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Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 10:58:54 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Clipper Exec Bd 20250825

External Email

Greetings Commission Secretary, please forward this message to the full Clipper Executive Board for the General Meeting of 25 August, 2025.

Good afternoon Board Chair Bob Powers and Members.

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

I bring you my comments pertaining to the work and mission of the Clipper Program.

I consider this past month since your previous Meeting. First I raise the matter of compensation in regards to the Clipper outage that occurred on 1 July, 2025. In my last letter to you I laid out premises for calculating appropriate compensation. I am in support of what looks like MTC advancing compensation, in order that the operators receive their funds more timely.

I ask and expect the fullest of accountability when it comes to calculating the appropriate amounts of compensation. It looks like these funds will be drawn from what is called the Clipper float account. I am in support of this use of funds, and appropriate future amendments to the Budget.

However, I expect amounts paid in compensation to be derived from reasoned and fact based analysis. I do not want to see the claims on the Clipper float account be like letting the pigs loose to the trough at meal time. We have to consider that some did pay appropriate fares during the outage, such as cash in fare boxes, and mobile period passes already in effect. And some would have evaded fare even if the Clipper system was operating normally. It is absolutely essential to remember that Clipper funds are Public funds, stewarded by MTC on behalf of the Public. It is my hope that the root causes of the outage will be fully examined and determined forthwith, and appropriate ultimate recourse implemented.

I bring forth matters of open payments now being accepted on BART. On 20 August, 2025, a few days ago, I used the open payments protocol on BART. I made two trips within Oakland, and I was charged the standard adult fare of \$2.40 each time. I am fully aware that this new protocol only works with adult fares. Even though I am a Reduced Fare user, and those trips normally would have cost me \$.90 each, I did this anyway. I'm sure there are many who took advantage of this most important development. Yet how many will return appropriate feedback to you in Meetings and in letters? And so I chose to take on this extra cost in order for me to have experiences to share with you. I can speak academically on such things. Yet I felt the need to actually practice this, in order to share testimony with you to inform the Clipper Program going forward.

I used both a plastic Visa card and my phone in this mini adventure on BART. I found using the plastic card worked seamlessly at the fare gate, with immediate opening. Yet in using my phone, the fare gate made clicking sounds, and I had to position my phone a certain way in order for the gate to open. This was in no way different than in using Clipper on my phone, such might be a near field communication issue. I received timely text messages after these trips as to my card activity. This comes from my enabling text notifications whenever my card is used. Such texts do not always come in immediately. Regardless. In checking my statement that evening, both of these charges were showing as would anything else.

I think back to the fall of 2021, when I went to New York for about ten days. At that time, the OMNY open payments program was available systemwide on New York City Transit, and only for adult single ride fares. I had a paper Reduced Fare MetroCard, that I could have put a weekly pass on. And so I wanted to experience OMNY in its fullest. That day I used OMNY six or seven times. I said to myself, as much as I liked this method, at this rate it would cost me over \$100 to use the Subway for a week. I then put a weekly pass on the MetroCard and I fortunately did not end up having to endure any damaged MetroCard stories.

And during that time I went to a Meeting of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and I rendered Public Comment on matters of OMNY. On 28 February, 2022, OMNY instituted its first iteration of weekly fare capping, and in June 2022 OMNY was made available to Reduced Fare users. And on my next trip to New York, in 2023, I think, I was able to take advantage of Reduced Fare OMNY using my phone. And my first use of this program happened in the 74 Street-Roosevelt Avenue Station of the New York City Subway. I did have to enable express transit mode, and then I easily entered the Subway. At that time the weekly Reduced Fare cap was \$17. (This is slated to rise to \$18 pending Board approval

later this year.) And on that day, once again, I experienced the ideals of the Subway being The System that is Legendary and Stately. It is absolutely essential to remember that the Subway is a system that practices the values of being steeped in tradition, mindful of history, and being relevant to the future.

I went to visit a close family member during my time in New York, I think last year. I was invited in, and this individual asked for my help in setting up the OMNY for Reduced Fare. We called the MTA and after about ten minutes it was all set up, just as I had done for myself several months before. And this person was very reluctant to give up their paper Reduced Fare MetroCard. I said, someday it's going to be push comes to shove, it will go away, you will have to do this anyway, so why not do it now. A few days later I was out and about in New York and I received a text message. It was from my close family member who used OMNY on the Subway for the very first time, in the 59 Street-Columbus Circle Station. The text said that everything worked fine. I replied, of course it works, should I be surprised? I was not surprised at all. And so I seek to share similar testimony with you when it comes to this program here at BART. Yet even more than BART being the first system to bring open payment into revenue service, this development indeed reflects this most basic ideal that BART is The Peoples System.

It is my hope to hear a public report on the uptake of BART open payment usage, as opposed to having to file Public Records Requests. I feel that such information should be disclosed in order to inform the Public of this most important development. This work is only the beginning, as there are more questions to be asked and answered, and new protocols put into place.

I am looking to see more operators implement the open payments on their systems. I would advocate for a focus on small operators, who play very important roles in mobility around our beloved Bay Area. I think San Francisco Bay Ferry is a plausible next step in this program. I would hope to see open payments come to AC Transit, given their Transbay bus route portfolio. Caltrain certainly should come soon, given their new and frequent electric rail service. Perhaps a phased in approach would be best. OMNY was usable over time as more stations turned on, but that is because the Subway only requires fare paying interaction upon entry. A day will come when Reduced Fares will need to be implemented on Clipper 2, just as with OMNY in New York.

I am simply an ordinary user of Public Transportation, beginning with the New York City Subway in early 1970. I consider many challenges going forward, especially with new fare policies being considered in New York. I hope that more people will use Public

Transportation, and that our funding will be sustainable. This is an all hands on deck moment, which includes the Public paying appropriate fares. And I look forward to seeing how open payments will be done in Grand Central Terminal, which is a legendary and historic commuter rail station located in New York City, that which I have used and enjoyed since the fall of 1980. Gerry Rafferty comes to mind, but unlike his song “Get it Right Next Time”, for us here atcClipper, there is no next time. We have to get it right the first time. Surely Gerry Rafferty, a Scottish musician, was thinking of New York City in working on his songs, especially with Baker Street and Right Down the Line. I ask that in your Meeting that we not have acrimony, but instead to consider and practice the ideal of George Harrison’s signature work, Love Comes to Everyone. I ask of you all to check any issues you might have at the door and convene your Meeting with this in mind, to focus your efforts on building the very best Clipper program that we can have.

Thank you.