



ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

Latham Square Building • 508 Sixteenth Street, Oakland, California 94612 • Telephone 654-7878

April 11, 1968

Mr. Chairman and
Members of the Joint Committee
on Bay Area Regional Government

STATEMENT BY ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District was created in 1956 by a vote of the electorate in the East Bay. The enabling statute, the "Transit District Law," was adopted by the Legislature in 1955 after a long period of study and agonizing over the transit service offered by the Key System Transit Lines. As early as 1950 a report was issued to the Mayors and City Managers of the cities of the East Bay, recommending that a public agency be created to take over and operate a transit system in the East Bay.

In 1953, after the disastrous 76-day Key System strike, the cities and counties of the East Bay fashioned the legislation which eventually resulted in the creation of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District. Two-thirds of the cities in the originally proposed area of the District had to vote in favor of placing the matter on the ballot. The electorate in an equal number of cities in the proposed district had to vote in favor of creating the District. The Board of Directors of the District are directly elected by the voters, two at-large and five from wards evenly distributed throughout the district.

The voters of the district approved a bond issue in 1959, permitting the District to purchase facilities from Key System Transit Lines and to commence operations in 1960.

The District has carried out its obligations to the electorate as presented in the bond issue election of 1959. These have included the purchase of new equipment, inauguration of service into areas not previously served, establishing express lines and, in general, improving the service to the extent that the nation-wide trend was reversed and new customers were attracted to the service.

In 1958 the Key System Transit Lines carried 47 million passengers, and at present the District is carrying in excess of 51 million passengers. The District is now operating a fleet of 683 coaches compared to Key System's fleet of 575.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Since it was created as a public agency by the voters in 1956, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District has cooperated fully with--and worked closely with--other public agencies, in the Bay Area, in the State of California and in the Federal Government. Particularly, since the District became an operating entity on October 1, 1960, it has worked closely with governmental representatives to better fulfill the role to which it is dedicated. The basic objective, spelled out in the Transit District Law, is to meet transit needs. It is an objective the District is meeting fully.

The District has a close link with many agencies. AC Transit has representatives on the Bay Area Transportation Study Commission. Our District is an active member of a joint liaison committee with the Bay Area Rapid Transit District and the San Francisco Municipal Railway, developing a plan for coordinated transit that we expect to set a transportation pattern for the rest of the nation.

Our District has supplied information and cooperated with the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area Pollution Control Board, and the Association of Independent Districts. The District recently withdrew from formal membership in the latter organization, but expressed a continued interest in Association objectives and a willingness to cooperate in matters of mutual concern.

The President of our Board of Directors, Mr. John McDonnell, also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Transportation. A report on a state-wide basis is expected to be issued by this group in the near future.

The District also has supplied legal, technical and organizational information to the Marin County Rapid Transit District; the West Bay Rapid Transit District; the City of San Jose, the County of Santa Clara, and the County of Contra Costa, with respect to their transportation plans.

The District works closely with the eleven cities and the two counties it serves, giving its cooperation in other problems facing these communities. This has included providing transportation for various economic opportunity programs and working on transportation services for school districts in the integration field and in regular transit requirements.

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL ASPECTS

In connection with area-wide community problems, such

as air pollution, the District has made every effort to minimize any contribution which might be caused by its equipment.

The District retired its last gasoline-powered bus in February of 1965, making way for all-diesel equipment. Diesel fuel does not contribute to smog. In line with good, preventative maintenance, we use the best quality of diesel fuel produced, minimizing smoke and odor. This month, incidentally, we received our sixth consecutive national award for excellency in equipment maintenance.

Our extensive network of constantly improving bus service closely links eleven cities and provides transbay service to and from San Francisco over the Bay Bridge. This network is so extensive, over a million people are within reasonable distance of economical, efficient public transportation. This is particularly true in low-income areas, where the percentage of service is considerably higher than it is in higher income areas. As an equal opportunity employer, 24.8 percent of our total work force of 1450 are members of minority groups. Not only are we experimenting with additional service for low income areas, but currently we are cooperating with the City of Oakland in a study, financed by a Federal grant, into the need of carrying residents of poverty areas to places of employment.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Our District has made every effort to take full advantage of Federal legislation providing for financial assistance to local transit operators. To date we have participated in the following projects with the aid of Federal grants:

1. The Northern California Transit Demonstration Project, 1966-1967, a joint effort with BART and S. F. Municipal Railway. Two-thirds of the cost of \$792,500 was paid by the Federal Government.

2. Purchase of 30 new buses, in 1966. One-half of the cost of \$818,000 was paid by the Federal Government.

3. Installation of a two-way radio system, 1967, linking the District's basic fleet of 300 buses into an instant communication network. One-half of the cost of \$218,643 was paid by the Federal Government.

These projects received the approval of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Bay Area Transportation Study Commission as being consistent with the regional plans for transportation.

We also have an application pending with the government to assist in the purchase of 30 new buses, costing approximately \$986,000.

We are exploring, with the encouragement of the government and the national labor organization representing our employees, ways and means of combating the problems of assault and robberies against bus drivers--a program of vital interest to the entire transit industry.

NEW TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS:

We also are pursuing the acquisition of additional articulated coaches as a means of carrying more passengers at a lower cost than any other transit vehicle today. Two years of successful experiments with a duo-bus acquired used by the District has demonstrated a double bus can carry more riders in greater comfort and at less cost per passenger than regular buses--and at far better use of road space.

We are now investigating new concepts in transit vehicles, including a promising coach being developed by General Motors, powered by a gas turbine engine. Other advancements we are investigating include full use of computer techniques in such fields of transit as scheduling.

FUTURE SERVICE

The Northern California Transit Demonstration Project Report, prepared by the engineering firm of Simpson and Curtin, will be presented in a separate statement.

The District is utilizing information developed by the engineers, plus a 1965 system-wide origin and destination study, in reshaping its entire bus network.

The program will lay the groundwork for meeting present and future transit needs, including coordination with future operations of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

AC Transit is looking at all of its routes and services--in one of the most extensive and complex surveys in the history of East Bay transportation. We will pull the system apart and put it back together again. We will analyze what improvements we need to make today--and what we need to do when BART goes into service. One aim is to determine how individual East Bay neighborhoods can best be served by public transit.

Our objective is to coordinate our service with train service to avoid unnecessary delay. We are planning an efficient, direct, streamline of operation--geared to

individual, community needs.

SEARCH FOR NEW REVENUE SOURCES

In our persistent efforts to hold the line on bus fares and encourage greater use of mass transit, we are exploring all sources of additional revenue to supplement the assistance now given us by our local taxpayers--taxpayers, we believe, who cannot assume additional financial burden in paying for the cost of providing public transportation.

Our District, along with other transit properties, is seeking passage of SB 202, authored by Senator James Mills of San Diego and 34 other Senators, to exempt payment of the 7 cents per gallon fuel tax. It is hoped this bill will save our District approximately \$300,000 per year.

AC Transit, which faces an increase of \$821,900 in labor expenses June 1, also is requesting the California State Toll Bridge Authority for a reduction in toll charges for buses using the Bay Bridge. Transbay buses now carry more than half the commuters who cross the Bay Bridge during the riding peak. Riding on transbay buses has increased 12.3 percent during the past year. Auto passengers using the bridge have shown an increase of 20.7 percent during the same period.

The need for financial assistance to transit, whether it be rail, local or feeder service, is going to continue into the future. New sources of revenue, other than local property taxes, will have to be found to make it possible to provide a level of service, at reasonable rates, necessary to avoid complete traffic strangulation.

CONCLUSION

The experience gained by our District, insofar as its sub-regional aspects and its direct contact with the electorate are concerned, are important factors that should be borne in mind by any legislative committee drafting future governmental entities.

AC Transit is fulfilling its obligations under the Transit District Law and stands ready to play whatever role is necessary in the future.

Attachments:

Statement by Alan L. Bingham, General Manager
Annual Report, June 30, 1967
Transit Times, March 1968