

Transit Times

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR COMMUNITY

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Engineers Report on Transit Plan

New Equipment, Expanded Service at Top of List;
Studies Indicate System Will Be Self-supporting

A substantially improved public transit system that can pay its own way with existing fares is the prospect for residents of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District.

A preliminary report by Charles E. De Leuw, consulting engineer for the Transit District, indicates that revenues at present fares may be sufficient to pay all operating expenses, provide adequate depreciation reserves, pay fixed charges on the bond issue required to activate the plan, and leave a "modest net income."

De Leuw said his estimates take into account the increased scale of wages recently granted Key System employees. Other estimates of traffic and revenues, he added, are based on a "conservative view of the probable patronage of the new and improved service."

Express Service

In a progress report to the Board of Directors, De Leuw broadly outlined a new transit system that will include improved frequency of service, extensions and additional routes, the inauguration of express bus service, and the purchase of modern equipment.

Long range transit plans of the District must be made to serve twice the present population by 1980, he said.

New local service will be proposed in the eastern portion of Contra Costa County, the southern section of Alameda County and intermediate areas not now properly served.

De Leuw noted that the MacArthur

Higher Key Fares to Have No Effect on ACT Rates

The recent application by Key System Transit Lines to increase local fares will have no effect on the rate structure of the Transit District.

Robert K. Barber, president of the District, said following the formal filing of Key's application with the State Public Utilities Commission:

"The studies of our consulting engineers show that the District will be able to provide improved and expanded service at present fares."

Before the District begins actual operation, the Board of Directors will conduct a full review of the current fare structure in order to provide economical transportation to the District's patrons.

and Grove-Shafter freeways will provide an "excellent opportunity" for rapid transit service. New express bus service between Hayward, San Leandro, Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond also would substantially improve the public service, he said.

The transit engineer contemplates a fleet of more than 600 buses, including 315 new ones. The new equipment, he said, will include all of the features required to provide the utmost in operating economy and passenger comfort. Parlor coaches with wide seats all facing forward, head rests and overhead racks will be proposed for express bus and intercity routes, he said.

All of the service operated during day

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and evening hours can be furnished with new buses and initially, about half of the service during the morning and evening rush periods, De Leuw said. The heavier local lines will be operated with the most modern and comfortable buses containing between 48 and 50 seats. Lighter lines will be equipped with 36-seat units.

The cost of buying necessary equipment and other major properties to put the District into actual operation will not be estimated until a final report on a mass transit plan for the District is presented by the De Leuw firm early in September. A bond issue to purchase equipment will be presented to the voters in November.

Buses Get "New Look"

Riders of a new city bus line in Detroit are getting a pleasant touch of glamour. The city inaugurated a new express run covering the seven miles from municipal outskirts to the downtown district with pretty hostesses aboard every bus.

Even the name is fancy. It's the "Imperial Northwest Express."

District Approves 'Activation' Budget

Directors of the Transit District have adopted a budget of \$270,640 which contemplates the District will be in actual transit business by mid 1959.

The District's program for 1958-59 will require an estimated tax levy of less than 1.4 cents per \$100 assessed property valuation. Last year's rate was one cent.

The total budget is about \$121,000 higher than last year's financing. A carry-over of approximately \$59,000 in unspent funds, however, will mean that only \$62,000 more than last year must be raised by taxes.

The finance committee, under the chairmanship of John McDonnell, pared more than \$80,000 from a preliminary budget draft before recommending it to the Board. Subsequently, on receipt of advice from officials of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, \$37,000 was restored to defray election costs.

"The budget should provide for smooth transition from the current formative stage to the job of actually providing transit service in the area," McDonnell said.

Significant changes in the budget, largely attributable to preparations for actual commencement of transit operations, include:

A reserve for election costs, \$37,000; legal costs of Key System valuation proceedings before the State Public Utilities Commission, \$54,000; publications and information services, \$12,500; general contingency reserve, \$21,240, and a reserve for several new positions including a general manager, \$28,600.

A committee of Directors, headed by Vice President Wm. J. Bettencourt, is currently engaged in recruiting a general manager for the District, to be hired in the near future.

In drafting the budget, it was estimated the District would be in operation by the middle of next year. A bond issue to buy necessary operating equipment will be submitted to voters in November.

Some Used Equipment is Necessary to Operations

A proposal to purchase some used equipment when the Transit District goes into actual operation is considered by officials of the District as a sound and necessary procedure.

An exploration of the proposal was made by Robert K. Barber, president of the Board of Directors, in an open letter published recently in the *Oakland Tribune*.

In response to a similarly published letter from a private citizen who feared the plan would entail a waste of taxpayers' money, Mr. Barber said he agreed that when the District transit engineers first offered the proposal, he viewed the idea with much the same alarm.

"But on closer appraisal of the plan," Mr. Barber said, "I and other Directors came to agree with the transit experts that it would be folly if the District did not purchase some used buses along with a fleet of entirely new equipment."

The engineers pointed out, he continued, that the use of some fairly new second-hand equipment is economically sound, will minimize capital expenditures, and will thereby allow the transit system to support itself without having to fall back on a tax subsidy.

The used buses—all of them post World War II models—number less than half of the total buses proposed for the system, and can be purchased for a fraction of the price that new ones would cost, Mr. Barber said. Furthermore, an inexpensive but thorough rehabilitation and colorization program would place these used buses on practically the same level of efficiency, comfort and appearance as those being built today.

"Another reason cited by our engineers for buying some used equipment," Mr. Barber said, "is the fact that 60 per cent of transit vehicles are used for only two or three trips a day during peak hour travel. The engineers believe it would be 'economic suicide' to have all new equipment parked in the garage for most of the

day and night when reconditioned equipment could be used for the same purpose almost as well.

"And finally, in my judgment, it is sound business practice to stagger the purchase of new equipment so that only a portion of it need be replaced every year. The District, otherwise, would be faced with the terrific economic burden of the entire fleet becoming obsolete at once." Mr. Barber concluded:

"I might add that the District has culled out more than half of Key System's buses as unsatisfactory for the District's use. Where we have asked the State Public Utilities Commission to determine the fair market value of Key's 276 post war diesel buses, we have omitted nearly 300 gasoline buses owned by Key as obsolete and undesirable."

What the Editors Say About Transit

S.F. 'News' Urges Cooperation With East Bay Transit Planning

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District is pressing forward with commendable dispatch in solving the East Bay's problems of public transportation.

Its chief concern is moving people around the district itself, but another phase is the movement of commuters across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco. There are nine million such rides a year.

It is of vital interest to San Francisco that the people who come here to work and to shop find convenient and comfortable terminals. The city recognized this with the present Ferry Building 60 years ago. Some 90,000 commuters a day arrived at and departed daily from the foot of Market Street.

No permanent terminal is going to result from the East Bay study, of course; this is a mere preliminary to the big rapid

transit show which has yet to hit the road. But San Francisco should express its interest in any plan to move East Bay buses downtown because any such arrangement will be with us in the several-year period before the major rapid transit plan materializes.

San Francisco has no concern with how the Alameda-Contra Costa district solves its purely local problems, beyond a friendly hope that satisfactory solution can be found.

But we do have a concern about that 15-20 per cent of the present Key System traffic that involves travel to the City.

In the fight to keep the rails on the Bay Bridge, San Francisco cooperated with the East Bay Transit District. Now, with that district engaged in a study on long-range transit—local and commute—that cooperation must be revived.

The East Bay study is progressing rapidly. If San Francisco is to act, it must do so now. Regrets later will not avail.—*San Francisco News*.

Trial Date Set to Hear Lawsuit Against District

A date for trial has been set in Marin County Superior Court to determine if Richmond, San Pablo and unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County are legally part of the Transit District.

Four days beginning Sept. 16 are set aside to hear the case, which was brought against the District by five Contra Costa County taxpayers. The suit contends that absentee ballots for the specific areas in the county were improperly canvassed in 1956 when the District was created.

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Special Bus Lanes Prove Successful

An experimental bus lane to speed up the flow of transit vehicles in downtown Baltimore, Maryland, has proved a success and will become permanent.

Close traffic checks by the city disclosed during a trial period that buses, on the average, were speeded up 19 per cent by use of the special lane, and other traffic by as much as 30.5 per cent.

The city is considering exclusive lanes for buses in other congested areas. "It's just a case of unscrambling traffic and putting the cars where they belong and the buses where they should be," said a Baltimore transit official.

An eight-block stretch of curb lane was reserved for buses between 7:30 and 10 a.m., and 4 and 6 p.m. The city plans to paint diagonal stripes in the lane to designate it more clearly as a priority rush-hour path for transit vehicles.

Exclusive bus lanes also are proposed for three major downtown arteries in Ottawa, Canada, with later extension of the plan to three more streets. Motorists would be permitted to make right turns only at certain intersections.

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