

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MTC-ABAG Info](#)
Subject: Comments for Clipper Exec Bd 20250728
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External Email

Attention Commission Secretary, please forward this message to the full Clipper Executive Board for the General Meeting of 28 July, 2025.

Greetings Board Chair Bob Powers and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her, with Team Folds.

I bring to you my general comments concerning the work and mission of the Clipper Executive Board.

First I think back to the Clipper outage that our community endured this past 1 July. I did not experience that situation, given that I was in Seattle at the time. I read of an issue involving a calendar file that caused the system to become inoperative. This is a situation where something seemingly minor can have major consequences. I have not yet spoken with anyone on this matter, given my recent time in Seattle and Portland, and that many transportation agency boards have gone into recess for the month of July.

I share of matters of compensation. I think compensation is something that needs to be considered. You see, a number of transportation systems were unable to collect appropriate fares, yet still kept their services in operation, in keeping with their mandates to safely and consistently serve their communities.

Yet how do we as a community of transit providers calculate compensation? Such is definitely easier said than done. It is true that the Clipper system was inoperative, and many traveled without the payment of fare. Yet we have to consider that some still paid appropriate fares, and this was accomplished in a number of ways.

There are some systems that use mobile applications and fare was still paid. Some might have activated mobile period passes earlier in the day, and they were in use at the time of boarding. Some might have paid cash. And some might have weekly or monthly passes that were already in effect. And then fare evasion has to be taken into account, how many might have evaded fare if Clipper was in operation at that time?

In the case of BART, Caltrain, and Golden Gate Transit, these are systems that use distance based fares. And AC Transit has several routes that have both local and transbay service, with a two tier fare schedule, generally the F, NL, and O. And so how is compensation calculated with passengers paying different amounts, and not able to identify who would have paid what? On BART, how do we know how many riders took short trips such as within San Francisco or Oakland, or long trips such as to the airports? And preparing calculations for proposed compensation is indeed vexing. And I do not want to see this matter go into some kind of protracted litigation. I do believe compensation is warranted, yet there are no easy answers on arriving at amounts they everyone can agree on. It is my hope we can put this matter behind us sooner rather than later, and to focus our attention of building the very best Clipper Program that we can have.

I read in your Agenda, Item 4A, of a pilot program to bring open payments to BART. I am looking forward to this work, in offering a new option for our BART patrons. I am appreciative of this phased in approach, just as it took time for all the different systems to join the original Clipper Program. Perhaps it is too much to try to turn everything on at once. Yet I hope that all of the other systems will join Clipper 2 as soon as possible.

I often speak on matters of BART, including at their various Board and Committee Meetings. And I appreciate the leadership of Bob Powers, the General Manager of BART in this work. You see, BART is very near and dear to me. I often share that I like BART almost as much as I like the New York City Subway, which I have used since early 1970. The Subway is known for being The System that is Legendary and Stately, and practices the ideals of being

steeped in tradition and mindful of history. The Subway has many distinct features that no other Public Transportation system has. And one of these features is the OMNY fare payment program on New York City Transit. While OMNY is not the only open payment system on rail transportation, it is the largest in North America. And the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has designated OMNY as a megaproject, given the far reaching impact for the millions who use the bus network and the Subway every day. And I often refer to BART as having the unique distinction of being The Peoples System.

It looks to me that this work of open payments on BART is an extension of the work of Clipper, given the information presented herewith. I look for future implementation of open payments to be done as part of the Clipper Program, as opposed to agencies trying to go it alone. It is the Clipper Program that offers consistency across our beloved Bay Area. I fully support the collaborative work of Clipper going forward, as I always have.

As much as I engage with Clipper there are some other programs that I use for the payment of appropriate fare. That is because some of the other programs offer options that Clipper does not. I am able to use fare capping on AC Transit, and buy time period tickets and passes on Caltrain, both of these through mobile applications. Yet money that I use in other programs does not go through Clipper, and does not help to amortize our investment in Clipper. And it is important to have options, as no program can be all things for all people. And small mobile application programs can move more quickly than larger programs. Yet I feel that Clipper can and should move quickly and responsively as well, size really should not be an issue. Ultimately fare programs are the results of fare policies enacted by the governing boards of transit systems. Even with all the technical and infrastructural work done with OMNY, ultimately the final product of OMNY came about from the deliberations and decisions of the MTA Board of Directors.

I ask of all of you on this panel to practice reasoned and fact based oversight. Meetings can be challenging at times but I ask that we not have acrimony in the room. I ask that none of you be arrogant or impetuous, but instead to focus your efforts to bring Clipper 2 into full revenue service. This is a work that must be done right, and done right the first time. I do not want to see us having to perform damage control, in needing to explain to a Public that might not be particularly forgiving when things don't happen as they normally should. I do believe we have the right people in place who are leading the work of bringing Clipper 2 into completion, this team has always been responsive to my concerns and needs.

I am appreciative of a date being set for the open payment pilot on BART. Yet date setting can be fraught. I can see setting a date, but what if we are not able to perform by that date? To be honest I would prefer we not have an in service date unless we know for sure we can go forward. And maybe BART is ready, and it is true that unforeseen circumstances can arise. One never knows what a day will bring forth. I want to have Clipper 2 more than anyone, and as an advocate, I want Clipper 2 to succeed, lest I have proverbial egg on my face. I quote the words of Argeo Paul Cellucci, "we must also remember that our work is not done." There is still much for us to do. In 1979 George Harrison shared the profound message of "Love Comes to Everyone." Perhaps George Harrison was thinking of New York City, especially that famous railroad station that is Grand Central Terminal. Now is not the time to bicker, but instead to build. I look forward to your Meeting on Monday.

Thank you.