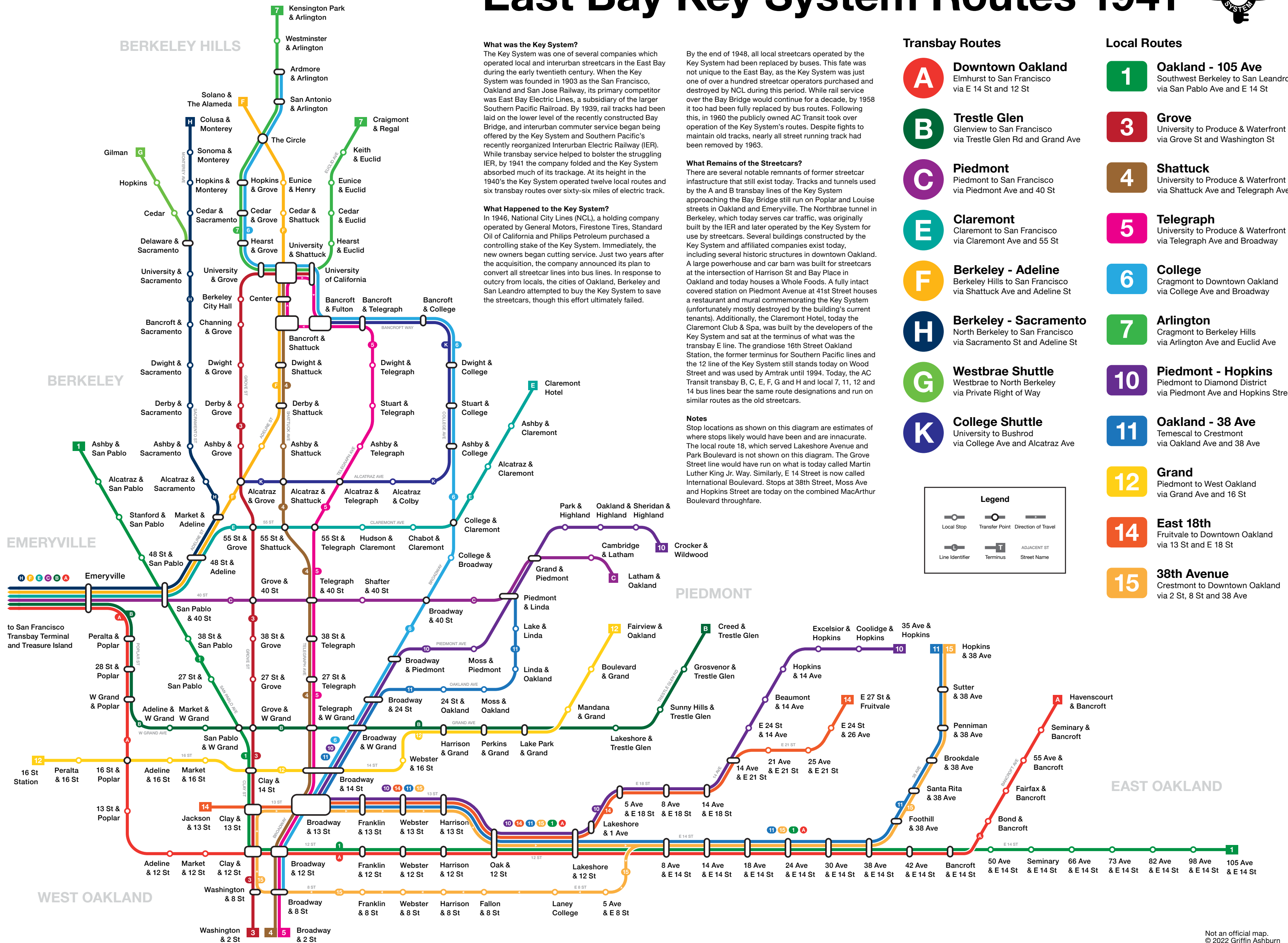


# East Bay Key System Routes 1941



**What was the Key System?**  
 The Key System was one of several companies which operated local and interurban streetcars in the East Bay during the early twentieth century. When the Key System was founded in 1903 as the San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose Railway, its primary competitor was East Bay Electric Lines, a subsidiary of the larger Southern Pacific Railroad. By 1939, rail tracks had been laid on the lower level of the recently constructed Bay Bridge, and interurban commuter service began being offered by the Key System and Southern Pacific's recently reorganized Interurban Electric Railway (IER). While transbay service helped to bolster the struggling IER, by 1941 the company folded and the Key System absorbed much of its trackage. At its height in the 1940's the Key System operated twelve local routes and six transbay routes over sixty-six miles of electric track.

**What Happened to the Key System?**  
 In 1946, National City Lines (NCL), a holding company operated by General Motors, Firestone Tires, Standard Oil of California and Phillips Petroleum purchased a controlling stake of the Key System. Immediately, the new owners began cutting service. Just two years after the acquisition, the company announced its plan to convert all streetcar lines into bus lines. In response to outcry from locals, the cities of Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro attempted to buy the Key System to save the streetcars, though this effort ultimately failed.

By the end of 1948, all local streetcars operated by the Key System had been replaced by buses. This fate was not unique to the East Bay, as the Key System was just one of over a hundred streetcar operators purchased and destroyed by NCL during this period. While rail service over the Bay Bridge would continue for a decade, by 1958 it too had been fully replaced by bus routes. Following this, in 1960 the publicly owned AC Transit took over operation of the Key System's routes. Despite fights to maintain old tracks, nearly all street running track had been removed by 1963.

**What Remains of the Streetcars?**  
 There are several notable remnants of former streetcar infrastructure that still exist today. Tracks and tunnels used by the A and B transbay lines of the Key System approaching the Bay Bridge still run on Poplar and Louise streets in Oakland and Emeryville. The Northbrae tunnel in Berkeley, which today serves car traffic, was originally built by the IER and later operated by the Key System for use by streetcars. Several buildings constructed by the Key System and affiliated companies exist today, including several historic structures in downtown Oakland. A large powerhouse and car barn was built for streetcars at the intersection of Harrison St and Bay Place in Oakland and today houses a Whole Foods. A fully intact covered station on Piedmont Avenue at 41st Street houses a restaurant and mural commemorating the Key System (unfortunately mostly destroyed by the building's current tenants). Additionally, the Claremont Hotel, today the Claremont Club & Spa, was built by the developers of the Key System and sat at the terminus of what was the transbay E line. The grandiose 16th Street Oakland Station, the former terminus for Southern Pacific lines and the 12 line of the Key System still stands today on Wood Street and was used by Amtrak until 1994. Today, the AC Transit transbay B, C, E, F, G and H and local 7, 11, 12 and 14 bus lines bear the same route designations and run on similar routes as the old streetcars.

**Notes**  
 Stop locations as shown on this diagram are estimates of where stops likely would have been and are inaccurate. The local route 18, which served Lakeshore Avenue and Park Boulevard is not shown on this diagram. The Grove Street line would have run on what is today called Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Similarly, E 14 Street is now called International Boulevard. Stops at 38th Street, Moss Ave and Hopkins Street are today on the combined MacArthur Boulevard throughfare.

## Transbay Routes

- A Downtown Oakland**  
 Elmhurst to San Francisco via E 14 St and 12 St
- B Trestle Glen**  
 Glenview to San Francisco via Trestle Glen Rd and Grand Ave
- C Piedmont**  
 Piedmont to San Francisco via Piedmont Ave and 40 St
- E Claremont**  
 Claremont to San Francisco via Claremont Ave and 55 St
- F Berkeley - Adeline**  
 Berkeley Hills to San Francisco via Shattuck Ave and Adeline St
- H Berkeley - Sacramento**  
 North Berkeley to San Francisco via Sacramento St and Adeline St
- G Westbrae Shuttle**  
 Westbrae to North Berkeley via Private Right of Way
- K College Shuttle**  
 University to Bushrod via College Ave and Alcatraz Ave

## Local Routes

- 1 Oakland - 105 Ave**  
 Southwest Berkeley to San Leandro via San Pablo Ave and E 14 St
- 3 Grove**  
 University to Produce & Waterfront via Grove St and Washington St
- 4 Shattuck**  
 University to Produce & Waterfront via Shattuck Ave and Telegraph Ave
- 5 Telegraph**  
 University to Produce & Waterfront via Telegraph Ave and Broadway
- 6 College**  
 Cragmont to Downtown Oakland via College Ave and Broadway
- 7 Arlington**  
 Cragmont to Berkeley Hills via Arlington Ave and Euclid Ave
- 10 Piedmont - Hopkins**  
 Piedmont to Diamond District via Piedmont Ave and Hopkins Street
- 11 Oakland - 38 Ave**  
 Temescal to Crestmont via Oakland Ave and 38 Ave
- 12 Grand**  
 Piedmont to West Oakland via Grand Ave and 16 St
- 14 East 18th**  
 Fruitvale to Downtown Oakland via 13 St and E 18 St
- 15 38th Avenue**  
 Crestmont to Downtown Oakland via 2 St, 8 St and 38 Ave

