programmer analyst, Data Processing.

More staff news on Pg. 7

CLAIMS STAFF — Assuming responsibilities at the General Office within the Claims function of Risk is this group of District employees: David Ackroyd (mid-page, far left), senior workers' compensation claims examiner, pictured with Dorothy Boutte and Faye Sapp, both of whom are workers' compensation claims assistants; and (above, far left) Daisy Macasocal (left) and Ellen Webb-Smith, both also workers' compensation claims assistants.

Bus boosters meet

BUS BACKERS — East Oakland General Superintendent Keith Steckly (lower right, back to camera) hosted AC Transit Boosters in mid-March. The organization — headed by Passenger Robert Vaughn (center) — is developing a charter and by-laws. It is open to District employees, retirees, and the public. The next meeting will be April 16 at Hayward Division. Potential members may call 891-4859 for information about the support group.

Five take new positions within Maintenance

(Continued from page 6)

MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS — Recent changes within the complex of skill specialties and supervisory structure comprising the District's Maintenance function have included these: Harold Radcliffe and Anthony Haile (top row, left and center) have been newly appointed to posts as maintenance superintendents, while John McDonald (top row, right) has assumed his new duties as facilities maintenance foreman. Also assuming new responsibilities — as foremen, Central Maintenance — are (above, left and right) Jim Freeman and Robert Bithell.
Honors go to four more employees

RECOGNITION PROGRAM — It was nearly a sweep for one District division when three out of four of the previous period's "Employees of the Quarter" turned out to be from East Oakland. The fourth honoree of that period, who works in Finance at the General Office, was Claudia White (below, right, receiving plaque from General Manager Gene Gardiner), selected in the "Clerical Employee" category. The triumphant trio from East Oakland is identified below.

SIGNING UP — The District is testing a new destination sign which displays larger letters for easier viewing by people awaiting buses along the street. The new letters shown in the headsign (foreground) are six inches high in the text — 50 percent larger than the four-inch size of the regular AC Transit front destination signs — and with the route designation eight inches high. The signs, manufactured by Illuminator, Inc., are being tested on various District routes to determine passenger and driver response.

FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

EAST OAKLAND HONORS — With three Employee Recognition selectees in the spotlight at the same time, East Oakland Division met the challenge by providing three separately inscribed cakes (right photo, with Earl Horton, the division's chief clerk and honoree in the "Non-Union Employee of the Quarter" category shown at the head of the line). On hand to present the awards were (top photo, with "Mechanic of the Quarter" Richard Prewitt) General Manager Gene Gardiner and (background, left and right) Keith Steckly, general superintendent, and George Grandison, director of operations. "Driver of the Quarter" honors went to Norman Grant (above), who took his turn at the microphone during the March 2 ceremony at East Oakland.

CAPITAL EVENT — AC Transit Director Linda Shepard, who also is American Public Transit Association's Vice President for Human Resources, spoke at the March 12 opening of Sacramento's new light-rail trolley system. Shepard praised planners for their forward-looking system.
FINISHING FACADE — Workers are moving toward completion of the new Administrative Office building. The entrance for the ten-story structure features recessed front doors, creating a protected, welcoming entryway (above). The lobby curves around the first floor (top), flowing into the customer services area. Bus patrons will have easy access from the street to clerks who will assist them in purchasing monthly passes, securing pocket time-tables, and receiving disabled and elderly discount identification cards. Later, landscaping will lend color and textural contrast to the front of the building.

NEW ADDRESS — When AC Transit's Administrative Office moves this summer into the new building above, it will mean a greatly improved, more efficiently laid-out working environment for some 200 employees representing the executive, operations, and support functions which now are housed in leased quarters in the Latham Square Building, less than two blocks away in downtown Oakland. Construction began after ground-breaking in April, 1985.

Our "Stockholders' Write"

I would like to take this opportunity to commend you (Steve Black) and A.C. Transit for exceptional performance in rendering assistance to a disabled charter bus on the night of February 16, 1987.

This particular charter was enroute home to Medford, Oregon, with thirty-two high school students and four instructors when it became disabled eastbound I-80 on the Appian Way off ramp.

The students came to California to compete in a speech tournament at U.C. Berkeley. They were returning home from an exhausting trip when their bus became disabled. My officers were with the bus at 9:35 p.m. but were unable to secure assistance to repair the bus.

At 11:00 p.m. the students' chaperones decided to lodge the group at a local motel. They had not slept since 5:00 a.m. My officers then had to solve the problem of transporting such a large group in a safe and secure manner. My shift supervisor had our dispatch center contact A.C. Transit to ascertain what assistance could be provided.

You authorized a bus to be sent to aid the youth group. This bus arrived on the scene in short order along with a courteous driver who was very reassuring to the students.

A.C. Transit made a very large and favorable impression upon our visitors from Oregon. Your assistance and cooperation in this matter are greatly appreciated.

Captain W. T. Sanders, Jr.
Commander, Oakland Area
California Highway Patrol

I find your service on the 7 and 8 Berkeley Hills lines exceptional, and there is one driver in particular whose service is exemplary. I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to board Don Boyer's bus.

Mr. Boyer is always cheerful, friendly and professional; and I can always count on a smooth, safe ride.

Stephanie Bolling
Berkeley

This afternoon I had the opportunity to observe one of your drivers, Mickie Jefferson, perform a very kind act in waiting very patiently while two elderly women (one with a cane) had to get on and leave the bus.

So often we have cause to complain but seldom say 'Thank you'.

Rose Lucey
Oakland

Last Friday I left my wallet on the C bus from San Francisco. The driver, Donald Williams, not only turned in the wallet to the dispatcher, but also took the trouble to call me to let me know it had been found.

I am very grateful to Mr. Williams and believe he should be commended.

Judy Coates
Oakland

I want to commend the driver of the 7:11 C bus (Maria Nielsen) for her promptness and courtesy. She made my ride pleasant.

Flo W. Allen
California College of Arts & Crafts, Oakland
At a regular meeting February 11, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized travel of three staff members to attend APTA Legislative Conference March 8-11 in Washington, D.C., on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized staff review and possible inclusion in the District's 1987 Legislative Program of a proposal that would create a state-mandated user subsidy equal to the special discounts now offered the elderly, handicapped, and youths, on motion of Director Wiggins.
- Authorized continuance of service to Golden Gate Fields for the 1987 season, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to negotiate contract with Cleveland and Cleveland (Continued on page 5).
- Authorized continuance of service to Golden Gate Fields for the 1987 season, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to negotiate with Winston Network, Inc., for front-mounted bus advertising sign, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized General Manager to schedule Public Hearing on proposed rerouting of Lines 65 and E in Berkeley, proposed extension of Line 42 to serve Marina Village in Alameda (weekdays only), and creation of new Line 6, on motion of Director Fajans.

At an adjourned regular meeting February 25, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to negotiate contract with Mason Tillman Associates for Affirmative Action Outreach Plan and for DBE/WBE participation as exhibitors during APTA Annual Meeting and Expo in San Francisco in September, on motion of Director Shepard.
- Authorized General Manager to negotiate contract with Cleveland and Cleveland (Continued on page 5).