Buses aid anti-crime program
Transit trends and topics

Nakadegawa notes busway pluses

“The key advantage to Busways as a commuting concept is the combination of cost-effectiveness and flexibility,” says Board President Roy Nakadegawa. “Rather than continue a costly infatuation with heavy-rail transit projects, let’s combine the best characteristic of rail — the efficiency of an exclusive right-of-way — with the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of bus operations.”

Nakadegawa forecasts high-capacity buses forming in convoys that travel swiftly via exclusive Busways linking employment centers with residential neighborhoods. Along each Busway, coaches stop briefly to serve transit centers and suburban park-and-ride lots, spaced at intervals much like more-familiar train stations.

“One essential advantage of this system is that riders need not necessarily be forced to transfer to continue a trip,” says Nakadegawa. “Steel wheels and rails are severely limiting in this respect; you can’t cut cars out of the train to spread the passengers conveniently throughout suburbia.

“However, buses can be operated on the Busway only where it’s efficient — in the congested areas. Along the way, from the transit stations or the outer extremities, coaches can be routed to drop off the Busway and fan out into neighborhoods.”

Another advantage is safety and speed: when buses don’t have to compete with other vehicles for road space, travel time is greatly reduced.

“Take a typical freeway which can accommodate 1,800 cars an hour — or just over 2,000 commuters (at 1.2 passengers per vehicle, on the average). Install an exclusive Busway instead, and 450 standard 40-foot buses each hour would provide sufficient capacity to move 18,000 riders comfortably. With articulated or double-decked buses, commute-hour capacity on that hypothetical Busway (at 75 riders per coach) would increase to 33,750 per hour.

Nearly two decades ago, the Busway was introduced (in the form of a reversible inner lane) on Interstate 95 approaching Washington D.C. In the early 1970s, officials reported that commuters were opting to park their cars and board express buses up to 12 miles away in Virginia. At that time, this exclusive right-of-way cut commute-hour travel time to the Nation’s Capitol by as much as 25 minutes.

Since 1970, a 2 1/2-mile “Exclusive Bus Lane” (XBL) has served the needs of thousands of commuters using the I-495 approaches from New Jersey to New York City. Ten years later, officials stated that, typically, 1,100 buses carried 40,000 weekday passengers via the contraflow XBL — with travel time savings of 15 to 25 minutes. This capacity, incidentally, exceeds that of any rail commuter system introduced in the U.S. in the past 25 years.

Another contemporary success story is to be found in Ottawa, Canada, where tens of thousands of commuters enjoy speedy trips on Ottawa-Carleton’s new “Transitway.” This facility, stretching 15 kilometers across the city, already carries 9,000 passengers per hour and is expected to accommodate an additional 50 percent increase in ridership — a projected level which matches the capacity of BART’s much more costly system traversing San Francisco Bay.

“Unfortunately, the U.S. isn’t looking for cost-effectiveness as it considers new transit systems,” Nakadegawa notes. Even in a heavily-congested corridor, rail is very expensive. Exclusive Busways would be an equally effective, yet much less costly option to meeting commute-hour needs of metropolitan transit users.

Top North American drivers compete

APTA ROADEO — The American Public Transit Association’s 1987 Bus Roadeo — held at Hayward Division, adjacent to the Training and Education Center (shown in background) — drew participants from 103 transit agencies from across the United States and Canada. The September 29 competition, challenging the skills of outstanding men and women operators across North America, saw Seattle Metro capturing top honors, while AC Transit finished 14th. This national Roadeo followed local and regional competitions, hosted by the District — which also contributed staff and support for APTA’s San Francisco convention (to be featured in next month’s issue).

Finance chief To close-out Varied career

N. A. Gage

Nathaniel A. (Nat) Gage, Director of Finance, has announced his retirement after more than eight years with the District. He previously had served as Deputy Executive Director for the MTC, following 35 years in the Army, from which he retired as a colonel.

The 70-year-old Gage directed financial affairs of the District, as well as overseeing the nearly-completed $100 million facilities improvement program, most of which was financed by government grants. Gage also is credited for the unique financial plan (employing no public money) which brought about construction of the new General Office building.

The program has produced revamping and modernizing of existing buildings on the same sites, plus some totally new facilities on acquired sites. The latter includes the District’s first Training and Education Center and a whole new operating division, both located in Hayward.

Gage also served the District as Acting General Manager in the 1985-86 period.

New Flyer of Canada Receives bus contract If set conditions met

AC Transit is slated to buy 56 new buses, plus a possible additional 56, if a Canadian company agrees to open a plant in the Bay Area to assemble the coaches.

New Flyer Industries Limited, of Winnipeg, the firm submitting a low bid of $8.9 million for buses and equipment, will get the contract, but with conditions attached by the Board of Directors, who want buses assembled in the Bay Area, with the majority of component parts being American-made. Directors also want to inspect facilities where assembly will take place before voting their final approval.

The contract to procure the vehicles specifies a cost of $157,770 per 40-foot coach and $152,385 per 35-foot coach. Both models are equipped with passenger lifts to aid riders with mobility problems.

Included in the bid package are spare parts and equipment to ensure fleet reliability on the road. The option to purchase an additional 56 buses specifies the same cost per unit.

Purchase of the new buses, which could be delivered within a year, is in line with the District’s equipment replacement plan, according to Board President Roy Nakadegawa. This plan projects purchase of 56 buses per year during the next five years.
District, Union make historic move

Representatives of the District and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 192 leadership took a historic step this summer with the creation of AC Transit’s official Joint Labor Management Oversight and Policy Committee.

“This new problem-solving task force has a vital agenda which will be simple, yet sweeping in scope,” states General Manager Gene Gardiner. “Their goal is to work together to improve morale, health, safety and security of all employees.”

Initially, Local 192 Vice President Jerry Sullivan and Chief Labor Attorney Dan Ready will share responsibility for chairing the eight-member Oversight and Policy Committee (OPC), which consists of four management and four union representatives.

The OPC will initiate and then oversee activities of six Worksite Committees to be convened at each of the operating divisions, at Central Maintenance and in the Administrative Offices. Additionally, the oversight group will establish the action plans and agenda for the entire JLMC process.

Worksite Committees will be established this fall to meet twice monthly, focusing on work-related problems and issues of a non-disciplinary nature. These satellite committees will pursue projects approved by the oversight group, and they’ll also be expected to generate recommendations for dealing with problems at their specific locales.

The OPC co-chairs note that these committees — and the process — will be entirely divorced from the familiar grievance procedures. The OPC and its subsets cannot alter the Collective Bargaining Agreement or District policies and procedures.

“The District is taking an important stride in improving the level of employee involvement in the decision-making processes,” notes Ready. “Internal improvements will be one important product of this process. We also expect that improved internal relations will have healthy effects on the product of our collective activities: sustaining and improving the quality of service we provide to the public.”

OPC members in addition to Ready and Sullivan are Bus Driver Don Boyer, Director of Operations George Grandson, Bus Drivers Marvin Netles and Pat McFall, and Director of Administration Michael Settles. The make-up of the six-member Worksite Committees is being determined jointly at each of the six District facilities.

District’s prototype bike rack shows promise

A prototype of a new bicycle rack for front-mounting on District coaches is awaiting inspection by local two-wheel enthusiasts and review by the California Highway Patrol.

The lightweight steel and aluminum rack was produced at the Central Maintenance Facility as a collaborative effort of three employees: Alan Bowerman, a welder/fabricator; Richard Cardozo, working foreman; and LeRoy T. Grant, machinist. Its promise lies in its being lighter, cheaper, easier to manufacture and maintain, and less obtrusive when coaches pass through the wash racks.

Production Supervisor Colby Swanson calls it “a great example of our people spotting a problem and seeing if they could come up with an improvement.”
More employees earn quarterly honors

Since its inception in 1985, the Employee Recognition Program has chosen 38 quarterly honorees, plus two “Employees of the Year.” Quarterly winners receive plaques; $50 savings bonds; $750 National University scholarships; worksite ceremonies, including refreshments; and in-house publicity. “Employees of the Year” also receive higher-value — $1,000 — savings bonds and scholarships.

EARNED PRAISE — Richmond Division Dispatcher Onisimo G. Rios (left, with General Manager Gene Gardiner) was chosen “Clerical Employee of the Quarter” for “a high level of productivity with a high quality of performance.” Anthony Clifton (below, with Director of Operations George Grandison), Mechanic A, Emeryville, became “Maintenance Employee of the Quarter” after a nomination letter was signed by some three-dozen drivers. Hayward Division’s George E. “Chili” Garcia (below left with wife) earned “Bus Driver of the Quarter” honors for his performance as a Hayward Division operator and 43-year service record.

ANOTHER HONOREE — “Non-Union Employee of the Quarter” is Marketing’s Doyle D. Dewberry (above, at right, with General Manager) selected for “job performance above and beyond the normal call of duty” as public information liaison to community groups. He is a former driver and instructor.

Three get quarter-century safe-driving awards

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT—Harry E. Hall, Richmond Division driver, receives congratulations from General Superintendent Lee Skilling as Hall’s wife, Melva, looks on. The Richmond resident achieved his goal of two-and-one-half decades of safe driving, then announced his retirement. Hall will be devoting more time to his model ship building, a hobby which has won him recognition in both public display and sales.

PERFORMANCE REWARD — Director of Operations George Grandison (right) presents East Oakland Division Operator Marcellous Harrison with one of several symbols of recognition for being the 66th District driver to earn the 25-Year Safe Driving Award. Harrison was honored for recording the excellent safety performance over a career which began in 1956. Harrison received his first behind-the-wheel safety award in 1957.

HONORING EXCELLENCE — Ceremonies at East Oakland Division honored Henry Lim this month as the veteran operator was recognized for 25 years of safe driving. The 65th AC Transit driver to receive the quarter-century award, Lim has been behind-the-wheel since 1959, and won his first safety award in 1961. Presenting the pin denoting his achievement is Director of Administration Michal Settles.

Hologram imprint assures Monthly Pass integrity

NEW LOOK — AC Transit Customer Service Supervisor Lorrie Gonzales holds new Monthly Pass which features special hologram printing (top center of the card), guaranteeing that passes will be valid. The new design was initiated with October’s press-run. The District currently issues some 30,000 passes each month, offering passengers both economy and convenience.
FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

INFO BOOST — AC Transit’s Marv Hancock (left) and Kay Bell of MTC view the first of 25 planned passenger information aids to be installed, by 1990, at focal points of Bay Area transit. Each will have from 3 to 12 panels — depending on the extent of transit activity at the site — to help passengers with boarding locations, maps, fares, schedules, and transfer information. This particular module is at BART 12th Street. The Regional Transit Association funded it through a Transportation Development Act grant.

CLASS PERFORMANCE — Among those present at a luncheon for Diesel Mechanic graduates, were (front row, from left) George A. Tercero, Jr.; AC Transit General Manager Gene P. Gardiner; R.C. Jones; Alejandro N. Panares and Kenneth Edwards. (Back row) Victor Titus; College of Alameda Instructor Vic Carranza; Charles R. Denison; and Director of Operations George Grandison. Graduates unable to attend were Linda Dewberry and Danny B. House. The unique training program for AC Transit employees interested in improving their job opportunities by qualifying as mechanics, is a joint effort of AC Transit and Peralta College System’s College of Alameda. This is the seventh class which has completed the program, and nearly 100 AC Transit employees have taken advantage of the opportunity to further their prospects in the field. The course requires employees to spend two nights per week, of their own time, for nine months. The District absorbs all costs.

UNITED WORKERS — This group representing functions and departments throughout AC Transit volunteered their efforts to canvass fellow employees during the annual in-house campaign to benefit United Way of the Bay Area. Under the direction of Personnel’s Donna Pate (far right, holding bus model) the group collected the checks, pledges and payroll-deduction authorizations which will aid in supporting the 200 human-needs organizations which receive United Way funding.

BATH-AND-A-HALF — Though the weather was dry, September brought showers for coaches at the Richmond Division with installation of a new bus washer at the District’s northernmost facility. As part of the face-lifting for Richmond’s operational yard — a $13 million project — the new wash rack features two bays and an environmentally sensitive water reclamation system. The new dual washers replace a single washer which has been in use for more than 20 years. Among other benefits of the current system is elimination of minor nicks and scrapes caused by the older, outmoded unit. All 148 buses at the Division are being washed on a daily basis. Total revamping of the Richmond site is expected to be completed by the end of next year.
Actions of the Board

(Continued from back cover)

• Adopted resolution supporting accessibility in all situations where fixed-route transit is available to the general public, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

• Scheduled Public Hearing September 9 to solicit public input on Draft AC Transit Five Year Plan for Fiscal Year 1988-92, on motion of Director Smith.

• Approved a series of actions relating to management employees' salaries, benefits, and job classifications; approved realignment of Personnel Department staff functions; approved adoption of Career Paths Guidebook; approved proposed Early Retirement Program, on motion of Director Shepard.

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At an adjourned Regular Meeting July 29, the Board of Directors:

• Approved proposed personnel authorizations, subject to specified adjustments, for Fiscal Year 1987-88, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved District Operating Budget for FY 1987-88, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Adopted Classification Analysis and Salary Compensation Study, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Adopted "Private Enterprise Participation: Proposed Policy/Process for AC Transit"; approved a slate of service adjustments and deferred action on other specified adjustments, on motion of Director Fajans.

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At a Regular Meeting September 9, the Board of Directors:

• Authorized General Manager to renew contract for Regional Transit Connection Employee Outreach Ticket Sales Program for FY 1987-88, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Adopted resolution expressing appreciation and best wishes to retiring Director of Finance Nathaniel A. Gage, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

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At a Regular Meeting August 12, the Board of Directors:

• Adopted resolution honoring Vernon J. Sappers for life-long contributions to and support of the District and the cause of public transportation in general, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

• Adopted resolution authorizing agents of the District to institute, prosecute, and defend small claims cases, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

• Authorized General Manager to execute reciprocal transfer agreement with Vallejo Transit, on motion of Director Fajans.

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At an Adjourned Regular Meeting August 26, the Board of Directors:

• Awarded contract for furnishing buses to New Flyer Industries, Ltd., subject to specified contingencies, on motion of Director Fajans (see story, Pg. 3).

• Authorized General Manager to execute Request for Proposal for Management Benefits Program and to enter services agreement in connection with Strategic Plan Development Project, on motion of Director Fajans.

* * *

• Authorized General Manager to execute agreement in connection with Strategic Plan Development Project, on motion of Director Fajans.

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Dear Mr. Dan Reagin:

Thank you (Florene Braneon) for helping me find the bus with my yearbook on it. I am grateful and pleased with the efficiency of your work. I am thankful that I received my yearbook back and that you were there. That day was a nightmare until you showed me where to find my yearbook.

I am very pleased to know that there are people like you that help people like me.

Eric Ko
Oakland

Mr. Dan Reagin is consistently one of the most courteous drivers I've had occasion to ride with in quite some time. He works during the morning rush hours and is always prompt to meet his passengers. It is a pleasure to ride on his bus. We need more like him!

Leo M. Tinsley
Oakland

*I feel it is necessary to commend excellent drivers who set a good example of good service. For the 78 Line I commend Lawrence Redic to be not only a friendly, outgoing person but one who is considerate of others and a very caring person. He's always on time and, after a long hard day of work, his service is greatly appreciated.

Tina Marie Graham
Richmond
Actions of the Board

At an Adjourned Regular Meeting June 30, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized specified contribution for the District's participation in the 1987 Annual Meeting of American Public Transit Association, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized minimum essential expenditures to bridge the period prior to approval of Fiscal Year 1987-88 Operating Budget, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted resolution establishing appropriations limit for 1987-88 tax proceeds, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved contract award to C. Overaa and Company for Emeryville Division Operating and Maintenance Facility reconstruction and demolition, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved interim continuance of Line DB-Dumbarton Bridge service, on motion of Director Rinehart.

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At an Adjourned Regular Meeting July 15, the Board of Directors:

- Deferred action on contract award for furnishing 56 new buses, pending additional staff analysis and recommendation, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved contract award to Caleb V. Smith for furnishing District uniforms, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Authorized General Manager to assign responsibility for Facility Improvement Program to Facilities Administrator, on motion of Director Wiggins.

(Continued on page 10)