

East Shore & Suburban Railway Chronology

The primary sources of information for this chronology were Earl Hansen's two pieces on the subject: *The East Shore and Suburban Railway*, by Erle C. Hanson, 1961; and *Richmond Streetcars*, by Erle C. Hanson, in the Nov. 1957 issue (#217) of *Western Railroader* magazine. The *Richmond Streetcars* article has a number of errors that were corrected in the 1961 book. [Items inside square brackets are information that is not directly related to the East Shore & Suburban Railway but is significant in overall ES&SR or East Bay streetcar history.]

- 9/2/1863 [The San Francisco & Oakland Railroad starts local service on Seventh Street in Oakland with steam trains.]
- 9/6/1869 [Transcontinental railroad service reaches San Francisco Bay at Alameda as the Western Pacific opens its line to Sacramento via Altamont Pass. Shortly thereafter the Oakland & Berkeley Rapid Transit Company opens the first electric streetcar line in the East Bay.]
- July 1893 [Francis Marion "Borax" Smith begins purchasing shares in East Bay streetcar companies.]
- 1895 [Borax Smith, F C Havens, and others incorporate the "Realty Syndicate" and commence buying 13,000 acres of land in the Oakland and Berkeley hills.]
- 1898 [Borax Smith forms the Oakland Transit Company to unify his numerous streetcar interests.]
- 8/13/1900 Augustin S. Macdonald and William G. Henshaw are granted a 50-year franchise by the Contra Costa County supervisors to build a street railway. It is to run from the area that is today's Pt. Richmond business district to the Southern Pacific depot near 18th Street, thereby connecting the unincorporated towns of Old Yard, Atchison, and East Yard. Legal complications ensue, as this requires crossing the Santa Fe Railway and the Santa Fe balks at granting permission.
- 1/10/1902 Colonel William S. Rheem, the President of the Standard Oil refinery, organizes the Richmond Belt Line Railroad to provide service to the refinery.
- June 1902 [The San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose Railway Company (the first Key Route operating company) is incorporated by Borax Smith.]
- 10/26/03 [The first trans-bay Key System train departs University and Shattuck in Berkeley for the Key System pier and the ferry ride to San Francisco.]
- 5/2/1904 Col. Rheem purchases the franchise of the street railway and organizes the East Shore & Suburban Railway.

- 7/7/04 The East Shore & Suburban Railway commences operations, running from the Standard Oil refinery in Point Richmond to the Southern Pacific depot at 18th & Macdonald. Just about the entire town turns out for the opening ceremonies. The fare is five cents.
- Jan 1905 Two new lines are placed in service: i) a line running north from 6th & Macdonald to near the Santa Fe tracks in North Richmond: this line ran north on 6th Street to Barrett, east on Barrett for two blocks, and then north on 8th Street to about Lincoln Avenue; and ii) a line on Ohio Street, running west from 3rd & Ohio (Maple Hall) to where the new line joined the main line on Ashland Avenue (now Garrard Blvd.) People came from miles around on Saturday nights to Maple Hall, where all enjoyed dining, dancing, and drinking. Extra cars had to be borrowed from other lines to get the crowds home at closing time.
- 8/7/05 [The City of Richmond is incorporated.]
- Oct 1905 A major new extension opens. It runs east on Macdonald Avenue from the SP Depot at 18th Street to San Pablo Avenue, then south on San Pablo Avenue to the Contra Costa/Alameda County Line. At the county line, passengers can transfer to a car for Oakland. The streetcar tracks cross the SP at 18th Street in Richmond, but since there is a city ordinance that forbids loaded streetcars from crossing the SP tracks, passengers must walk across the SP tracks from one streetcar to another.
- Nov 1905 The land for the car barn at 19th & Macdonald is purchased.
- Dec 1905 Two new extensions are placed into service: i) The Ohio Street line is extended east to 14th Street and then south on 14th Street to Potrero Avenue; and ii) the 6th Street line is extended south of Macdonald to join the Ohio Street line.
- Jan 1906 Planning starts for a subway on Macdonald Avenue under the SP so that the East Shore & Suburban can avoid crossing the SP tracks.
- Feb 1906 A new line to San Pablo is placed into service. It runs north from Macdonald on 23rd Street and then turns east on Market Avenue, running five blocks to Church Lane.
- Feb 1906 Ingersoll-County Line station is built on San Pablo Avenue at the Contra Costa/Alameda county line. It bridges Cerrito Creek and is covered so that passengers can easily transfer between the Oakland cars and the Richmond cars in any weather. The station is named in honor of Mr. Ingersoll, a very popular conductor on the line.
- 2/17/1906 The East Shore & Suburban purchases a site in Stege where the line intends to build "Eastshore Park". Construction of the park, a dance pavilion, and a roller skating rink commences in March, as does construction of a new line to get passengers there. The line splits off the San Pablo Avenue main line at Potrero Avenue (this

point will later be named “Stege Junction”) and continues west on Potrero Avenue to about 49th Street.

- 4/1/06 Service to the Eastshore Park station begins.
- 4/6/1906 The San Francisco earthquake hits. The East Shore & Suburban is soon carrying hundreds to a 15-acre refugee camp that had been quickly put together in San Pablo by Standard Oil. “Camp Rockefeller” was near the end of the San Pablo line, on Market Street between Church Lane and 23rd Street.
- 9/1/07 The contract is signed to build the subway on Macdonald Avenue under the SP.
- Oct 1907 The west end of the line is extended another half-mile into the Standard Oil refinery as far as the asphalt plant.
- Late 1907 John Nicholl announces the formation of the “Richmond Railway and Navigation Company”. He intends to run a competing street railway and also provide ferry service to San Francisco. Col. Rheem promptly takes care of this problem by buying the new company.
- 4/6/1908 Service starts on a line extension to the Blake Brothers quarry. Service to the asphalt plant at the Standard Oil refinery is discontinued.
- 5/10/1908 The Macdonald Avenue subway is put into service. Through service to the Blake Brothers quarry from the county line begins. An additional fare is collected at 23rd Street.
- Early 1909 Pullman announces that it intends to build its new West Coast shops between Stege and Richmond. This area soon becomes known as Pullman and land promoters and developers spring into action.
- 4/10/1909 A new line to Pullman is opened and the Eastshore Park Shuttle line is discontinued. The new line runs south from Macdonald along 23rd Street to Railroad Avenue (it became Pullman Avenue in 1910 and then changed names again in the 1930s to Carlson Blvd.), south on Railroad Avenue to Potrero Avenue, and then east on Potrero Ave. to Stege Junction. The shuttle to Eastshore Park is discontinued.
- June 1909 A line to Grand Canyon Park (today’s Alvarado Park) opens. The line runs north on San Pablo Avenue from Macdonald Avenue and then east on Park Avenue (now McBryde Avenue) to the park entrance. Grand Canyon Park was built in 1909 by real estate developer Bernhard Shapiro to induce people to buy property in his nearby subdivisions.
- 1909 A streetcar suffers major damage in a collision with a hay wagon.

- 1910 Direct service between Stege Junction (Potrero Avenue at San Pablo Avenue) and 23rd Street via Macdonald Avenue is discontinued. The southern terminus of the Grand Canyon Park line at Macdonald & San Pablo Avenues is moved further south to Stege Junction. The southern terminus of the line to San Pablo is extended from Macdonald & 23rd Street to Macdonald & San Pablo Avenue.
- 1910 Francis Marion “Borax” Smith’s Oakland Traction Company gains control of the East Shore & Suburban Railway.
- 1910 Direct service from Oakland to Richmond commences and the Ingersoll-County Line station is razed.
- 1911 An East Shore & Suburban streetcar deadheading to Oakland is broadsided by a Santa Fe train at the crossing near Conlon Avenue. The conductor and motorman are able to jump clear before impact.
- Mar 1912 A new spur is built into the Blake Brothers Quarry and the line starts hauling rock to Oakland for macadamizing the streets and filling the waterfront.
- 3/21/1912 The East Shore & Suburban Railway, along with the rest of the lines owned by the Oakland Traction Company, is consolidated into the San Francisco & Oakland Terminal Company (another Borax Smith Company.)
- 1912 The San Pablo Avenue line becomes the #2 line.
- July 1912 A new substation is built in Richmond to supply power for all the lines in Contra Costa county.
- Fall 1913 The main line on San Pablo Avenue is double-tracked between the Contra Costa/Alameda county line and Solano Avenue in Albany.
- 5/1/1915 Service starts on a quarter-mile line extension beyond the Blake Brothers Quarry. The extension runs to Pt. Orient, where the terminal for the new ferry service to Marin County is located. Shuttle service is initiated to meet all ferries.
- May 1915 The Pullman shops open, six years after they were initially announced.
- May 1915 The Mira Vista passenger shelter is erected.
- Spring 1916 A spur is constructed south from Potrero Avenue parallel to 49th Street, as far as Eastshore Park and a new subdivision.
- 8/26/1917 [The City of El Cerrito is incorporated.]
- 1918 The line is double-tracked from the Alameda/Contra Costa county line to Pullman Avenue and 23rd Street.

- 1918 The Grand Canyon and the San Pablo lines are consolidated into one line. The line on San Pablo Avenue between Macdonald Avenue and Potrero Avenue is abandoned.
- 8/21/1918 Fares are increased from five cents to six cents.
- 4/14/1919 Trailer service is initiated on the San Pablo Avenue line between Oakland and Standard Oil. Fifteen center-entrance trailers were especially built in the Oakland shops for the service.
- 1919 Ashland Avenue becomes Garrard Blvd. and Park Avenue becomes McBryde Avenue.
- 10/1/1920 - The Carmen's Union goes on strike, all service shuts down. Auto jitneys
10/11/1920 become quite popular.
- 6/12/1920 Trailers are no longer used between the Richmond car house and Standard Oil. The trailers are dropped off at the car house on the way to Standard Oil and then picked up again on the trip back to Oakland.
- 12/12/1920 Express service is started between the Standard Oil refinery and Oakland. The express train makes the run in 48 minutes vs. 78 minutes for the local.
- 5/1/1923 The Macdonald Avenue subway is double-tracked.
- 5/15/1923 A lane for cars is completed in the Macdonald Avenue subway.
- 6/1/1923 The San Francisco & Oakland Terminal Railway Company enters receivership. It is taken over by the Key System (another Borax Smith Company) on June 6th.
- 9/2/1924 A line is placed in service to the new terminal for the San Rafael ferry at Point Castro. Shortly thereafter the Richmond Belt Line Railroad extends its tracks south from Winehaven to the ferry terminal. There is joint trackage between the ferry terminal and the Blake Brothers Quarry.
- 1/15/1926 Fares increase from six cents to seven cents.
- 3/3/1926 The line on Garrard Blvd. is double-tracked.
- Summ. 1926 Grand Canyon Park is renamed Alvarado Park.
- 3/1/1927 Trailer service on the San Pablo Avenue line is discontinued.
- 2/1/1928 The terminal on the Alvarado Park line is cut back to McBryde & San Pablo Avenues.

- 8/2/1930 The East Bay Street Railway Company (another Borax Smith Company) takes over all of the Key System streetcar operations. Trailer service on the San Pablo Avenue line is resumed during peak periods.
- 7/3/1932 Fares are raised from seven cents to ten cents or seven tokens for fifty cents. The 6th Street line is converted to buses.
- 8/1/1932 The East Richmond - 23rd Street line is converted to buses.
- 10/1/1932 Shuttle service from the Standard Oil refinery to the ferry terminal is converted to buses. About this time the San Pablo Avenue line and the Hayward line are consolidated into a single line, with a trip from one end to the other taking 1 hour 55 minutes. Trailer service on San Pablo Avenue during peak periods is discontinued.
- 11/7/1933 Date of the last local streetcar service north of Ashby Avenue.
- 7/26/1941 [The final revenue run for Southern Pacific's IER (Interurban Electric Railway) Red Train trans-bay service. The first line to be abandoned was the Alameda line, on 1/18/1941. The final IER train ran on 7/26/1941. The Key System moved rapidly to replace the abandoned Berkeley and Oakland service.]
- Nov. 1948 The Key system converts the last East Bay local streetcar routes to buses.
- 4/20/1958 The final revenue run for Key System trans-bay streetcar service.