

ORIGINALDecision No. 49307

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
 KEY SYSTEM TRANSIT LINES, a corporation,)
 for authority to inaugurate motor coach)
 service in lieu of its present transbay) Application No. 33920
 "A" and "B" rail lines between points in)
 the City of Oakland and San Francisco,)
 State of California.)

(For list of appearances, see Appendix "A")

O P I N I O NPreliminary Statement

Key System Transit Lines has asked this Commission to authorize substitution of motor coach service for rail passenger service on its transbay "A" (12th Street) and "B" (Grand Avenue) lines.

The application, which was vigorously opposed in whole or in part by various municipalities, civic organizations and others concerned with the project, was submitted for decision on July 22, 1953 following four days of public hearings held before Commissioner Potter and Examiner Gregory at San Francisco.

Applicant's Proposal

Applicant's plan, in substance, calls for establishment of faster and more frequent service by motor coach between San Francisco Bridge Terminal and Oakland than is presently available over its "A" and "B" rail lines. An additional express service on the "B" line via MacArthur Boulevard during peak travel periods is also proposed.

Motor coach routes would be generally those over which the rail service is presently operated, as indicated by maps in

evidence, except that the "B" coach route would terminate in Oakland at Wesley Station (Trestle Glen Road and Lakeshore Avenue), instead of continuing to Underhills Station, approximately 0.8 mile further east, at which the "B" rail line now terminates. No substitute service is contemplated for the area east of Wesley Station upon abandonment of the rail line.

The "A" line motor coach service in Oakland would be routed over Cypress and 14th Streets to Fallon Street, eastbound, and via 12th Street, westbound, in order to conform with the one-way street program and the traffic pattern at the 12th Street Dam as developed by the City of Oakland.

Applicant's plan contemplates removal of trackage, roadway and electric overhead on the "A" rail route east of Poplar Street and on the "B" rail route east of San Pablo Avenue. Remaining portions of the "A" and "B" rail lines from Yerba Buena Avenue along Poplar Street and West Grand Avenue, it is alleged, are subject to retention by Oakland Terminal Railways for freight operations upon applicant's abandonment of rail passenger service.

Applicant also proposes to reroute certain local bus lines and to increase local service in areas to be affected by the rail line abandonment.

No mention is made in the application of any plan for handling increased motor coach peak traffic at the San Francisco Bridge Terminal.

Position of Protestants and Other Interested Parties

a. City of Oakland

The City of Oakland did not oppose substitution of motor coaches for rail service on 12th Street. Indeed, the record shows that one of the main reasons for filing the application was the

insistance of the City of Oakland that applicant rearrange its service to conform with one-way street traffic patterns being developed in downtown Oakland.

The city, however, opposed abandonment of "B" line rail service on the ground, among others, that increased bus traffic on MacArthur Boulevard, Grand Avenue and some of the narrower residential streets at the eastern end of the line would adversely affect traffic conditions at peak periods.

b. Lakeshore Homes Association

This group of residents and commuters in the Trestle Glen area in Oakland objected to abandonment of the "B" line east of Wesley Station because no provision had been made by applicant for substituted service.

c. City of Berkeley

The City of Berkeley's protest, in the form of a resolution adopted by its City Council, was based essentially on the argument that abandonment of "A" and "B" rail service was only a prelude to eventual abandonment of the remaining three rail lines; that increased congestion on the San Francisco Bay Bridge and its approaches would result from use of additional motor coaches to replace train service; that removal of rail service or tracks prior to completion of projected studies for mass rapid transit in the bay area might prejudice rapid transit plans.

d. State Department of Public Works and California Toll Bridge Authority

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and the Bridge Railway are under the jurisdiction of the California Toll Bridge Authority and the State Department of Public Works. The San Francisco Terminal, used by both rail and motor coach lines, is owned by

the State of California and operated under jurisdiction of the Authority. The Authority also owns 37 of the 88 articulated rail units available for transbay service by Key System, which operates the 37 units under lease from the Authority.

The Department based its objection to the proposal mainly on conclusions reached in a voluminous engineering report in evidence. The gist of its and the Authority's protest was that the Bridge Railway might ultimately function as an integral part of any rapid transit plan developed by the Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission and that additional buses on the lower deck of the bridge, in lieu of train service, would severely tax the capacity of the lower deck, particularly during evening peak hours. Applicant's proposal, however, does not contemplate abandonment of any trackage on the Bridge Railway.

- e. The Senate Interim Committee on San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Problems and the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission.

The protests of the Senate Interim Committee and the Rapid Transit Commission, presented respectively by State Senator Gerald J. O'Gara, Chairman of the Committee and by A. M. Cohan, Executive Secretary of the Rapid Transit Commission, in substance were similar to those of the Department of Public Works and the Toll Bridge Authority. Resolutions put in evidence by the Interim Committee and the Rapid Transit Commission stress the need for preservation of the Bridge Railway as a possible mass transit facility, as well as the adverse effect of congestion on the lower deck of the bridge from additional buses during peak hours. It was estimated that two years would be required for completion of rapid transit studies by the Rapid Transit Commission.

f. Downtown Property Owners' Association

This Oakland organization favored abandonment of rail service on the "A" line in order that 12th Street might be fully utilized for vehicular traffic in connection with the 12th Street Dam and Oakland's one-way street program. The association also urged, as an alternative to complete abandonment of the "A" rail line, that rail service be terminated at Washington Street, thus permitting one-way traffic on a major segment of 12th Street.

g. San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, by a resolution put in the record, opposed abandonment of both the "A" and "B" rail service on the ground that it considered that the Bay Bridge Railway tracks would be an essential link in any future mass transit system; that abandonment of the "A" and "B" rail lines might lead to eventual abandonment of the remaining three rail services and removal of trackage on the Bay Bridge; that increased use of buses would add to the already congested traffic in the San Francisco Terminal area.

h. City of San Francisco

The City of San Francisco based its protest mainly on the ground that the company's plan to load and unload an additional 29 buses at the San Francisco Terminal, during peak periods, from islands constructed on the west side of Fremont Street or the east side of First Street, which proposal was first advanced by the company at the hearing, would increase seriously the already critical traffic congestion in the terminal area. Officials concerned with regulation of traffic on the streets of San Francisco stated they would "resist to the utmost" any further

reservation of curbside space for loading or unloading of buses at the Terminal, especially on the west side of Fremont Street.

The Commission's Staff

Studies presented by the Commission's staff indicate that though running times and frequency of service would be improved by conversion of the "A" and "B" rail lines to motor coaches and that the lower deck of the bridge could handle the additional buses required for the substituted service, the lack of additional bus loading space at the San Francisco Terminal would increase peak hour congestion in that area.

The studies also indicate that the Company's proposal would inconvenience certain passengers, namely, those travelling between Treasure Island and downtown Oakland and between San Francisco and 32nd and Louise Streets, in Oakland, who would no longer have through service but would be forced to transfer en route; those residing beyond Wesley Station, who would have no substitute service, and those residing in housing projects in the vicinity of West Grand Avenue and Campbell Street, in Oakland, who would have to walk an additional two blocks to the No. 12 bus line.

Cost studies presented by the staff indicate that complete track rehabilitation, with girder rail, on the "A" and "B" lines will cost \$1,302,580, while a temporary track improvement program for at least five years' operation will cost \$465,105, the work to be spread over five years in each case. For a period of less than five years, the studies show, the company could probably continue to maintain the "A" and "B" trackage in the present rough standard, with either increased maintenance expense, carrying

out portions of a track repair program, or by operating trains under slow orders.

Conclusions

The record leaves no doubt that the company has been facing a condition of declining transbay traffic for several years, both by rail and by motor coach, and that bus operations would be cheaper, more frequent and generally faster than existing rail service on the "A" and "B" lines. The decline in bus and rail traffic, studies indicate, is due to several causes, important among which is increased use of private automobiles aided by comparatively low bridge tolls.

The record, however, makes it abundantly clear that the company has not presented, at this time, a sufficiently comprehensive plan for conversion of rail operations to motor coach service on its "A" and "B" lines. Notably absent from the company's showing is any provision for adequate use of the existing San Francisco Terminal for bus operations, either for the "A" and "B" lines alone or for all bus operations in the event of abandonment of the other three rail lines. Moreover, the objections raised by the City of San Francisco and others, concerning peak period congestion in the San Francisco Terminal area, find strong support in the evidence.

The foregoing considerations, together with a careful study of the record, lead us to the conclusion that applicant has not made a sufficient showing in justification of its proposal to substitute motor coach service for its existing "A" and "B" rail lines and that the public interest would be adversely affected by applicant's present proposals if carried out.

The application will be denied.

O R D E R

Public hearing having been held in the above entitled and numbered proceeding, evidence having been received and considered, the matter having been submitted for decision, the Commission now being fully advised and basing its order upon the findings and conclusions contained in the foregoing opinion,

IT IS ORDERED that the application of Key System Transit Lines for authority to inaugurate motor coach service in lieu of its present transbay "A" and "B" rail lines be and it hereby is denied.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 10th day of November, 1953.

J. E. [Signature]
 President
Justin J. [Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]
Verne [Signature]
 Commissioners

APPENDIX "A"

List of Appearances

Donohue, Richards, Rowell & Gallagher, by Frank S. Richards, and George E. Thomas, for Key System Transit Lines.

Herbert E. Wenig, Deputy Attorney General and Warren P. Marsden, Attorney, State Department of Public Works, for California Toll Bridge Authority and State Department of Public Works, protestants.

John W. Collier, City Attorney and Loren W. East, Public Utility Engineer, for City of Oakland, protestant and interested party.

Dion R. Holm, City Attorney, and Paul L. Beck, for City and County of San Francisco, protestant.

Fred C. Hutchinson, City Attorney and Robert T. Anderson, Assistant City Attorney, for City of Berkeley, protestant.

Charles W. Ehlers, for Lakeshore Homes Association, protestant.

G. L. Fox, General Manager and Walter A. Rohde, Manager of Transportation Department, for San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, protestant.

Joseph R. Grodin, for Amalgamated Association of Street Car, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America, Division 192, protestant.

Senator Gerald J. O'Gara, for Senate Interim Committee on San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Problems, protestant.

Angus M. Cohan, for San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission; D. W. Campbell, for United States Navy; Edward J. Kenney, Lt. USN, for U. S. Naval Station, Treasure Island; Edward R. Plotner, City Attorney, for City of Albany; Mrs. Kathie Zahn, Member of Albany City Council, in propria persona; Marston Campbell, Jr., in propria persona, all interested parties.

J. G. Hunter, T. A. Hopkins and J. K. Gibson, for the Commission's staff.