



PUBLIC COMMENT

BART Board Meeting

July 11, 2024

Item 7

From: aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 10:31 AM
To: Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>
Subject: comments from things nearby

Secretary April Quintanilla, please forward this message to the full BART Board for the next Regular Meeting.

Greetings Board President Bevan Dufty and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her.

I bring you my miscellaneous thoughts concerning the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

They're Afraid to Ride the Trains.

I reflect on things in the past, some distant, and some more recent. I consider populations often not heard from, who are afraid to ride the trains.

I think back to the aftermath of 9-11, and there were profound changes made to airport security. In reaction to the unspeakable tragedy of 9-11, security protocols in some ways became more invasive, and there were accusations of profiling. I considered my evolving fear of flying, which I most likely picked up during Operation Desert Shield / Storm, in 1990-91.

And so as a person who over time evolves into differences from established societal definitions, I eventually decided to refrain from flying. And so my fear of flying was not just about turbulence on airplanes. My fears were also about navigating a security system that was not particularly welcoming to people with differences from society as a whole.

I think back around two decades ago, I was in conversation somewhere, it might have been in Florida in the late 1990's, I was mentioning in passing about my using the New York City Subway. And one of the elderly people with me became agitated. The Holocaust was mentioned, and the rail transports involved in that unspeakably dark chapter of world history. I was at a loss for words, I still am, and we moved onto talking about other things. It was around that time when my grandfather mentioned about his family losing distant relatives in the Holocaust, during our visit together in late 1998.

And so I consider things more recent, such as some Pride events around the country denying law enforcement members the opportunity to march. Such upset me deeply, as I had always thought of Pride as an inclusive ideal, and yet there was exclusion right in front of me. I thought to myself, they're excluding police officers today, will they exclude Veterans tomorrow. As a Veteran I was deeply concerned and upset in considering such possibilities. And so I did not participate in Pride events at the time, wanting to keep faith with those excluded from full participation.

I consider this is Pride Month. I did notice a Pride event happening in a community room in BART World Headquarters at 2150 Webster Street here in Oakland. I am in support of such events for BART employees. Yet I think Pride needs to be about deeper conversations about equity and welcome, and not just about parties and parades. You see, the day after Pride, on that Monday, it is easy to descend into what is known as post Pride blues. Yet Pride should be year round in advancing the cause of equity and welcome. And so Pride events should not just be about giving out free food and swag, but with the hope that more at BART will know what to do with me when I appear on the scene.

And so I think of the many who are afraid to ride on the trains, whether they be survivors of the Holocaust, or people who have endured traumatic experiences in airport security checkpoints, or many who just seem to never get a fair shake in life because of who they are. I can only share with you my experiences, of which sometimes such things are hard to translate into appropriately descriptive language. And such conversations can be hard to have, or even to mention.

I am appreciative of our BART PD, and the many who perform their assigned duties with professionalism and diligence. Yet what can I say to those who upon seeing our BART, and seeing the people who protect our BART, that those with painful histories might feel they have to turn away? I can only respect people where they're at and not try to compare or convince. Some may never fly on airplanes or ride on trains again. It is not my place to say that they could or they should. I can only be a good listener and seek to learn from the things that are said. I do seek after deeper levels of consciousness when it comes to the matters of equity and welcome. And I do not know if I am understood when I share my thoughts with you in messages or in my various speakings from the podium. And sadly many do not understand why there are some who will not get on the trains. Yet these are things we have to keep in mind, that more will participate in the high quality transportation service that is BART. And this I keep in mind wherever I go, and in sharing this ideal, that BART is The Peoples System.

On Politics.

I often think about matters of politics, and what makes a person a politician. I can't answer the question about whether Directors of BART are politicians. I think that is a question only you can answer for yourselves. I don't know if I'm particularly good at politics, as much as I speak in favor of Congestion Pricing in New York, that system has still not yet been turned on. And I think I'm pretty good and speaking and writing letters, but yet I consider the possibility that I might not be understood. Perhaps the best kind of sausage making for me is preparing ground meat with spices, and heating the patties in a cast iron pan on my electric range. And I do consider that the future of the New York City Subway is once again in question. One must ask, how is a rail system over a hundred years old kept in good repair when the money isn't there to pay for that? And so is my speaking at MTA Board Meetings and using the Subway enough to move the needle toward a more positive future? Is my sharing of ideals that are legendary and stately, steeped in tradition and mindful of history really enough? And I try to bring positive energy when it comes to matters of the Subway, and Grand Central Terminal, and our BART, that work they needs to be done will get done. And while I am on the same page as executive leadership in building better systems of Public Transportation, is that enough to overcome politics? And I have nothing against politics, there are many things about politics that interest me, and perhaps some might call me a wannabe politician or even a gadfly. I do not know if I am qualified to speak on matters of BART, but I can share of my experiences. Many often think of the famous quote by William Shakespeare, "to be, or not to be, that is the question". And I often ask myself, what does it mean when "one can never have enough Grand Central Terminal?" Some questions might not be easily answered, if at all. But at least I consider the undisputed facts of the proper name of that famous railroad station is Grand Central Terminal, and its location in New York City. Perhaps that is answer enough, or at least a reasonable start. I think of my hearing the instrumental "Hey Girl", by the 101 Strings, while riding the Route 101 Rainbow Blvd bus in Las Vegas, in 2016. Before that day I had not heard that piece since the early 1980's on the WPAT, Easy 93. Such opened up to me basic understanding of the sounds of the Hammond B3 Organ, with a background of symphonic violins. I think back to watching The Lawrence Welk Show in the early 1980's, an interest that it seemed few in my age group pursued at the time. Yet I still enjoy listening to many timeless works of "grandparents music", reminded of the days of when WPAT, Easy 93 was an easy listening station. And I share of these things because this gives context as to who I am. Perhaps the sharing of interests and experiences is part of transcending past basic academic

expositions and into deeper levels of understanding. For I might not be a politician, but I am an ordinary user of BART, and such is a foundation of the many things that I share with you in my speakings and writings. And perhaps my best sausage making is in my kitchen on my electric range powered by solar energy.

“Alone Again.”

I consider “Alone Again, Naturally, performed by Gilbert O’Sullivan and released to the world in 1972. I do a bit more enjoy the 1973 easy listening version performed by the Ray Conniff Singers. As I think about Alone Again Naturally, perhaps the song told of the story of a young man, an only child, a good son, who lived in bucolic semi rural western New Jersey with his parents, in the early 1970’s. They lived comfortably in a modest middle class home, his father in a professional career, his mother a homemaker and community volunteer. I spent about two years living in Whitehouse Station, in that area, in the late 1990’s. And so the young man excelled in school, ran cross country daily, had some good friends, and was close with his parents. Surely they took the train to New York to enjoy classical concerts and fine arts museums. They most likely spent evenings in the living room enjoying hours of easy listening on the WPAT, Easy 93. And yet Alone Again, Naturally, is indeed a sad story. After the young man finished his education and settled into his own professional career, and continuing to see his parents often, he met a woman and they planned to get married. The young man looked forward to being a good husband and father, following the wonderful example of his parents. Yet on his wedding day, his bride did not show up. And so everyone went home empty handed. And a few years later, the man’s father died, and then his mother passed not long after, and according to the lyrics, he cried and cried all day. And he found himself Alone Again, Naturally.

And so some might ask, what does the music of Gilbert O’Sullivan and life in early 1970’s New Jersey have to do with BART? You see, things often happen that aren’t foreseen or predicted. And there are many who are often misunderstood or overlooked. And while this young man in the song Alone Again, Naturally, most likely appeared and lived according to societally established definitions, surely he was cognizant and appreciative of the many who were different from him. And I consider, how can he have a BART that will welcome those who are different? I am not able to vote for you because I live outside of the District, yet I feel that as a user of BART I seek after equal standing. I consider the matters of Pride, and I know that several of you have decades of deep work in advancing the cause of equity and inclusion. But yet I wonder if many at BART only render lip service when it comes to Pride and other commemorations of inclusion. It is my hope that the former would be the case. I submit to you that I take matters of Pride very seriously. I am not up to doing parades and festivals much anymore, but I practice the matters of Pride daily and in diverse spaces. You see, Pride for me is about moving past definitions and into inclusive ideals that transcend definitions. And I know at BART I am often not preaching to the choir, but witnessing to the many who need to hear the message. I consider the organizational structure of BART. The overwhelmingly vast majority of BART employees are part of chains of command accountable to Bob Powers, your General Manager. And Bob reports to you as a collective Board. And so whom does your Board report to? Sometimes I’m not sure. I would like to see your Board uphold the ideal of reporting to the Public. And the meaning of such can be complicated. I am a member of the Public, though I am not comfortable with the idea of you working for me. I seek for you to work for the collective Public as a whole, and not specific groups or interests. I ask that BART promote the ideal of welcoming those who are different, especially those who do not fit established definitions. Yet many things at BART are predicated on definitions, and such can leave some behind. I ask that you consider seriously the comments of the small cadre of thoughtful and respectful advocates that use this system that is BART. I ask that you not curry favor with those who sow disrespect and discord. I take the matters of BART very seriously, and I expect everyone else at BART to do the same. For I believe that the New York City Subway is the System that is Legendary and Stately, and steeped in

tradition and mindful of history. And perhaps the Subway is indeed in a class by itself and without peer. Yet I believe in a BART that holds to this unique ideal that I practice daily, that BART is The Peoples System.

Remembering the importance of tradition and history.



Thank you.

From: aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, July 5, 2024 9:32 AM
To: Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>
Subject: comments for the Regular Meeting

Secretary April Quintanilla, please forward this message to the full BART Board for the next Regular Meeting.

Greetings President Bevan Dufty and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her.

I share with you my various thoughts pertaining to the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

These photos are screen captures.

This is the Track 23 platform area in Grand Central Terminal, in the early 1980's, with the original track number signage.



Hearing Mr Harrison.

I share with you my experiences with the words and thoughts of Mr George Harrison, a highly acclaimed English musician who was a member of a famous music group called the Beatles. In 1979, his solo works Blow Away and Love Comes to Everyone were released to the world. I think back to when I first heard Blow Away. Upon hearing that, I was instantly brought back to the fall of 1980, and my first visit to Grand Central Terminal, which is a legendary and historic railroad station located in New York City. Not long after I heard Blow Away, I came across Love Comes to Everyone. I played that song along with a video of Grand Central Terminal made silent. I considered this upon hearing Blow Away, that lower pitched sounds corresponded to lower track numbers, and higher pitches to higher numbers. In viewing a track map of Grand Central Terminal, such looks like a symmetrical layout of piano strings. I think back to seeing different characteristics of the track layout in Grand Central Terminal. At one time there were Tracks 22 and 31, they were not used for passenger service, and were later removed to build pedestrian passageways. Track 14 is used for station service and support. Track 12 was once in the storage yard, it was removed to create the platform between Tracks 11 and 13. And there are many reasons why track numbers in Grand Central Terminal do not correspond to normally sequential numbering conventions. And at one time on the lower level, the tracks numbered 100-117, but 116 and 117 were removed to make way for Grand Central Madison.

I do not have a logical reason as to why these musical works of George Harrison remind me of Grand Central Terminal. I don't know why Baker Street by Gerry Rafferty reminds me of Forty Second Street in New York City either. And Right Down the Line has a constant background of Hammond B3 organ. Surely Mr Rafferty heard and was inspired by the under running third rail, that which powers the trains in Grand Central Terminal and throughout the Metro-North system. I consider that I enjoy visiting fine arts museums, and the Legion of Honor in San Francisco is one of my favorites. I don't have a good answer as to why I spend some of my days standing in front of various works of fine art. I guess I simply enjoy that. I especially enjoy medieval tapestries, and paintings by artists of the Hudson River School. And we all have our own reactions of what fine art means to us. And there are many things that I take notice of that others might not. I remember the old track number signs at the beginnings of the platforms in Grand Central Terminal. They were squares, black numbers and borders, with white backgrounds. They were removed during later renovations of the Terminal. Yet I remember actually seeing them, among many other things often not noticed. And there is a logical pattern to assigning trains to particular track numbers, to minimize conflicts in the interlockings at the start of the Park Avenue Tunnel.

I admit that I am not an expert on the things of BART, nor do I have all of the answers. I state that I do take my Grand Central Terminal very seriously, as I have since the fall of 1980. I would have liked to have met Mr Harrison and seen many interesting things in New York, including Grand Central Terminal. But I have my experiences, and I bring them to you so you can have context as to who I am. And so with me being very different from many at BART, I ask myself where do I fit in? Or do I have to fit in at all? What I bring to you is respectful comment in your Meetings, and following the rules of conduct out on the System. That should hopefully be enough for anyone to be able to use and enjoy BART in its intended manner. The things that I say might not be understood, but the ideas and directives of Bob Powers and Michael Jones are, with the goal of building the best BART that we can have.

On matters of charging batteries.

I mention to you my thoughts and concerns about the charging of various kinds of batteries. You see, I have a cell phone, which I need to charge the battery on occasion. And we live in a world where battery powered devices are becoming ever more prevalent, even close to ubiquitous.

I have been on several railroads where charging of small devices such as cell phones are easily facilitated. Such provide power outlets at each row of seats. And the rules of the road are clear. I mention to you that recently the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City passed a regulation concerning the charging of batteries. This policy is part of a broader regulation pertaining to bringing personal electric vehicles onto MTA property. Such is a well thought out regulation that keeps safety first and foremost in mind.

And so I feel here at BART we need to have clarity when it comes to the charging of batteries. You see, a few months ago, a passenger charging a cell phone was contacted by BART PD. I don't have all the facts of what happened, so I will not comment about specifics here. But if that person needed to charge their phone, couldn't an Ambassador or Crisis Intervention Specialist have assisted instead? And could the charging of my cell phone in the Board Room during a Meeting result in a contact by BART PD, and me being ejected from the Meeting? Am I at greater risk because I am different and wear a skirt? I wish we had greater clarity when it comes to the charging of batteries on BART property. I feel there needs to be Board level policies, based on basic safety first principles, to govern what is and isn't allowed when it comes to charging batteries on BART. And such policies need to be communicated and expectations set and adhered to, so we can have the safest BART that we can have.

The People I Meet.

I mention to you that lately I have met a number of people at BART who have shown me true and sincere welcome. Recently I spoke with an Assistant General Manager, who reports to Bob Powers, this individual I will not name. I mentioned to this AGM that their team has really welcomed me into the BART space, and I felt the need to report about that. And my conversations with this team started out with my mentioning the subject of direct deposit. Perhaps my sharing about direct deposit is a good ice breaker. You see, I am a person who is very different, and I have practiced direct deposit since 1989. And I always look forward to seeing this team at your Meetings, where they continually practice the welcome. I have come across a few Station Agents who have been very helpful when I need information, especially with elevator and escalator status. And I have met a few in BART PD who welcome me into the BART space as well. There are people in BART who do know what to do with me when I appear on the scene. Should I be surprised? It is my hope that I should not be, and I seek for everyone at BART to know what to do with me. And so how do we promote the ideals of professionalism, courtesy, and equity here at BART? I think back to the press conference I attended last year on the topic of courtesy and respect, at the noon hour in the main concourse of Grand Central Terminal. I can only share of the things that I need in order to properly navigate this system that is BART. And I consider myself fortunate to have met and conversed with some of you who are members of this Board. I consider that the New York City Subway is the System that is Legendary and Stately, steeped in tradition and mindful of history. And so I ask of all at BART to practice this timeless tradition, that BART is The Peoples System.

This is what Right Down the Line looked like when I saw it in the fall of 1980.



Thank you.



PUBLIC COMMENT

BART Board Meeting

July 11, 2024

Item 9-A

From: [Gail Murray](#)
To: [April Quintanilla](#); [Louis Osemwegie](#)
Cc: [Robert Raburn](#)
Subject: Board of Directors Item #9
Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 11:03:04 AM
Attachments: [BART Board of Directors.docx](#)

Please circulate the message below and attached to the Board of Directors for the July 11 meeting. Please read it into the record when Item #9 is heard on the agenda.

BART Board of Directors

Item #9 on July 11, 2024 Agenda

I'm pleased to see the item about fare gates on your agenda this week and urge you to move forward with haste. More than a decade ago when I was on the Board of Directors, I asked that BART address fare evasion. I continue to follow the financial problems of BART and progress on the Regional Measure to address its impending fiscal cliff. My constituents complained about fare evasion whenever there was an incremental fare increase that affected them. They saw a major unfairness when BART was asking them to pay more while neglecting to forcefully address fare evasion. Installing the new faregates will insure people in the Bay Area that BART is doing its part at time in the future that it will be asking them to do more by voting for a new funding measure. We cannot allow BART to fail for lack of significant action to address this simmering issue that passengers see daily. For the success of any future funding and the health and safety of the BART system, please expedite the installation of faregates as you have pledged to do by 2025.

Gail Murray

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BART Board of Directors
Item #9 on July 11, 2024 Agenda

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