From: aleta dupree [redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 14, 2025 12:15:55 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Clipper Exec Bd Meeting 17 November, 2025.

External Email

Greetings Commission Secretary, with thanks, please forward this message to the Clipper Executive Board for the General Meeting of 17 November, 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 ongoing work and mission of the Clipper Executive Board.

First I share with you a message that I sent to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City, as part of a series of Public Hearings on matters of fare adjustments and policy changes. I had originally sent this for your Meeting of 22 September, 2025, which was cancelled.

Letter begins here.

Greetings Board Chair Janno Lieber and Members.

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

I bring you my comments pertaining to fare adjustments and policy changes at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, based in New York City.

I start in sharing on technical matters of proposed policy changes. I am generally in alignment with the proposals presented herein. I fully support the OMNY rolling 7 day fare accumulation program being made permanent. OMNY is a program that I have availed

myself of since the initial pilot in 2019, on a segment of the Lexington Avenue Line (4, 5, 6 services, A Division, IRT). It is absolutely essential to continue framing OMNY in the context of being a megaproject. In my various engagements with you at Meetings I have shared of the importance of OMNY, and its profound and positive effects for diverse communities.

You see, for many, the concern about overpaying for transit is commonplace and foremost in the minds of many. This comes from having to make a choice between single ride fares and time period passes. And the rolling 7 day fare accumulation eliminates that concern. And a rolling seven day period keeps our visitors in mind, many who might arrive on a Friday and leave on a Sunday, in keeping the 7 day period intact even when crossing from one calendar week into another.

Given our adoption of the rolling 7 day period for fare accumulation as the standard policy, I support the elimination of the sale of period passes. For those who have a preference for period passes, the OMNY 7 day fare accumulation allows for practicing this, just in a different way. You see, I used to pay $17 for a weekly Reduced Fare MetroCard. Yet with an OMNY card, I can pay the $17 into stored value, treating such as a weekly pass. Yet if for some reason, I do not use the system twelve times in the rolling 7 day period, I would have some funds left over, which I can use for travel in future rolling 7 day periods. And for those who prefer to store monthly pass amounts, that can be preloaded as well. And so it goes, OMNY cards and accounts can offer Customers many different ways to manage their Fare balances according to their needs and preferences, much like a basic bank account, and without the risk of overpayment.

I read of tap and go becoming the new and default standard for our bus network. I am fully in support of this change. You see, in London, Stockholm, and other places, tap to go is the standard for bus fare payment. And these programs have over time worked well, improving the service experience for all concerned.

I consider that there may be some pushback to the idea of operating a cashless bus system. Yet I believe this can be successful, as evidenced in other places such as London and Stockholm. Messaging is an absolutely essential component of this work. And cash users will not be left behind. You see, as mentioned many times before, the OMNY vending machines will still take cash. Yet also the importance of a robust community retail network for OMNY is an essential component as well.

You see, given the physical nature of currency and coinage, such requires a transfer and conversion in order to take possession. And many receive paper checks for payment and

cash them. And so these customers throughout the region can purchase stored value for their OMNY cards right in their communities. And this network should extend to the farthest and least densely populated areas of our region, to ensure no one gets left behind.

I admit I might be speaking academically, give that I do some things very differently. I use OMNY on my phone, with an embedded Visa card, and I am registered for Reduced Fares. Given that, I pay no more than $17 per week to use the buses and the Subway. I do not need to perform cash transactions to use OMNY, given that I receive my income through direct deposit. As a person with disabilities on a fixed income, I am able to participate in many programs where I am able to access appropriate financial services. I have done so even in a period of unsheltered living. You see, I am a Veteran of Operation Desert Storm, and while living in tents in the middle of the desert, I had my pay deposited twice monthly into my bank account. And we have seen great success with the open road tolling on our bridges and tunnels. This is not just practiced on various toll facilities on the East Coast and in Illinois, but also in California. I believe this transition will be successful. And so I ask you to be prepared for possible pushback, and continue to state your case for improving safety and the customer experience through this new tap and go proposal for the bus network.

I have mentioned about simplifying the fare structure on commuter rail, pertaining to peak fares. I am looking forward to Reduced Fares being available on the rail network 24/7. This will make it easier for Customers, in not having to figure out a time specific purchase. This will also make it easier for onboard personnel, not having to risk conflict over issues of ticket prices.

I support the new plan to simplify ticket purchasing on Train Time. I am used to buying tickets for future use. Yet I support the idea of one transaction instead of two, and having a four hour time frame. This change will require our underground facilities to ensure consistent Internet access in order to purchase and activate tickets just before boarding the train. Perhaps a stored value component would be helpful, an option to be used for these ticket purchases and activations. We want things to be easier for all concerned, and that includes that everyone has to be in compliance with the Fare Ordinance when boarding and riding on the trains.

I do feel we have a well thought out fare policy plan going forward. It is true that my bus and Subway costs will go from a weekly limit of $17 to $18. I think I am going to be all right. I believe that the MTA is a community institution, and that requires full participation of all of our stakeholders in ensuring the highest quality of service. That includes the Public paying appropriate fares and following the rules of conduct. I think back to a recent Meeting,

where one of you said something like this, “the Subway is the greatest transportation system the world has ever seen.” I am in full agreement here. For I believe that the Subway is The System that is Legendary and Stately. The Subway holds to ideals that are steeped in tradition and mindful of history. I ask of you to stay the course in this work, and I look forward to your final presentation and vote on these matters.

Thank you.

Letter ends here.

I enclose this message as a way of giving context to the direction and potential as we move into the era of Clipper 2. And ultimately the programs that Clipper 2 can offer would be founded in fare policies passed by governing boards, given that executive staff does not have unilateral authority to enact fare adjustments and policies. And in the case of the MTA in New York, even though the positions of Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer are held by the same person, Janno Lieber, it is the full MTA Board of Directors that makes the ultimate decisions on all things related to policy, including on matters involving fares. And even though you as General Managers sit on this panel, the ultimate success of Clipper is really predicated on the support of the governing boards that you all report to. And yet how do we engage with our governing boards on these matters of Clipper, especially when very few such as myself engage with you at your Meetings? I do speak at other Meetings, such as BART, which is not only practicing open payments, but also has the unique distinction of being The Peoples System. It is not easy carrying the water in this work, but I enjoy doing so. I often say to governing boards, “do not forget the important work of Clipper 2 which will be here soon”. I consider the words of Argeo Paul Cellucci, who declared to the world, “we must also remember that our work is not done”. Yet can we have our all hands on deck moment in not only bringing Clipper 2 into full revenue service, but for all of our operating agencies to bring their systems into full Clipper usage as well?

I do sense trepidation from various operating agencies when it comes to moving away from paper fare media and toward electronic methods such as Clipper, and soon to come, open payments. Some often raise the words, “equity concerns”. Yet Clipper shows itself to be a program that addresses equity concerns instead of opposing such. And so for me being a person who lives with equity based issues, it is Clipper that helps me to navigate matters when it comes to the payment and management of transportation Fares.

I relate to you a story. I mention that recently I visited a community space where there is an informal coffee shop if you will. And there are various baked goods offered, in exchange for suggested free will donations. I noticed a tall glass vase filled with bills of various denominations, but no cash register or QR codes. I mentioned to the people behind the counter that I would like a baked good and that I did not have any money on my person. I also said that I would like to participate by making a donation on the website. I was given the baked good of my choice and I was sent on my way to enjoy it.

And so I did make a small donation on the website as appreciation for the work involved in selling the baked goods. I asked this of myself, I was in a space with most likely a fairly affluent population, and everyone around me was using cash to pay for their baked goods. And so when I mentioned my paying through the website, it was welcomed, but very new to them, not something they had ever seen before. And I have found over time that cash seems often used more by the affluent than by the economically disadvantaged. I am on a fixed income and I have a free checking account with a debit card, and I receive my income through direct deposit. You see, in Las Vegas, there are many of affluent means who use cash often. And that is because there are many, residents and visitors alike, who play various games in the casinos. So if someone is planning to do some gaming, and withdraws cash for that, they'll withdraw cash for other things in life as well, such as paying for groceries, utility bills, home supplies, etc.

And so I see an imperative for our operating agencies to move into Clipper as completely as possible. And BART operates completely on Clipper. Yet cash users are not excluded, because the BART vending machines take cash, and there is a community payment network as well. And these cash payment methods are ways that people can spend down the cash in their piggy banks and coffee cans and convert those funds into Clipper value. I have mentioned this methodology to the Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee as well.

It looks like open payments on BART have plateaued for the time being. That is to be expected given that BART open payments are standing alone at this time. Yet come 10 December, this will all change, and change quickly. I expect Clipper stored value balances will decline, both on an individual basis, and also in the general Clipper float fund. Some will continue to use stored value, and that should always be an option. For some, keeping stored value is a way to manage funds separately, much like filling a gas tank or charging a battery. And the OMNY (One Metro New York) fare system on New York City Transit is not just about open payments but OMNY stored value cards are available as well. And New York City Transit is known for operating North America's largest bus network, and the

legendary and historic rail transportation system that is the Subway. I am interested in seeing how OMNY can be integrated into paratransit as well. I am not an exprert on matters of paratransit but it is essential that paratransit be Clipper enabled. And we have to take on the work of enabling discounted fares with open payments as soon as possible after opening day of Clipper 2.

The time to turn on Clipper 2 is nearing, and quickly. This will be an all hands on deck effort. I ask that you as a panel support the teams that are working to bring Clipper 2 into service. I continue to meditate on the words of Gerry Rafferty who has shared this refrain, “and if you get it wrong you’ll get it right next time”. Surely Gerry Rafferty was considering New York City and its many interesting places in working on his songs. Yet as much as I like the words of Mr Rafferty, in our work of Clipper 2, there is no next time. We have to get this right the first time. It is the Public, our residents and visitors who will benefit greatly from this work. And I do believe, with good reason, that when we get this work done, the Public will indeed be grateful for that.

Thank you.