

From: aleta dupree
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 6:43:03 AM
To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>
Subject: Clipper Exec Bd 27 APR 2026

External Email

Commission Secretary, with thanks, please forward this message to the Clipper Executive Board for the Regular Meeting of 27 April, 2026.

Greetings Board Chair Julie Kirschbaum and Members.

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

I bring you my comments in pertinence to the ongoing activities of the Clipper Executive Board.

First I begin with matters of housekeeping. I have noticed in my letters presented to you for the last few Meetings that my last name has been redacted. I admit that I am surprised and bewildered. I have never heard of last names being redacted from Meeting materials before. I am not aware of any public agency that redacts last names from public comments in the normal course of business. Besides, I always introduce myself with both my first and last name for the record. The same I intend to be true for my written correspondence. And some might know me as Aleta, but for the uninitiated, I introduce myself with my full name of Aleta Dupree, and that is how you all know me. I ask of qualified legal counsel to be consulted, and appropriate corrections made so I can be known in my written comments by the full name that I share with you herein.

I admit that I have not been in tune on matters of Clipper over the last few weeks, given that at this time I am in New York. And some of my writing is taking place while riding on Long Island Railroad trains, including the use of Grand Central Madison. And I did not fly directly from Oakland to New York but I decided to spend three days in Denver. And for the first time I used the Denver RTD fare payment system with the new fare capping program. This I performed with the Denver RTD mobile application. Fare capping can be accomplished by using plastic Denver RTD MyRide stored value cards as well. I have not yet enabled the open payments feature for Reduced Fares, given that I have a stored balance that I will eventually use up. Yet open payments are available across the board on Denver RTD, which I plan to use eventually.

I consider that on 16 June, 2025, the Port Authority Trans-Hudson, commonly known as PATH, began accepting applications for Reduced Fares based on qualifying disabilities. This developed from various forms of outreach, including Public Hearings. I shared comments at one of these hearings by way of Zoom, and with a background of an inside scene of Grand Central Terminal. And so during this trip to New York I decided to visit the new Reduced Fare Application Center at the Journal Square PATH station. There is a process involved and I should receive notification when I will be able to use open payments with reduced fare on PATH. I do not know if any of you are familiar with PATH, which is a transportation system linking Manhattan with several cities in New Jersey. PATH with about fourteen miles of route is much smaller than the New York City Subway. PATH is also considered a commuter railroad even though it looks much like the Subway at first appearance. And so on for the first time in the history of PATH, which was formerly known as the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad, Reduced Fares for persons with qualifying disabilities is now being offered. I consider that PATH is much like BART, not just with open payments, and schedules where all stops are made on every trip, but also keeping in mind

the distinctive ideal that BART is The Peoples System.

I share with you on matters of banking transaction fees, based on testimony in your last Meeting, and in various news reports I have heard. It is true that the gross amount of transaction fees will rise as our Clipper business expands. That is a given for any growing enterprise. I'm not going to read any further into that. I want our Clipper business to grow and therefore increasing gross amounts of banking fees are a necessary cost of doing business.

I am interested in the characteristics of our Clipper transactions, especially open payments, as such evolves over time. In the past I used to have fairly large additions of value to my Clipper account. Before I started using mobile Clipper, I automatically loaded \$20 each time I went under the \$10 threshold. I also bought monthly passes from time to time, which were in the \$30 to \$45 range. Yet today, I'm not buying passes, so I am more commonly loading \$10-15 at a time. I do not have regular travel patterns so I work to keep smaller balances in my account. You see, I am not always in the Bay Area and I do not want to have large orphan balances on any of my transit accounts when I am not able to use them. The amounts per account are small but I have a number of transit accounts around the country and the aggregate amount of funds among those accounts is quite substantial.

And so will the banking fee per transaction increase on a percentage basis as our average transaction gets smaller? I am thinking so, given fixed amounts embedded in the basic interchange fees that are the foundation of the card network based payment system. Yet even if the percentages rise, I do not see them rising very much over time. And cash processing costs are substantially more expensive, often quoted at about 15 percent of the value of currency and coinage received. And cash processing is not free. Banks charge fees for cash processing, and set rules as to the form that the physical money has to be tendered at the door. There are many other expenses along the way, i.e. trucking, security, packaging, and staff time. So the idea that cash processing is free is a myth, though some in the small business space use "sweat equity" if you will, in performing the work themselves. And that often is accompanied by greater challenges in accounting and security. Over time electronic transaction fees will save money, but unfortunately there are some in this world who are disbelieving, no matter the evidence presented.

I consider the evolution of open payments in other places. You see, I often do laundry on my travels, given my being away from home for more than a week at a time. At one time all laundromats were coin operated. And then electronic payments systems began appearing on the scene. At first stored value cards were the primary means of moving away from coins. These cards could have their value added using cash, and in a number of places, from cards and mobile wallets as well.

Yet open payments in the true sense have been appearing in laundromats for about the last decade. This system allows people to pay directly for their laundry on the machines themselves as opposed to using a stored value medium. Stored value cards are good to those who live in the area and use the laundromat regularly. The issue of an orphan balance doesn't really come up in this situation, until the user of that system moves away. Yet for travelers, stored value for laundry is quite cumbersome, especially given that some laundries charge fees for obtaining the plastic cards. I can understand why, given that there are costs to acquiring plastic stored value cards. And so open payments for laundry is absolutely essential for me to go about my business wherever I happen to be.

I haven't really seen any new reporting on matters of Clipper. Yet I advocate for balanced reporting. For me, Next Generation Clipper has basically been a good news story. I feel that we need to refine the display of information, especially in ensuring that balances are displayed accurately in real time across all of the virtual platforms. Yet even with such discrepancies, I have still been able to use Public Transportation in its intended manner. I have not engaged in any workarounds or alternative methods. You see, as difficult as it can be sometimes, I am leaning into the issues and moving forward. This affords

me experiences that I am able to share with you in Meetings and letters.

I recognize, as I have said before, that Next Generation Clipper is probably the most complex fare collection and management program that has ever been attempted. And complex projects are inherently difficult to deliver. I remember when the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City declared the OMNY fare payment system to be a megaproject. And megaproject designations are usually reserved for large civil infrastructure endeavors such as the Second Avenue Subway and Grand Central Madison. Yet OMNY is a program with far reaching implications for the New York megaregion. And Clipper is essential for all who need to engage with Public Transportation in our beloved Bay Area for doing the things they need and want to do. I know the teams at MTC and Cubic are continually working to solve the challenges that come up along the way. I ask that none of you grandstand, and especially that you not be arrogant or impetuous when it comes to sharing on matters of Clipper. I engage with you and the teams respectfully with the goal of building the best Clipper that we can have. I advocate that there should be modest amounts of bulk migration of accounts, in order that more will be able to access the full suite of benefits that Next Generation Clipper has to offer. We can monitor small packages of bulk migrations and evaluate performance. You see, I want everyone to be able to access Clipper in its fullest, just as I am able to do. And I know the teams to be continually responsive to my needs and concerns I feel we have the best people in place to continue in this most important work. I can only share things as I know them and I call things as I see them. I look forward to what you all have to say in the Proceedings of your upcoming Meeting.

Thank you.