

# HANDOUT - Programming and Allocations Committee

## Agenda Item 3b (Letters of Correspondence)



May 8, 2018

Re: Proposed Means-Based Fare Discount Program  
To: Metropolitan Transportation Commission Programming & Allocations Committee  
Cc: Steve Heminger, Executive Director; Alix Bockelman, Deputy Executive Director; Andrew Fremier, Deputy Executive Director; Anne Richman, Programming & Allocations Director; Carol Kuester, Electronic Payments Director

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On behalf of Seamless Bay Area and Friends of Caltrain, we are writing to express our support for a regional Means Based Transit Fare Discount pilot program, with specific recommendations to refine and better achieve the program's goals.

**Seamless Bay Area** is a group advocating for a unified, world-class transportation network for our region. We envision an integrated region where it's easy to get around on a frequent, connected network of excellent public transit and other forms of mobility. We believe the greatest barriers to building an integrated network are fragmented governance and need for regional leadership.

**Friends of Caltrain** is a 501c3 nonprofit with over 6,000 participants on the Peninsula Corridor, supporting modernization and stable funding for Caltrain, as part of a well-integrated network of sustainable transportation that is accessible to all.

### **The "Launch and Grow Proposal"**

We support a smaller initial rollout with a deeper discount level for the region's low-income transit riders. Furthermore, we urge you to act on one of the original goals of the Means Based fare study and to direct this program to pursue regional fare streamlining after pilot program evaluation.

[Seamless Bay Area](#) and [Friends of Caltrain](#) propose a "Launch and Grow" proposal to get the program started, and make progress toward a more equitable, streamlined, high-ridership system. We recommend that the Programming & Allocations Committee adopt a modified version of staff's recommendation as described below:

1. **Start with a pilot discount program on only BART and Muni.** These agencies are the most enthusiastic, have many low-income residents in their service areas, and have capacity to manage the program and analyze the data. Limiting the initial rollout will help the available program funding go further. Please increase BART's proposed discount



level to as high as financially feasible for the pilot. We doubt that 20% will be a substantial enough discount to attract many riders.

2. **Carefully evaluate the program to plan next steps:** Who uses the discount program, for what kinds of trips? Will this be used mostly by extremely low-income people for short local trips? By low-income commuters for longer regional trips? Do participants use multiple agencies? How deep a discount is needed to increase transit use? How easy is the program to use, especially for hard-to-reach communities and how to improve ease of use? The region should be able to answer these fundamental user experience questions before designing a lasting program in Clipper 2.0.
3. **Plan for a broader rollout with more agencies:** Phase in other regional transit services after the pilot. When funding becomes available, prioritize AC Transit Transbay, WETA, Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit & Ferry, SMART and other regional transit services such as express and feeder buses.
4. **Study how streamlined fares could affect users in the program evaluation:** To increase ridership, achieve the needs of low-income users and deliver a better system for all, study regional fare integration with a timeline to roll out on Clipper 2.0.
5. **Seek funding for a broader rollout:** Transit agencies have been reluctant to participate in the program because the subsidy amount offered by MTC is quite low. Create a funding plan to scale the program.

We urge you to adopt the “Launch and Grow” proposal in the Means-Based Transit Fare Discount Program and commit to pursuing regional fare streamlining after the pilot program evaluation.

Sincerely,

Beaudry Kock

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beaudry Kock".

Seamless Bay Area  
[www.seamlessbayarea.org](http://www.seamlessbayarea.org)  
[info@seamlessbayarea.org](mailto:info@seamlessbayarea.org)

Adina Levin

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized "A" followed by a flourish.

Friends of Caltrain  
<http://greencaltrain.com>  
650-646-4344

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**From:** Sarah Boudreau <boudreau.sarah.m@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 08, 2018 8:20 AM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Boudreau, District 2 Voter

May 7, 2018

Programming and Allocations Committee  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale St, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Item 3b: MTC Resolution No. 4320. Approval of Regional Means-Based Fare Program Framework.

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members:

SPUR is a member-supported nonprofit organization that promotes good planning and good government in the San Francisco Bay Area through research, education and advocacy. SPUR fully supports the Means-based Fare Program and we are pleased the program is being proposed as a pilot. In this letter, we present and discuss our recommendation for the pilot and provide suggestions to help guide implementation.

### **Pilot Program Recommendation**

SPUR strongly recommends MTC pilot the program as a minimum 20 percent discount on a single BART trip and a minimum 20 percent discount on a single MUNI trip.

Our reasons for this recommendation are twofold:

#### **1. The focus at this stage of the program should be learning, testing and understanding.**

Given how little involvement people with low-incomes have had in the design of the program, we should not assume we know what program and delivery model are best. The primary purpose at this stage should be seeking answers to what we don't know so that a sustainable program can be developed.

The limited use of regional services by people with low-incomes suggests that these services are cost prohibitive. At the last Programming and Allocations Committee meeting, the Committee was coalescing around reducing the cost burden of long-distance trips as the goal for the Means-based Fare Program. However, it is unclear if this is the problem the Means-based Fare Program should be solving or if there is another more acute need, such as the high cost of multi-operator trips. Longer distance trips can, and often do, involve a ride on more than one transit agency.

Designing the program as a pilot to run on BART — a regional operator — and Muni — a local operator — allows us to test the hypothesis that long-distance trips are truly the problem. It also allows us to assess how a discount impacts transfers in general, and if/how a discount on a local operator impacts transfers to a regional operator. To determine this, enrollment in the pilot should be open to all nine counties. Furthermore, offering the program on both BART and Muni offers the opportunity to learn how to deliver the program at multiple operators which is the longterm goal of the program.

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Both Muni and BART have many low-income residents in their service areas and have the capacity to manage the program and collect and analyze data. Muni has experience managing discount programs; this experience can and should be leveraged for the pilot. While Muni does already offer several discount programs, for the aforementioned reasons we think it is important that the pilot be offered on a regional and local operator and Muni is the only local operator that has expressed interest in the program.

## **2. Funding availability should inform which pilot we choose.**

We applaud and appreciate Golden Gate Transit and Caltrain for their willingness to participate in the program. However, MTC has only committed \$11 million to the program, \$3 million of which is set aside to cover administration costs. An \$8 million subsidy is low and MTC and transit operators should identify additional funding sources. Nonetheless, it is the subsidy currently available and thus a constraint that needs to be considered when developing the pilot. We think a BART and Muni only program is the most effective use of the \$8 million subsidy.

MTC has proposed three options for the program and in each, regardless of the number of participating operators, the discount remains the same at 20%. Having fewer operators in the program offers the opportunity to offer a deeper discount.

### **Suggestions for implementation**

SPUR offers the following suggestions to help guide the implementation of the pilot program.

#### **1. An evaluation plan and funding for evaluation must be in place prior to program rollout.**

Evaluation is critical to the long-term success of the Means-based Fare Program. The Programming and Allocations Committee should require the development of an evaluation framework and should approve the framework in advance of approving funds for the project. If the Committee elects to approve the program expenditure at the upcoming meeting, we recommend doing so with a contingency for MTC staff to return with an evaluation framework in approximately six months. Furthermore, a minimum of \$250,000 of the administrative costs should be set aside to hire an independent organization to conduct the program evaluation.

If the pilot is to produce learnings that will inform larger rollout, MTC needs to understand how each aspect of the program — from outreach to enrollment to use— is received by users and non-users in addition to the participating transit agencies. At a minimum, the evaluation should seek to understand the following:

- impacts to ridership
- effectiveness of marketing and outreach in hard to reach communities
- ease of participation and administration
- county by county sign ups
- use of other operators by program participants
- the nature and lengths of trips taken with the discount
- revenue impacts

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Participants will be required to get a new Clipper card when enrolling in the program. MTC should seek permission from those program enrollees who previously had Clipper cards to access their trip history. This will allow the program to have baseline data on transit use by program participants.

## **2. Co-create the program with potential program enrollees.**

The Means-based Fare Program needs to be easy to apply for, easy to use and easy to renew. How the various elements of the program are designed will significantly influence the program's adoption and use. It may be easier, for example, to communicate the discount as a set dollar amount (e.g. \$1 or \$1.50 discount on the cost of a trip) or as a discount range, as opposed to as a percent discount.

We are concerned that potential program participants have not been engaged as part of the development of the program framework and urge MTC to deeply engage Bay Area residents with low-incomes in each aspect of the program design process going forward. This is not the same as conducting focus groups; MTC should design the program side by side — with— Bay Area residents with low-incomes.

## **3. Develop a roadmap to guide program expansion that includes regional and express bus services.**

MTC should develop a detailed roadmap for how to bring additional transit services into the program. The roadmap should include a timeline for program expansion and identify additional funding sources. The results of the program evaluation should inform the next phase of the program. MTC should use the period before and during the pilot to engage with the transit operators not included in the pilot so that changes and additions to the program can be made after the first year.

As we noted in our previous letter, it is a mistake to not consider the regional and express bus service provided by AC Transit, WestCat, SamTrans, Fast, SolTrans and Napa Vine for inclusion in the next phases of the program, in addition to SMART and WETA. For example, only about three percent of AC Transit Transbay riders have incomes less than \$25,000 a year; around 10 percent have incomes less than \$50,000 a year.<sup>1</sup> The cost of a ride on AC Transit Transbay is \$4.50; in June, the price will go up to \$5.50. Regional and express bus services, regardless of whether they are standalone services or operated by a local operator, are premium products, have a higher price point and should be considered for inclusion in the Means-based Fare Program.

## **4. Carefully study regional fare integration and develop regional fare policy roadmap that corresponds with the design and development of Clipper 2.0.**

Without any regional fare integration, people with low incomes who travel across counties will continue to pay more and struggle to afford transit.<sup>2</sup> The program, as designed, is attempting to

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<sup>1</sup> AC Transit Memo. Transbay Tomorrow -- Phase One Update on Existing Conditions and Outreach. September 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.actransit.org/wp-content/uploads/17-256-Transbay-Tomorrow1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> This is not a new finding. In 2004, Loren Rice conducted was hired by MTC to conduct an analysis of transportation affordability for low-income households. One of her key findings was that transfers are a main contributing factor to high commute costs for the region's low-income residents. To ease this burden, she recommended reducing the costs of transfer. See: Rice, L. (2004). *Transportation Spending by Low-Income California Households: Lessons for the San Francisco Bay Area*. [http://www.ppac.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_704LRR.pdf](http://www.ppac.org/content/pubs/report/R_704LRR.pdf)



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address the high cost of longer trips, but these trips can and often do involve more than one transit agency.

The initial research for the program found that the highest priority need for people with low-incomes is to reduce the high cost of multi-operator trips. Participants expressed strong support for a pass that included trips on different operators and for making transfers more affordable. This need will not be met so long as there is no regional fare coordination.

To truly guarantee a fair transit fare for people with low incomes, the larger inequity of a disjointed collection of fare policies and products needs to be addressed. The transition to Clipper 2.0 — now — is the optimal time for the region to rethink its approach to fares. Transit agencies, transit agency boards, MTC Commissioners and MTC staff should work together collaboratively to develop a roadmap to regional fare policy that corresponds with the design and development for Clipper 2.0.

We understand that there is interest in establishing a weekly and monthly accumulator now, under the current Clipper system. SPUR supports this as so long as the accumulator is multi-agency. Should each agency adopt their own accumulator, with different fare increments and caps, this will add complex and not meet the needs that low-income riders have articulated.

## **5. Develop a complete strategy to address transit affordability.**

The means-based discount should be an aspect of a larger strategy to reduce the transit affordability burden.

The Means-based Transit Fare Pricing Study conducted two focus groups to better understand how transit affordability impacts people with low-incomes. SPUR reviewed the findings from the focus groups. Below are three key findings from the study MTC should address as part of a complete strategy to support transit affordability for people with low-incomes.

- a) **Participants were unaware of locations where they could purchase a Clipper card.** On many systems, transit riders receive a discount for paying with Clipper; Clipper also offers convenience and time savings. We are aware that MTC is working to reduce obstacles to Clipper uptake in lower-income communities and we support and encourage an expansion of this effort as part of this effort.
- b) **Many Vallejo participants expressed concern about the lack of transfers in their system, and how this impacts the affordability of their multi-legged trips.** SolTrans is the only bus operator in the region that does not offer intra-agency transfers. MTC does not set transit operator fare policy. However, as the lack of intra-agency transfers was identified as an obstacle to transit affordability, we encourage MTC to work with SolTrans to identify options for reducing or removing the double fare barrier.
- c) **Clipper card minimum balances present a problem for low income riders, and these vary a lot from one system to the next.** Transit operators require Clipper users to maintain a minimum balance on their Clipper card at all times. A significant share of people with low-incomes reside in Solano County where the Clipper minimum balance is \$6. Even if a low-income transit rider receives a discount off the BART leg of their trip



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from Fairfield to Downtown Oakland, for example, the cost of the ride on FAST coupled with the minimum balance requirement may keep that trip out of reach.

We understand that transit operators set their own minimum balance. However as this was identified as a barrier to transit affordability by people with low-incomes, we encourage Clipper staff to work with transit operators to reduce their Clipper minimum balance where appropriate and to standardize the minimum balance requirements in Clipper 2.0.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional input on the Means-based Fare Program. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have at 415-644-4280.

Sincerely,

Arielle Fleisher



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**From:** Caitlin Barta <caitlin.barta@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 9:19 PM  
**Subject:** Please support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, compared to just a 20% reduction for our riders struggling financially.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll also get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

Please consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what will be the foundation for our community for years to come.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Barta  
San Francisco, CA

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**From:** Sarah Bindman  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 1:48 PM  
**Subject:** Please support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
Sarah

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**From:** Dana B  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 1:20 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support of a BART/Muni pilot program regarding a 50% means-based fare reduction. I believe this pilot program will make a difference in riders' access. I believe that, with a 50% reduction, ridership is likely to increase, thereby offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

I also believe that, with a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts, gather data, and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,

Dana Bolstad

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**From:** Mark Y. Goh  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2018 1:16 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
mark goh

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**From:** Kyle Borland  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 05, 2018 1:07 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Borland  
District 10

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**From:** Eric Chan  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2018 1:50 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,

Eric

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**From:** SF Carl  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2018 1:43 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
Carl Stein

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**From:** Anis LaRosa  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2018 1:20 PM  
**Subject:** Please support the BART/Muni fare reduction pilot!

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership. I also invite you to learn more about the benefits of fare integration here: <https://seamlessbayarea.org>

Sincerely,

A. Anis LaRosa, SF Resident and commuter to Redwood City.



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**From:** Laura Schewel  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2018 1:04 PM  
**Subject:** Support a BART/Muni 50% means-based fare reduction pilot

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I'm writing to support a BART/Muni pilot of a 50% means-based fare reduction. I urge a bold pilot that will truly make a difference in riders' access and lives. Only with such a pilot will we be able to see the real impacts and plan a strong fare program for the future.

With a 50% reduction, ridership is much more likely to increase, likely offsetting at least some potential losses. I don't believe a 20% reduction would be a strong enough pilot to give enough relief to our low-income riders to evaluate this effect.

With a pilot across two agencies, we'll get a much better picture of rider habits locally and regionally. This data is crucial for building a future fare program that truly serves riders.

The point of the pilot is to evaluate the impacts; gather data; and learn the best way forward to encourage participation and increase ridership. It will be a missed opportunity if we don't try a 50% reduction and take advantage of the two agencies willing and able to execute the pilot.

I urge you to consider the future of transit in the Bay Area, what is best for transit riders, and what is most impactful for building a stronger system and serving a growing ridership.

Sincerely,  
Laura

# HANDOUT - Agenda Item 3b Correspondence

## 5/9 Programming and Allocations Committee

San Francisco Transit Riders  
P.O. Box 193341, San Francisco, CA 94119  
www.sftransitriders.org | hello@sftransitriders.org | @SFTRU



May 4, 2018

Programming and Allocations Committee  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale St, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: SFTR Support for Regional Means-Based Transit Fare Pricing Study

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

San Francisco Transit Riders (SFTR) is the city's grassroots advocate for efficient, equitable, and growing public transit. We fully support efforts to make regional transportation more affordable to provide improved access and attract more transit riders. We applaud the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's study that aims to do just that.

However, recent conversations about the implementation of a means-based program have begun to steer towards a pilot program that includes a BART-only, means-based discount at the 20% level.

On behalf of SFTR, I'm writing in support of the pilot concept, but encourage a pilot of a BART and Muni 50% means-based discount, with future program funding sources identified that do not impact operating budgets.

Specifically:

- BART and Muni are both eager to participate in the program, and have capacity to manage and evaluate the data. Muni already manages the Lifeline discount program for monthly passes; it would be a missed opportunity not to offer a discount on single trips. Plus, this is an excellent opportunity to pilot the program on both a regional and local transit operator.
- The means-based discount should be at the 50% level, not at 20%. As the riders' advocate, we do not believe a 20% discount is meaningful enough to encourage participation and increase ridership. Further, systems that have made fares more accessible have seen overall revenue increase due to increased ridership. A pilot program could evaluate this effect.
- The pilot program should include a robust evaluation of travel patterns of low-income riders that will inform a future regional program that encourages participation and increases ridership. Little data exists to fully understand the patterns of how people with low incomes are traveling by transit regionally. Is it short trips on multiple operators? Is it long distance on BART? What are the barriers to entry? This is an opportunity to understand these patterns and build a program that truly serves riders.

## **HANDOUT - Agenda Item 3b Correspondence**

### **5/9 Programming and Allocations Committee**

- The evaluation should outline a roadmap for expanding the program to additional operators. There has been reluctance from many transit agencies to participate in the program due to budget concerns. The roadmap must identify how a regional program would roll out, and sources for how such a program would be funded. We strongly encourage funding for a means-based program that does not impact an agencies operating budget.

Lastly, we strongly urge a study for regional fare integration with a timeline to roll out using Clipper 2.0. We are thrilled that several Committee members have expressed interest in an accumulator function for Clipper. We are in strong support of a daily, weekly or monthly accumulator, but encourage this function to be developed across multiple agencies - not at the individual agency level. This is an opportunity to reduce the cost, complexity and confusion of multiple pass products for the regional transit rider, and the first steps to streamline fares for a more seamless transit experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this exciting program. We look forward to the rollout.

Sincerely,



Rachel Hyden  
Executive Director  
San Francisco Transit Riders

cc: Ed Reiskin, Director of Transportation, SFMTA  
Board of Directors, SFMTA  
Grace Grunican, General Manager, BART  
Board of Directors, BART