Please forward our mail:
Farewell to Latham Square
Vandal-proof bus seats studied

AC Transit is struggling with a puzzling question: can the System continue the longstanding practice of buying fully-upholstered bus seats or should it switch to more vandal-resistant types?

"Throughout our 26-year history, AC Transit has always provided upholstered seats for riders," General Manager Gene Gardiner states. "But now, the actions of some riders may prompt an adjustment in this policy."

The problem stems from the destructive tendencies of those passengers who slash and vandalize bus seats. And it is complicated by the fact that this vandalism occurs most often in the back of the bus — the area most removed from the driver's view. According to one recent survey, the seats behind the rear door of buses were vandalized six times more often than seats installed forward of that door.

A potential solution under consideration would be installation of vandal-resistant seats in the area behind the rear door — "Tough seats," as promotional brochures from Transportation Seating, Inc., describe one such product.

The fiberglass seats are built for durability and low maintenance. Their one-piece seat shells — comprising both bottom and back — are molded from high-density plastic that resists ink and paint, according to the manufacturer.

They are being considered for installation in the rear of up to 56 new buses which may be ordered for delivery in 1988. Under Gardiner's proposal, the fiberglass would be purchased with padded cushion inserts. Their cost-effectiveness would be realized in the form of reduced maintenance requirements throughout the life of the buses.

"The question our Directors must answer," Gardiner added, "is whether we continue costly efforts to maintain upholstered seats that are regularly being destroyed. And we'd appreciate any advice the public has to offer on the subject, since vandalism now cost the System — and the public which foots the bill — more than one-half million dollars in labor and materials each year."

Public comment sought

AC Transit is seeking public comment on a revised, expanded program designed to make bus service available to handicapped persons throughout the East Bay. Directors have scheduled a public hearing on the subject for 7 p.m., May 19, in Oakland.

The program spells out steps by which AC Transit would gear the entire fleet to accommodate wheelchairs or other mobility aids by the mid-1990s, assuming that sufficient funds are made available. It is designed to make accessible service operational:

- During hours and days when the general public is served;
- At reasonably convenient intervals;
- On routes where a need for accessible service exists;
- For fares no higher than others pay.

The "Deficit Reduction Plan" now before the Board of Directors lists a sweeping set of actions geared to balance AC Transit's operating budget in Fiscal Year 1988 — and to establish a foundation for keeping budget problems in the ensuing years to more manageable proportions.

The FY 1988 Operating Estimate currently under discussion suggests that expenses for Special Transit Service District (STSD) #1, the 13 cities between San Pablo and Hayward, could total more than $106 million. This projection was computed by annualizing FY 1987 expenses, and making modest adjustments for increases expected in some specific costs.

But, Director of Finance Nat Gage notes, projected revenues in STSD #1 total just over $95 million — substantially less than MTC originally forecast last year when generating a two-year formula for allocation of regional resources to AC Transit, BART, and San Francisco MUNI. Additionally, Governor George Deukmejian deleted State Transportation Assistance funds from his budget and receipts from local and state sales tax were lower than expected.

Thus, AC Transit now expects to receive $48 million in fares and local revenues, about $6 million in transfer payments, and approximately $41 million in assistance funneled through MTC in the coming year. "Resolving a shortfall of more than $11 million is absolutely essential," Gage told District Directors. "Since the decline in federal and state assistance is likely to continue, we must move now to bring operating expenses more closely in line with revenues projected for the years to come."

The "Deficit Reduction Plan" to:

- Seek another $1 million or more from East Bay school systems to support Specialized Service schedules or, if such support is not forthcoming, reduce the service to achieve savings in that amount.
- Continue to work with MTC on allocating additional available discretionary funds to support East Bay bus service.
- Utilize limited amounts of Measure B revenues (the transportation tax passed by Alameda County voters last November) — about $2.5 million — to meet regional coordinated fare requirements, to improve on-time service delivery, and to improve wheelchair lift maintenance.
- Pare $3 million from operating costs by removing 40 to 50 buses from the peak-hour fleet — while working to minimize impact on System patrons.

THE COVER — Exactly 24 years ago this month, Oakland's Latham Square Building became District headquarters — subsequently familiar to tens of thousands, who crossed the distinctive Art Deco design of the entry paving to buy tickets or passes; claim lost items; attend Board meetings; acquire timetables; seek information. Shortly, they'll be welcomed at 1600 Franklin, less than two blocks away.
Summer runs to regional parks will repeat

This summer AC Transit and the East Bay Regional Park District again are joining forces to provide access to outdoor recreational opportunities via special bus service. Two different programs are scheduled.

Line 9-Tilden Park will operate seven days a week from June 22 through September 7, providing direct service from BART/ Berkeley to Tilden Regional Park between the hours of 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Buses will run approximately every hour, and will be equipped to carry bicycles for an additional 35 cents per two-wheeler. Regular local fares will be in effect.

Prescheduled Group Service also will provide the car-free, carefree opportunity to visit various regional parks. For information on this service, operating June 22 through September 4 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., interested organizations or individuals may call the Park District at 531-9300.

Last year, more than 8,000 used Line 9-Tilden Park service, while 5,400 took prescheduled group outings.

A year-round AC Transit bus line providing park access serves Don Castro and Point Pinole Parks.

Approval of this Park District-subsidized special service was voiced by AC Transit Directors at an April 15 meeting.

INSTITUTE ANNIVERSARY — Marking a decade of providing seminars for public transit employees representing wide-ranging organizations, the Bay Area Urban Transit Institute met this month for the last time at AC Transit’s old headquarters. Site of its next convening will be the District’s brand new Administrative Offices.

Baseball bargain offered

AC Transit patrons can save bucks on baseball by taking advantage of a special “Bonus Days for Bus Riders” program for attending Oakland A’s home games during the month of June.

Normal cost for adult seats on the Plaza Level of the Oakland Coliseum is $8. Through the “Bonus Days for Bus Riders” promotional, the cost would drop to $6.50 (or $4 for senior citizens and children).

Interested riders may take advantage of this recreation bargain throughout May by taking home onboard hanger flyers printed with reduced-cost admission coupons which, mailed-in or presented at the Oakland A’s Coliseum Box Office, will earn the ticket bargain. A total of 10 games, including night and day, weekdays and weekends, will begin with the Cleveland contest on June 2. An extra bonus included in the bus-riders’ bonus is a double-header Sunday, June 21, pitting the A’s against the Texas Rangers.

1987 ROADEO regional And international meets To be District-hosted

Having produced the 1986 APTA International ROADEO’s top driver — Rick Vierra — AC Transit is looking ahead to the 1987 event, this summer. This year’s equivalent internationals, plus the regional meet which precedes it, will be hosted by the District.

ROADEO-related events will kick-off June 20, with an in-house competition open to any employee qualified to drive a bus. That opener will be followed June 27 by in-house trials of driving expertise and knowledge among employees who qualify to compete under regional/national ROADEO rules.

The latter contest will produce AC Transit’s top competitor, who will represent the District at the August 29 regional ROADEO and the September 29 internationals. Hayward will be the site of these events.

Staff notes:

Bill Sullivan joins;
Onizuka moves upward

Bill Sullivan Wayne Onizuka

An addition to management and a promotion were announced recently.

William H. Sullivan, appointed Director of Planning and Analysis, previously worked for San Diego Transit, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority and Santa Clara County Transit.

Wayne Onizuka, in the new position of Hearing Officer, will conduct hearings of labor disputes. Previously Assistant Superintendent, Hayward, Onizuka joined the District as a driver in 1972, moving subsequently into Personnel positions.

Workers’ Comp work noted

The state has again ranked AC Transit as tops in its processing of Workers’ Compensation cases. The favored ranking came in a regular quarterly evaluation of how comparable California organizations handle such claims. The District was judged to be best, state-wide, among the self-insured, self-administered public agencies evaluated, according to Marit Roman, assistant risk manager.

AC Transit also was best in its category in the preceding quarter, Roman noted. “This is a habit we hope we don’t break.”

The District is evaluated along with schools, city governments, water districts, recreational and park systems and other such organizations serving the public.

“We are especially pleased,” says Roman, “to receive the honor. The real praise, however, should go to the individuals in the office who have helped AC Transit employees secure their proper benefits. It is good to be recognized for promptly moving to assist our people.”
G.M. lunches with retirees

It was St. Patrick's Day, but the subject matter at the monthly AC Transit Retirees Club meeting was far from blarney. General Manager Gene Gardiner (far left, with club President John Krajcar, center, and member Joe Turegano) talked about the District budget, the solidity of Pension Fund investments, and other matters of mutual District/Retiree interest.

PRE-MOVE TOUR — With the move into the new administrative office building set to take place in a few weeks, Directors took an early-April tour of the interior, led by Nat Gage (above, far left), director of finance, who has supervised the District's wide-ranging facilities improvement program. Checking-out the interior lay-out with Gage were (left to right) Board President Roy Nakadegawa; Rich Metier, attorney for the District; General Manager Gene Gardiner; and Director William Bettencourt. Top photo shows the lobby level.

Our 'Stockholders' Write

I would like to show my appreciation and thank Shirley Hearn for extending a warm and friendly attitude to her passengers, as well as yielding her patience and assistance to the general public.

Ms. Hearn should be commended for her professionalism. This comes despite what many operators have to contend with throughout their daily work loads.

Anthony Wilson
Member, AC Transit Boosters
Richmond

When I boarded a #18 bus, I appreciated the way Driver #1145 (Beverly Nash) stopped the bus at the curb, making boarding easy. She was very pleasant and courteous to passengers.

Her approaches to the curb, and leaving it were very smooth. I cannot comment, nor compliment enough about the skill she has in operating the bus. She also has a very pleasant reply to inquiries from passengers. I have used the bus for over 50 years.

Marie Lee
Oakland

We would like to thank you for providing St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church with copies of the AC Transit Route Map for the District Conference. We expect about 150 delegates, and the maps have provided an interesting and informational addition to the registration kits.

Felix D. Dancy, Minister
Berkeley

Thank you. I liked the bus ride. I appreciated what you did for us. It was very nice.

Nicole R.

Thank you for arranging the trouble that you gone trough and everything.

Kevin L.

I appreciate you comming to pick us up and thank you for all the trouble.

Yvonne C.

It was nice of you to pick us up and taking us to school. I hope it wasn't any trouble. Thank you very much.

Tina B. (Ed. Note: These are samples of notes and drawings from Mrs. Rhea Nelson's first-grade class at Amelia Earhart School, Alameda. The drawing selected as our theme picture is by class member K. L.)

I'd like to take this opportunity to throw bouquets to some of your personnel.

I left my purse on the bus when I got off at the San Leandro BART station. I didn't realize it until I had gone through the turnstile, and by that time the bus had departed. Fortunately, Charles Dunn, the road supervisor, was parked outside, saw my panic, and came to the rescue. He contacted the dispatcher, Greg Hunter, who in turn contacted the driver, Steve Goodell, who found it and held it until we got to his next bus stop.

Their efficiency and fast action saved my day.

Mary Barber
San Leandro
At an adjourned regular meeting March 4, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to solicit bids on behalf of the Regional Transit Association for a survey of childcare needs among public transit employees, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to implement a professional services agreement with World Institute on Disability for developing a sensitivity training program related to serving the special needs of handicapped patrons, on motion of Director Fajans.

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

- Authorized support for California Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2, A.B. 429 and 583; and opposition to A.B. 312, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved 15% discount on cash purchases of five or more 20-ride ticket books to be issued by public agencies to aid indigents, on motion of Director Rinehart.

**Safe driving stats rewarded**

Coffee and assorted goodies were “on the house” April 29 at Emeryville and April 30 at East Oakland as those divisions’ drivers celebrated meeting the previous month’s safe driving goals. The March stats showed East Oakland averaging 19,448 miles per accident (goal: 17,000), and Emeryville averaging 16,008 (goal: 14,640).