

June 14, 2019

Clipper Executive Board
c/o Martha Silver, Clerk of the Committee
375 Beale St, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Item 3b. Regional Fare Coordination and Integration

Dear Chair Mulligan and Executive Board members:

SPUR is a member-supported nonprofit organization that promotes good planning and good government in the San Francisco Bay Area through research, education and advocacy. Improving public transit and increasing transit use in cities are core priorities for our organization.

SPUR strongly encourages the Clipper Executive Board to approve the allocation of funding for the Business Case for Transit Fare Integration.

As detailed in our recently published report *Solving the Bay Area's Fare Policy Problem*, disparate and disjointed fares create customer confusion, inhibit people from using more than one transit service and undermine the benefits the region should derive from the significant investments it is making in new transit infrastructure and fare payment technology. The region's fragmented approach to fares pushes people to make inefficient and often costly transit decisions — or to get behind the wheel and drive themselves, adding to traffic congestion, pollution and carbon emissions.

A solution to the Bay Area's fare policy problem is long overdue. Other regions around the globe have streamlined fares across transit operators to improve user experience and grow transit use. The Clipper upgrade offers a rare window of opportunity to streamline and integrate fare policies. To grow transit ridership, optimize use of the regional transit network and offer an improved customer experience, Bay Area fare policies must look beyond transit operator boundaries.

The potential impacts of regional fare integration are not well understood. The issue has not been studied for more than 10 years. In the absence of real information, fear and assumptions are driving the decision to maintain the status quo approach to fare policy.

A business case to assess options, costs and benefits for regional fare integration would provide much needed information to move this issue forward. The 2008 Fare Integration Study evaluated various regional fare products for their impact on revenues and ridership. This is a limited understanding of what transit fares when employed strategically can achieve, such as improved system efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a better customer experience. We

strongly encourage using Metrolinx's four-part business case structure as a template for the business case as it considered the economic, strategic, financial and operations case for each fare concept it evaluated. The business case should also consider revenue investment and revenue neutrality options.

To ensure the business case is successful and prioritizes the customer experience, appropriate project management structures must be put in place. We support the project structure proposal and appreciate that the Policy Advisory Committee includes transit agency board members, MTC Commissioners and representatives from advocacy organizations. Transit agency board members understand the operating needs of transit agencies as well as the broader role public transit serves in the community by providing access to opportunity; furthermore, they set fare policy. As such, we believe it is important they be part of the advisory committee. Cities are also important stakeholders. Many people live and work in places with multiple operators, including the region's growing job centers. The seamless use of multiple operators supports the ways that Bay Area cities plan to grow.

Finally, we strongly support the principles proposed in the staff report (copied below), and encourage them to be embraced by the board.

- Treat the Bay Area transit network as one system;
- Fares should be predictable to users;
- There should be no penalty for transferring;
- Discounts based on age or status should apply uniformly;
- Trips of a similar distance should cost similar amounts
- Transit should be affordable for all
- Passes, if offered, should encourage transit use, not operator loyalty

Integrating transit fares will not be easy, but it is our responsibility as leaders to delve into that complexity so that we can create simplicity for riders. You took the big step with the Clipper card. We now ask that you pursue regional fare integration and move forward with the business case, with the involvement of Bay Area cities, transit riders and others who care.

Thank you for your leadership on this crucial issue for the Bay Area. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Arielle Fleisher
Transportation Policy Director