

Clipper® Executive Board

June 22, 2020

Agenda Item 5b

Clipper® START Means-Based Pilot Program Update

Subject: Update on the Clipper START means-based pilot program.

Background: For most Bay Area households, transportation is the third-largest monthly expense, trailing only the cost of housing and food. As a result of a 2015 study and in consultation with transit operators, MTC approved the launch of the Regional Means-Based Transit Fare Pilot Program in May 2018. The pilot program has been branded Clipper START.

Staff has presented information about the Clipper START pilot program at several groups of community-based organizations, including MTC's Policy Advisory Council Equity & Access Subcommittee.

The Clipper START pilot program launch was delayed to the COVID-19 public health emergency. It is now scheduled to launch July 15, 2020. It will run for 18 months. It is designed to:

- Make transit more affordable for the Bay Area's low-income residents;
- Establish a consistent regional standard for fare discount policies; and
- Define a transit affordability solution that is financially viable and administratively feasible and that does not adversely affect the transit system's service levels and performance.

BART, Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit and Ferry, and SFMTA are participating in the pilot program. MTC and the transit operators will split the cost of the discount, up to a total of 20 percent. Three transit operators – SFMTA, Caltrain, and Golden Gate Transit and Ferry – are opting to provide a higher discount of 50 percent, with the agencies paying the difference for the higher discount amount. BART is offering a discount of 20 percent.

On June 4, Caltrain made the decision to change its discount from 20 percent to 50 percent. Cubic Transportation Systems, the Clipper contractor, is making this change in one-third of the time normally required, in order to accommodate the July 15 start date.

Key Pilot Program Elements

The key pilot program elements are:

1. Eligibility: Adults who earn up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$52,000 per year for a family of four) will be eligible to participate.
2. Available on Clipper: Clipper START participants will use Clipper cards to receive the transit fare discount, which will be granted automatically when a participant uses the card to pay a single cash value fare.
3. Single-Ride Discount: Clipper START participants will receive a 20 percent discount on each single-ride trip taken on BART and a 50 percent discount on each single-ride trip taken on Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit and Ferry, and SFMTA.

4. Promotion: The program will be promoted through social service agencies, community-based organizations and the media.

Eligible individuals will apply through a website, although a paper application will also be available. They will need to provide proof of identification as well as proof of annual household income. The following types of proof of household income will be accepted:

- Electronic Benefits Card
- Medi-Cal Card
- County Benefits Eligibility Letter
- Muni Lifeline Card or Number
- Most recent tax return

The program requirements did not envision immediate support for newly eligible individuals, such as those who recently became unemployed during the pandemic.

Organizations that want to help promote the pilot program to their clients, customers and constituents can do so by visiting the program website and ordering free materials, such as brochures and posters in two sizes. Print materials will be available in four languages: English, Spanish, Traditional Chinese and Tagalog.

Attachments: None


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