



**July 9, 2026**

**BART Board Meeting**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**ITEM**

(Written public comments received  
before July 8, 2026 at 3pm.)

Comment received:

- 1 Aleta Dupree
- 2 Aleta Dupree

**From:** aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 2, 2026 10:09 AM  
**To:** Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>  
**Subject:** [External] comments of various reports  
Greetings Board President Melissa Hernandez and Members.

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

I bring forth to you my comments in relevance to the ongoing activities of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

Know what to do.

This is a presentation of the Courtesy Counts campaign, in Grand Central Terminal, a prominent public transportation facility that is located in New York City.



I share with you my thoughts in relevance to the things of BART, and of challenges thereof. I am very different from you, and many at BART, and I am often misunderstood. And I often share a refrain about this circumstance, that I often find myself in a BART that doesn't know what to do with me. And it is true that the Pride season is in full swing, and will be concluded by the time I send this message to you. And Pride is a time for having fun, and that party like atmosphere culminates in Pride Sunday. Such involves a big parade in San Francisco, and after parties going on into the next morning. And that Monday morning often results in feeling the "post Pride blues", and having to get back to the usual activities of life. For many, it means the parties are over, and having to go back to work.

Yet for me, Pride is a year round thing. And Pride to me is much more than parties and parades. Such is good for people being able to express themselves, ideally in safe spaces. I feel there is a place, a very important place, that people should have fun. I often share of the ideal that "Meetings are not just necessary, but should be fun as well". I often relate to the New York City Subway as not just being a way to get around, a means to an end, but a destination in an of itself. And journeys should be enjoyed along the way. I have done long walks in the past to lose weight and maintain a sense of fitness. And every day was a journey to be enjoyed, each day was a goal in an of itself. Such is like hiking the Appalachian Trail, only done in the local streetscapes that most call mundane and take for granted. I often told people at the time, the city is my gym, no membership required. Eventually I did start a membership at the gym at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV). And UNLV offered memberships to residents of Clark County for a nominal monthly fee. Back then I lived very close to UNLV and I enjoyed the benefits thereof on a daily basis. I also had free access to the gym at Nellis Air Force Base, given my being a Disabled Veteran, though the gym there was too far from my home. Every so often I did take the city bus to the base, and I carried food home from the grocery store known as The Commissary. Yet still the city was very much my gym, and still is to this day.

And yet Pride to me is about things much deeper, and often very difficult. To be honest I find some aspects of Pride to be superficial and forgetful. I went to an event in a park, and there was a resource fair, people in tents representing various groups and organizations. And I feel resource fairs are very important, in helping people to connect in ways that they had not known about before. Yet I also came away reminded of the story of the money changers who set up tables in the ancient tabernacle. And a young man came in and flipped them over. I would not do such things, my approach is more respectful and deliberative. Yet I walked away thinking, have we forgotten where we came from, and do we know where we're going? I asked myself, has anyone here even heard of Gerry Rafferty? I did share of bit about Mr Rafferty, and people who told me they had never heard of him did recognize the trademark saxophone solo in his 1978 work Baker Street. And so many really have heard the song Baker Street, but not initially making the connection. And they said, yes I've heard that. I mentioned, that's Baker Street, by Gerry Rafferty. And Mr Rafferty in mentioning of that street in London known as Baker Street, was sharing of his being inspired by that famous street in New York City that is Forty Second Street.

And I often ask myself during Pride season, have we forgotten where we came from? As much as I like BART, at times I feel I am in a BART that doesn't know that to do with me. And I find disrespect to be endemic in the world, not just in BART or in Public Transportation. I sometimes have to set the record straight. I often say to people, including in BART, "I always hated being called sir". Most are apologetic, yet some offer snide excuses, in saying things like, "I was just trying to be nice", or "I was showing you respect". I respond in saying, "you have deeply disrespected and offended me". I have to "pick my battles carefully", and sometimes I've had to let things go. Yet such leaves the proverbial bad taste in my mouth, and at times profoundly affects the course of my day.

And so when people are in an institutional or corporate setting, such as BART, they represent the organization they belong to. And so when someone works for BART and disrespects me, they are doing so as a representative

of BART. And such is amplified when the person isn't just possessing a BART ID card, but a badge as well. And I ask myself, I am being disrespected today, will I be hunted and pulled from a train tomorrow? Such indeed adds insult to injury. And the ghosts of skirt hunting in New York City up until the 1970's are still with us. And a day will come when those who have the stories to tell will no longer be with us. And I don't glorify the Stonewall Riot of 1969 or similar events. I seek after a more deliberative way of sharing my thoughts. Yet the paddy wagons were stationed near the clubs, and various street corners, and Subway entrances, to be ready for "dropping the nets and bringing in the catch". Some were most likely pulled from Subway stations and trains, after thinking that they made it a safe distance from the clubs and headed for home.

And I think many do suffer from a slip of the tongue when it comes to addressing me in ways that are not correct reflections of who I am. But the damage has already been done. And it is hard for me to respond, because I could be subject to retaliation. I could find myself denied entrance to Meetings or the System, simply for calling out a problem that is not due to my making. Some might play fast and loose with prohibition orders, issue them and declaring them non appealable. Some could say, you could appeal, but don't even try, you'll probably just make things worse. You see, policy is one thing, how policy is practiced is entirely another. And some would surely say, just suck it up and stay in your place. And for people who possess the badge, the answer could simply be, "I am the law". I could complain, but the reply could be, "stop making such a big deal of it, it's just words". And then I could be prohibited from using the System over that. And so I could be lacking standing anyway. Yet I feel I shouldn't be denied who I am, but accepted as I am. I know myself better than anyone else, simply because I am who I am. And assumptions made are often incorrect. And yet for many who cause offense, they can't seem to understand why they are being called out.

I say to all at BART, disrespect must end and it must end now. And how do we get past our hangups, and stop disparaging people, even if unintentionally? You see, when I went to basic training, we came from diverse communities. And the goal was to get us all to work together as a team. We all had to leave our issues at the door and get on with the mission at hand. And for me to be disrespected by BART employees leads me to believe that this reflective of BART as a whole. And such disrespects the fundamentally good name of the organization that is BART. And disrespect carries profound reputational risk. And perhaps I am like raw oysters. Some try raw oysters for the first time and go back for more. For me, I have enjoyed raw oysters at the famous Oyster Bar since the fall of 1980. The Oyster Bar is in the famous railroad station that is Grand Central Terminal, which is located in New York City. Yet for many, the idea of having raw oysters is something they won't go near with a ten foot pole. I ask that no one in BART think of me in a similar vein of discomfort and disdain. I may not be understood, and surely that makes some uncomfortable, but that is never a valid reason for disrespect. I say to people, my name is Aleta, and this is how I expect to be addressed. And some at BART surely will always be uncomfortable with people such as myself, and not go near us even with ten foot poles. Such attitudes deeply disturb me and in my opinion have no place in this public organization that is our BART. I sometimes come to Meetings with trepidation. Some surely are still trying to get used to me, even with my years of speaking before you at the Public Comment podium. I always share in the Board Room and out in the System with respect. I should also receive respect as well. But such should not be in return as if in a transaction, but instead should be an automatic first response. I still wonder if I will be turned back at the gate, or pulled from a train, or denied use of an elevator. simply because I am different. The ghosts of skirt hunting in 1970's New York City are still with me, given the painful stories I have been told. If it happens to someone else it could happen to me. I have no privilege to take refuge in, if you will. I have only two privileges in life, I can shop on military installations, and I have Reduced Fare on Public Transportation. I might not meet photogenic standards for appearing in BART outreach media. Yet I still speak at Meetings and send you letters. I do not know if I will be let into a BART party, given that I am very different. Whoever stands at the gate has all the power. Yet I fondly remember the welcome I experienced at the retirement party for Grace Crunican in June, 2019. I said in Public Comment, not only do I love a good Meeting but I love a good party. And your leadership team of Bob

Powers and Michael Jones brings forth clear and understandable directives emphasizing the importance of welcoming in our BART. But leadership ultimately rests with you, the Board that you are. I expect everyone at BART to hold each other accountable. I do not want us to lose a single rider due to disrespectful offense. I ask that no one equate wearing a skirt with Subway fare skipping. Yet we often only see the surface, and fail to look beyond. We are often told not to judge books by their covers. And durian is known to be a disgustingly smelly fruit when broken open, yet is sweet in its final preparation. I'll leave that to the experts. I do not want the embarrassment that would come if I accidentally drop a durian to the floor of a Subway car, it breaking open, and everyone needing to evacuate at the next stop. I credibly declare to you that I am not radioactive. I ask that everyone in BART practice this most inclusive of ideals without ceasing, that BART is indeed The Peoples System.

On Matters of Sustainability.

We're cooking with electricity.



I reflect on the preliminary presentation of the BART Sustainability Report, which will be published in full later this year. I am encouraged on some aspects, yet I am also concerned about others. I am seeing us taking on “low hanging fruit”, projects such as LED lighting, electric non-revenue vehicles, and heat pump water heaters (HPWH). I have an electric hot water heater in my home, (30 gallons nominal, 28 gallons usable).

I take great interest in heat pump water heaters, and heat pump technology in general. I wish I had heat pump systems in my home, both in climate control and water heating. Yet I do not own my home, therefore I have no control over the types of heating and cooling systems installed within. And heat pump systems would certainly save me money on my electric bills, how much I do not know. I do know that heat pump water heaters have compressors, how much noise they produce I’m not sure of. That could be an issue in a modest sized apartment. And because heat pump water heaters produce cool air as a byproduct of their operation, depending on the season and use case, that air byproduct could be beneficial or detrimental to the temperature of the surrounding space.

And water heating is a substantial use of energy in homes and businesses. I am not familiar with the diverse uses for water heating in BART. And the HWPWH will definitely result in reduced use of natural gas. I never really understood heating water with flammable gas of some kind, such is not as efficient as electric heating, where elements or refrigerant containing tubes are immersed in the water. Some don’t understand cooking with electricity either. And while many pizza places are using electric ovens for pizza baking, often their other kitchen equipment still uses natural gas. I think to myself, has electric induction heating never been heard of in these spaces? I often share of using induction heating for cooking in my own home, and the benefits thereof.

I must submit to you that I still find the explanation of why our BART is not a 100 percent greenhouse gas free energy to be cursory and lacking. I understand that Board Meetings often do not allow time for the deep discussions of things often considered to be abstract and esoteric. And matters pertaining to electricity can be quite complex, and often only understood by a few. And in my home I engage in deeply holistic practices when it comes to electricity. Such takes time in understanding, including what some would call research and development. Yet if one doesn’t have an all electric home, then the opportunities to practice deeper uses of electricity are diminished. It is one thing to plug in an electric vehicle, for most people it is “set it and forget it”. It another thing to understand the demand profiles of electric vehicle charging. And most people don’t think much of electricity. For many the only concern is the bill, and whether they feel they are paying too much. Yet few understand what makes up the electric bill. I’m not expecting people to know all about the deep aspects of electricity usage, such really should just be used and enjoyed. Yet I seek after understanding, and to make informed decisions.

And yet I am seeing a disconnect when it comes to electricity pricing for our BART. It seems implied that we in our BART are finding renewable electricity to be more expensive than its non renewable counterpart. And yet that is not true for me. I ask myself, what gives here? Perhaps there is more to this than meets the eye. It is true that some community choice aggregation programs (CCA) have renewable offerings that are more expensive than standard. Yet the difference seems to be quite small, though maybe not negligible. And yet who are we writing contracts for non-renewable electricity with? Are we sourcing energy from out of state coal fired generators? Or seasonally operating diesel peaking units? Or our own diesel generator network? I sincerely hope not. And while CO2 emissions are something to be concerned about, we never hear discussion about the associated particulates that comes from burning various kinds of fuels. Such is an important issue of both local and national concern. And yet do the people who write electricity contracts for BART belong to a “secret society”, entering the building through dedicated and exclusive back entrances? Perhaps they operate out of offices than few else in BART are able to access? I seek after transparency in our BART when it comes to

electricity purchasing, yet the explanations seem opaque. I can see the need for secrecy in some cases, surely few at BART know where the secret “money room” is. And fewer still know of the revenue collection trains from years past, and the secret train sidings where they unloaded their valuable cargoes. And perhaps I am rambling here but I seek after answers that should be basic and obvious in their nature. Where does the non renewable energy at BART come from? I wonder if the power content label fails to tell the whole story, given possibilities of internal and behind the meter generation.

And I fear that BART might abandon its goals toward 100 percent greenhouse gas free power. I hear of mentions of a cost allotment. Yet if the cleanest power is the cheapest power, then 100 percent should be a reasonable and convincing goal to achieve. And so it seems that we at BART are spending more money than we need to, and without the detailed explanation that should accompany that. If I was in one of your seats I would stand up and vehemently advocate for answers. I am conscious of these things because I practice the use of 100 percent renewable energy in my home. And when I go to restaurants and the kitchens are somewhat visible, I attempt to discern whether the cooking equipment is electric or not. I do not apply litmus tests about equipment to decide where I want to eat. However, I am more partial to pizza places that have electric ovens. Sustainability is a part of that but more so, in my opinion, electric ovens offer a higher quality bake. And dollars spent are votes in a way. As more pizza chefs and owners discover higher revenues from pizzas made in electric ovens, then it is more likely that electric pizza ovens will spread in popularity. I am noticing this with electric vehicles in rideshare services. I find the wait times to be a bit longer for electric vehicles. Such is basic supply and demand. I say this is mostly due to people intentionally requesting these. For me, I am intentional in choosing such, and my money pays into that.

Yet if we took a poll, would the average user of BART care about the source of energy to operate our System? I don't know. I'm not thinking so. Such doesn't seem to be a factor on whether people choose to ride BART. I admit that such wouldn't really affect my decisions to use BART, the alternative is often a diesel powered bus, such often takes quite a bit longer. And there are no bus transit services that traverse the Berkeley Hills as far as I know. I would use BART regardless of where the power is sourced. But I can and still care about that, given the various issues surrounding power sourcing and management. I ask myself, what accounts do I want to pay into? And I want to invest in things that will benefit our communities. Solar energy is homegrown as opposed to non renewable fuels that are often imported from out of state. I remember the days of New York City largely using foreign oil to generate electricity. And years before that the fuel of choice was coal. And New York, both the city and state have a long way to go toward achieving high levels of renewable resources. I ask that we never think of our customers as captive, but we should always think of our customers as concerned. And we all have different concerns and priorities. It is tempting to let costs determine how we practice our values. I ask that we not allow costs to detract from commitment to our values. And we can only do so much given our financial situation. Yet again, if clean power is the cheapest power, then we should take that toward a measure of completeness. And how do we practice using renewable energy if we are not using it in our homes? I am doing so myself. How does one understand cooking with electricity if they don't have an electric range? It is one thing to talk about values, it is an entirely different thing to practice them. It is my hope that deeper explanations will be expected and asked for. Unlike you all, I do not have the privilege of staff outreach and requests for information. I am depending on you as a Board to ask the questions and expect the answers. I am at a disadvantage given that I am simply an ordinary member of the public who is very different and often not understood. We are doing good work, but I feel at times we are disconnected from greater potential and possibilities. To me, continuous improvement is absolutely essential. Most of all I feel that even those who perform the things of BART in secret should openly practice the basic ideal that BART is The Peoples System. Wisdom of value.

“Well I was coming home late one dark afternoon, a reporter stopped me for an interview. She said she's heard

stories and she's heard fables, that I'm vicious on the mic and the turntables. This young reporter I did adore, so I rocked a vicious rhyme like I never did before. She said, damn fly guy I'm in love with you, the casanova legend must have been true." - The Sugar Hill Gang.

"If you wanna be a hoochie momma, I can be a hoochie man." - Bobby Rush.

"Way up here above this timeless sea. I realize just what it is you mean to me. You give me something when I thought that everything I had was dying". - Gerry Rafferty thinking of overnight rides on the Subway crossing the Manhattan Bridge heading toward distant neighborhoods in Brooklyn.

This is the Walnut Creek Station. Some might debate this sharply with me. Yet upon seeing this, I was again convinced without a shadow of a doubt that BART is indeed The Peoples System.



Thank you.

**From:** aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2026 12:34 PM  
**To:** Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>  
**Subject:** [External] comments of carrying the water  
Greetings Board President Melissa Hernandez and Members.

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

I bring forth to you my comments in pertinence to the work of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

The History and Mystery of BART.

This is the Transportation Building (370 Jay Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11201), opened in 1951. This building owned by the City of New York served as the headquarters for the Board of Transportation and later the New York City Transit Authority. It was here that the secret money counting and storage room was located, on the second floor. Today this building is a satellite campus of New York University.



I share with you on matters of the importance of tradition and history. It is easy to simply see BART only in the moment, which is understandable given that many just want to get where they're going. Yet I wonder if we at BART are forgetting about our history and traditions. Such then leaves the origins of our System shrouded in mystery. And in many cities around the world, there are often histories that are forgotten. There are many places that once had streetcars, yet today no traces of those systems exist. Recently I visited the Legion of Honor, which is an art museum in San Francisco. There was a special exhibit of Etruscan art and artifacts. If not for items such as these painstakingly restored and preserved, the evidence of Etruscan civilization might have been lost forever. And some might wonder about my visiting art museums, and accuse me of knowing nothing about fine art. I do not have educational credentials when it comes to fine art or other museum related subjects. Yet I appreciate the many who do. And on this visit I joined in on what is called a docent led tour. And this person leading the tour was definitely passionate about the things of Etruscan civilization. Such helped me and many others to enjoy the exhibition more deeply than simply wandering on our own. And I used Public Transportation to access the Legion of Honor, the MUNI 18 bus, though sometimes I walk up or down the hill. Yet on that day I also used BART. I had good conversations with people in elevators, and making my "elevator pitch" that elevators should be for everyone.

I think of my first visit to Denver, Colorado, in 2016. I found myself at the State Capitol and I enjoyed the free tour. The person leading the tour was indeed passionate in sharing of the many stories of this historic building that is the Colorado State Capitol. Near the end of the tour I climbed with a small group to the very top of the building, and I took in the 360 degree scenic views of Denver and beyond.

And there are many places where one can enjoy history. There are many opportunities to do so in New York City. And besides the many museums and historic sites large and small, there is the legendary and historic railroad station that is Grand Central Terminal. I have enjoyed many visits to Grand Central Terminal since the fall of 1980. Yet before that, in 1977, I made my first visit to the New York Transit Museum, located in the decommissioned Court Street Station in Brooklyn (B Division, IND). Yet even before then, I have enjoyed the history and traditions of the New York City Subway since early 1970. The Subway has a unique distinction of being a destination in and of itself, only requiring a nominal fare to enter upon and use. I recently met the person who is the General Manager of the Subway. I mentioned that the Subway is not only something that I use but I enjoy as well.

And yet there are many things about BART that are not known. There are a number of historical materials that depict BART history, such as the building of the Transbay Tube. Yet there are other things that seemingly have been forgotten. I read that BART had a building at 800 Madison Street in Oakland. Yet few pictures of the building exist, and the land at that address is open space. Yet has anything been preserved for historical record from that building? Was this the place with the Board Room, and what did the Board Room look like? Was there an executive dining room, or a fitness center? Perhaps there was a small grocery store for employees, much like a military Commissary. Were the executive offices and the Board Room wood paneled? Might there have been a kitchen, and perhaps a few sleeping rooms?

This is the loading door in the Jay Street-MetroTech Station (A, C, F services, B Division, IND) used for servicing the Subway revenue collection trains (1951-2006). There were two other nearby revenue service areas on the former IRT and BMT divisions in tunnels that are not visible to the public.



And perhaps this old BART building had the secret money room, and sidings for the revenue trains for unloading their precious cargoes. After all, the New York City Subway used revenue collection trains to bring the money to the Transportation Building at 370 Jay Street. And yet no has shared of the stories of the revenue collection trains that BART used in the early days. Is this a piece of history that people are sworn to secrecy? I can understand that one cannot reveal the location of the present money room. Yet should the legacy of revenue trains and historic spaces be sworn to secrecy as well? And what about the old BART generating station? You see, when I travel the BART Main Line between West Oakland Station, and the Downtown Oakland Tunnel portal, there is a small power plant to the south of our right of way. Might that have been the original source of electricity for our BART? Such seems plausible, especially given the apparent age of the structure. After all the Subway had three power plants at one time, 59 Street and 74 Street, both in Manhattan, and Kent Avenue, in Brooklyn. And yet we do not hear much about the original and perhaps prehistoric BART. And what did BART look like on opening day? It appears that some of BART on opening day looks the same as today. Yet it seems like some historical features have been removed. And were there plans for express routes, such as through Downtown Oakland? MacArthur Station is certainly reminiscent of express stations found in New York City, given the four track layout. What would BART have looked like if it was built in the 1940's, when the original plans came out. Yet some contemplated a BART even before then. I read that in the early 1900's, in Seattle, there was the Bogue Plan, which included concepts for a rapid transit system. Yet have the earliest forms of BART been lost to history? Am I seeing things that others do not, of possibilities not even considered, and things forgotten and forever lost? I am indeed different and not often understood.

And perhaps everyone in BART is sworn to secrecy concerning various things. The money room might be in a location no one would ever suspect. Yet it seems reasonable to conjecture it would be located near BART tracks, in order for the revenue trains to have been serviced. Yet today's money room could be anywhere, given the use of armored trucks today. And in Manhattan, at the 72 Street Station (1, 2, 3 services, A Division, IRT), I saw an armored truck, with New York City Transit livery. And money is no longer processed in downtown Brooklyn, but at 4625 Metropolitan Avenue in Ridgewood, Queens. And that facility is state of the art, and holding to the highest standards of security and accountability. The average person will probably never be able to take a tour. But such is understandable. Yet in the New York Transit Museum, people can enjoy the exhibits depicting 120 years of revenue collection and management.

And so how do we preserve the history of our BART, especially the forms of BART that a proverbially buried deep enough to be considered archaeological in nature? I ask that we not consider the history of BART to be a collection of relics but instead something of a "living document" that is relevant to today.

And Public Transportation in New York goes back over a hundred and fifty years. There was the prehistoric era, of horse drawn carts and a few short lived cable car systems. Then there was the elevated era, going back to the 1860's. Some railroads operated in even earlier times. In 1904 the first underground line was opened by the Interborough Rapid Transit. Not long afterwards, in 1913, the Dual Contracts were put into effect, and more rail lines were built. In 1932, the first line of the city owned Independent System opened. 1940 began the era of unification, of the three historic systems acquired under city ownership. 1953 brought state level oversight with the New York City Transit Authority. In 1968, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) came into existence, bringing in oversight of regional commuter rail and a network of bridges and tunnels. In 2020 Grand Central Terminal was acquired by the MTA, bringing that storied railroad station into full public ownership. And today the Subway is known for being The System that is Legendary and Stately. I ask we never forget our history, and to always be relevant to the future. And I feel that the path to get there is indeed obvious, to always uphold this most valued of ideals, that BART is The Peoples System.

A La Carte.

This is the Oyster Bar, opened in 1913, an iconic seafood restaurant seating approximately 400 guests, in Grand Central Terminal, 89 East 42 Street, New York, NY, 10017.



I share with you on things a la carte, if you will, and in relevance to BART. A la carte often is used in reference to food menus, but can be considered in a number of other ways. At one time transit fares were basically of a stand alone nature, such as five cents to ride the original Subway beginning with its opening in 1904. Yet over time, prepaid passes evolved, allowing people to use transportation systems on an unlimited basis during the paid for time period. And technology has evolved to allow for fare accumulation, or capping, if you will, most notably on New York City Transit.

And for me Public Transportation has become more regional in use, as opposed to rush hour commuting. I try to avoid rush hours, though I don't like cutting my days short. When I use Public Transportation during the mid day, I am offering presence on buses and trains during less crowded times. Such can be viewed as contrarian, and can be used to an advantage. I think about my use of electricity during the times when demand is lower, such helps keep the house cooler in hot days, and for many, prices for electricity vary during the course of a day. And the Washington Metro has variable time of day fares on weekdays, overlaid on distance based fares, period passes are available as well.

I consider the idea of what are called bar crawls, where people have drinks at a bar, and then move onto another bar. I have never been on a bar crawl because I have never been much of a drinker. I could do such activities by

enjoy not alcoholic drinks such as cranberry and tonic, probably my favorite. I sometimes have a glass of Bloody Mary mix on airplanes, without the alcohol, I have never had alcohol on a airplane and given my fear of flying, I prefer to keep things simple. And airplanes are generally pressurized to a cabin altitude of about 8000 feet, which reportedly can have increased dehydrating effects.

I do consider the idea of going from place to place to have a meal spread out over different places. This is easy to do in food halls, many of which are near Public Transportation. Yet I have also had an appetizer at one place, and then got on the Subway, and a few stops later, got off and then ate something small at another place. Perhaps this is similar to street food situations found in a number of other countries. I'm sure there are many people in New York who use the Subway to try different places to eat, even consecutively over short periods of time. I am not a particularly big eater so I usually stop after having two or three small items. And the opposite of a la carte eating is the all you can eat buffet, which has been popularized for decades. Such is most associated with Las Vegas, though few buffets remain there today.

And I consider the evolution of open payments, including on our BART. I think the first time I used open payment on Public Transportation was in 2019. This was during a pilot program for the OMNY system (One Metro New York). This was on a section of the Lexington Avenue Line (4, 5, 6 services, A Division, IRT). I remember my first time practicing this in the Grand Central-42 Street Station. Such is not only an express station, but also a big station, three stations connected together. And open payments are becoming more popular around the country.

Yet I see a tension between the use of open payments and period passes. Perhaps the period pass is like the all you can eat buffet, paid up front in full. I consider my recent trips on the Capitol Corridor, which is administratively managed by BART. You see, open payments are now available to all on Capitol Corridor, and no longer just for plastic payment cards, but mobile devices as well. This I have practiced a few times myself since the change went live. I am enjoying this new protocol, given it is much easier to retrieve my phone than a plastic card in my wallet. And surely more will practice open payments on Capitol Corridor, as public outreach continues. For me this is a no brainer, especially given that using open payments on Capitol Corridor currently offers a \$2 discount per trip compared to the standard Amtrak fares.

Yet some purchase Amtrak monthly passes. For some there could be a cost advantage. And buying tickets through an Amtrak account can yield points to the purchaser, to use for Amtrak fares in the future. To buy a pass once a month requires only one transaction, while open payment transactions over that month could number forty or fifty. For some that many individual transactions might be too much to keep up with. For me, when I am in New York, I have as many as twelve OMNY transactions in a week, and several more from other systems, be it commuter rail, PATH, and ferries. I don't have any issues keeping up with that. And I would like to see fare accumulators make period passes become a thing of the past, so no one will end up overpaying for something they don't use enough of.

And I consider car usage and ownership. To have full time possession of a car, being owned outright, financed, leased, or rented on a daily basis, is kind of like the all you can eat buffet. And using rideshare services, driven by people, or autonomous, is more of an a la carte style. And using rideshare on an individual trip basis is generally less than car ownership, as long as one does not try to commute long distances that way. Yet in not having a car, using rideshare services can bring about "sticker shock", in the minds of some, even though the aggregate cost of using rideshares is often less than full time car ownership. I have found that I could use rideshares for a day around town for less than the cost of renting a car. Yet even a single trip can feel quite expensive, even if just on its own. And so here in the Bay Area I rarely use rideshares, given that Public Transportation has a much lower cost. And renting a car for a day incurs great responsibilities, requiring various

kinds of high dollar insurance, and the risks of operating on public highways. And there is the issue of parking as well, of cost and availability, especially in downtown San Francisco. And while I do believe that rideshares, especially of the autonomous variety, play an important part in mobility, they cannot substitute for high capacity Public Transportation. Such is why the Subway is really foundational to moving the masses within the City of New York. And one never has to worry about overpaying for the Subway, given the OMNY fare accumulation program of a maximum twelve paid trips in a rolling seven day period.

And I am still intrigued by the a la carte structure of menus in high end steakhouses, when one orders a piece of meat or fish, that's all one gets. And so the vegetables and potatoes are often priced separately. Such can entail a bit of mental exercise. Yet years ago I went to the famous steakhouse at the Circus Circus Hotel in Las Vegas. And this iconic restaurant is known as THE Steakhouse. And THE Steakhouse is one of a minority of steakhouses that offers "complete meals". And I often wonder about the complexity of airfares at times, where one really doesn't know the cost until at the final step of ordering, when the time comes to hit "send" on the website, to generate a ticket for travel.

And so for me, I hope to see fare accumulation to become the default standard. The technology to do so is here today, and it is not new. Yet some still hang onto the past, and insist on buying time period passes, even at the risk of not being fully used. Then we hear complaints of things costing too much. And many forfeit the benefits of fare accumulation because they don't want to go through the process of obtaining a plastic card. Yet these plastic cards can have value loaded with cash, for those who insist on doing so, therefore no one is excluded. I remember the late 1990's, when the Subway introduced the MetroCard, with the \$4 Fun Pass, which allowed unlimited Subway trips until 4 the next morning. And many still lamented the loss of the brass tokens. Yet in the days of the tokens, it was one fare, one ride, and that added up quickly. It is my hope that more will use the open payment system on Capitol Corridor. And I often share of Capitol Corridor being managed by BART, and more so the ideal that BART is The Peoples System. And what will the future of fare schedules look like on BART in the future? Do the types of fares influence whether one uses Public Transportation? This is a question with answers that might not be apparent at this time. The possibilities are diverse, and to what degrees are not yet known. Perhaps such depends on whether customers of Public Transportation are captive or choice. And how do we find these answers, especially with surveys only obtaining answers from small and hopefully statistically accurate samples? Yet for me, I am fine with using my phone in frequent fare accumulation transactions. Such can be done with plastic cards as well. And fare validation is frequent anyway, given the entry and exit through our new fare gate system. I believe the new fare gates are achieving their stated goals, though not without hiccups along the way. Such is expected with deployments of complex technologies. And some are indeed set in their ways. It is not easy for some to learn new things. Such is true for me at times, but I seek to embrace innovation. Perhaps such helps me to feel like a young 60 instead of an old 60. Then again, there is something positive to be said about aged cheese and charcuterie, which I often refer to as cold cuts. I admit I have never prepared a dry aged steak, much as I would like to in the cast iron grill pan on the electric range. Some things are just a bit above my pay grade. Yet a close friend of mine, who lives in my home, asked me about caviar. I shared of my basic knowledge, and we developed a plan. And so we ordered the least expensive fish eggs, a packet of blini pancakes, and a small tub of crème fraiche. Perhaps fish eggs can fit most any pay grade, just as Public Transportation could. Sour cream is a less expensive alternative to crème fraiche. And I do prepare my own pancakes at times. I could be accused of being disheveled and irrelevant in sharing about fine foods in a letter about Public Transportation. Yet Public Transportation is germane to many other things, be it visiting art museums or searching for fine foods. And so it goes, buffet or a la carte, period passes or open payments. Perhaps such is only answered in the style of William Shakespeare's famous quote, to be or not to be, that is the question. I have my quote as well. I share things as I know them and I call things as I see them.

On tipping.

I share on matters of tipping, in relevance to Public Transportation. I have done the appropriate research, and there is no place called Tipping in China. I admit I have never worked a job that was compensated in full or in part by tips. Perhaps my exposition is academic or conjectural. Yet tipping and fare payment have much in common, often in frequency and the evolution of methods.

I do not remember the first time I went to a sit down style restaurant by myself, probably in my mid teens somewhere in New York City. Back then I paid for meals with cash, and I knew about the tradition of tipping, generally within fifteen to twenty percent. At that time, in the early 1980's, the Subway operated an all cash based fare system using brass tokens. This was before the paper magstripe MetroCards. And until 2006, the Subway used special trains to transport the revenue and fare media to the Transportation Building in Brooklyn.

And there are many other places where tipping is common and expected, such as taxicabs and barbershops. And up until the early 2010's, many small transactions were still paid in cash, including tips.

I came across a profoundly different situation for tipping around 2004, at the Railroad Pass Casino near Las Vegas. This gaming facility, along with a few others in the region offered 99 cent breakfasts. These were simple meals, generally eggs, potatoes, and toast. I found these breakfasts to be satisfying. Yet when the bill came, I considered the importance of the tip. I knew I had to offer more than fifteen or twenty cents. I asked myself, how could a server live on minuscule tips from 99 cent breakfasts? I decided to tip \$2, and I paid the bill in cash. I never asked the server about tipping on 99 cent breakfasts, I figured it out on my own. I still haven't asked that question to this day, and I don't know if 99 cent breakfasts really exist anymore.

And yet about a decade and a half ago these small portable point of sale terminals came on the scene, and not long after that, phone payment. I was intrigued, as I was becoming disillusioned with cash based payments in general. And it became more common to pay for small transactions electronically. This I came to practice more often, especially inspired by Bjorn Ulvaeus. Mr Ulvaeus, who is from Sweden, was one of the members of a famous quartet known as ABBA, and he shared of living without the use of cash. I said to myself, I can do this right here in the United States. In early 2016, I began living without using cash. Such was relatively easy, the only real challenges came with laundromats and transit fares.

I often see tipping as bifurcated, and even fraught. It is common in some dining situations for people to pay for the meal with their credit card, yet leave the tip in cash. Such is true in coffee shops as well, using the payment terminal for the price of the drink, and then putting cash in a jar or can. Such seems strange to me, in lacking consistency. Yet there seems to be a mindset in only using cards for larger transactions. I admit I do not see a rationale in that. Yet I still remember in 2013, I bought a banana in a supermarket in Las Vegas, and nothing else. I paid twenty six cents for that, and using my card. Such seemed as normal as paying twenty six dollars for a basket of groceries. And I was on the way to the bus stop, where I would pay my fare with a paper magstripe ticket. (In 2016 RTC Las Vegas brought out the RideRTC app, which I have used since that time).

And I don't think the situations where tipping is called for have really increased, but the options on payment terminals have made that front and center as opposed to an afterthought. And I am finding more places where electronic tipping is available. This is coming about in hotels, so people can tip housekeepers and other service employees. This is a good idea, given fewer people use cash. I sometimes consider using a bell person to carry my bag to my room, because I feel like it. Yet I have not used that service because for the most part they only accept cash. The same is true for valet parking attendants. Yet this is changing, and faster than even I would expect. Perhaps these things are evolving even in Las Vegas, where cash is most prevalent, given that most have cash on hand to play the various games. Yet even in Las Vegas, things are changing. It is important to remember

that Las Vegas is in Nevada, which is a State just as California is.

And so when I tip I always do so through the payment terminal, I don't have any cash anyway. Such offers greater transparency for the recipients of tips. The back end software can be calibrated to ensure proper proration and distribution of tips, ideally as part of direct deposit with the accompanying wages. And tips reported to the Internal Revenue Service for appropriate tax payments also have the positive effect of increased Social Security benefits in retirement. And direct deposit is the preferred way to receive Social Security and other kinds of benefit deposits. I receive my various retirement stipends by way of direct deposit. And some of this money I use to pay transportation fares, and through the use of Clipper (or open payments on Capitol Corridor).

And more and more street performers, often known as buskers are taking tips using QR codes generated by peer to peer payment apps. This I practice myself. I can only wonder, how often are tip jars and busker's buckets swiped, the hard earned money no longer available for the intended recipient to use and enjoy. Such I'm sure is deeply traumatic as well. I do not tip for high risk activities such as people using the various poles and bars in trains for gymnastics routines. I also do not tip for those using gasoline generators to power instruments and amplifiers, such might be illegal in some jurisdictions. There are batteries available for that use now.

I also generally do not tip for what I call simple counter service. And this matter can be hotly debated at times. And I am seeing more restaurants using a fixed service charge for meals as opposed to the usual practice of tipping. I support this change, such makes things easier for all concerned. In many cases the service charge is distributed among all hourly employees. I am in support of this as well. You see, in my teenaged years I worked as a dishwasher in a several restaurants. And the dishwashing position was often the lowest paid, yet performed a most essential function. I once asked a manager about the importance of dishwashing. This person of sage wisdom told me that dishwashing was an absolutely essential function, and without it, the restaurant would come to a stop. A few days later I was awarded employee of the week, and I was promptly given a twenty five dollar voucher for meals. Yet I feel strongly that people should not have to be so dependent on tips, I would rather pay a greater price for the meal to cover higher base wages, so all employees have more certainty in their weekly pay. Yet I have tipped for what I call coffee art, in my case for hot chocolate, given that I am not much of a coffee drinker. Yet recently I had my first of what is called latte, and a few months before that, espresso. I think I did tip something along the way. I told the barista, I am sixty, and I am originally from New York City, and I have no idea what a latte is. I grew up in the days of ten cent black coffee in old fashioned diners. My favorite was the old Market Diner near Forty Second Street and Eleventh Avenue in Manhattan, it went out of business about two decades ago. And there is a scene in the film Sudden Impact, where SFPD Inspector Harry Callahan ordered a black coffee, left the money for the drink and tip, and went outside. Upon discovering the coffee was not to his liking, he went back and found himself having to perform law enforcement duties in signature Dirty Harry style. Perhaps if Sudden Impact was filmed in New York City, this scene might have taken place in the old Market Diner.

I submit to you that I do not buy into the worn out tropes of mandating cash usage and acceptance on the part of various businesses and institutions. Such mandates actually presume certain populations incapable of participating fully in the electronic payments space. And that deeply offends me, because I am part of that large population group, especially given that I am a Disabled Veteran. And I support inclusion by practicing tipping in electronic forms, such are easily accessible across the board. And some often use cash as a "means of protest", if you will. Yet I feel I am doing the most good in my practices. I embrace change and innovation, at the same time I don't want anyone negatively impacted during the transitions involving changes. And these journeys are never perfect, and what matters most is to be conscious and intentional. And for me to pay cash for things incurs greater costs for all involved, both in my paying of ATM fees, and risk of losses, and also in merchants having

higher costs of cash handling. Such entails greater staff time, security systems and protocols, armored transport, and bank processing fees (there are fees charged for cash handling by banks). Perhaps business property and casualty insurance rates are prone to increasing as well. Some might not understand, as I am often not understood myself. The things I say I feel are credible but should not necessarily be taken as authoritative. I feel it is best to consult with qualified subject matter experts. And perhaps my expositions about tipping are not germane to the things of BART. However, small electronic transactions are, in my opinion. And such includes tipping, in its many forms. I feel my role is to shape conversations, and offer “food for thought”, if you will. And I might be accused of taking up valuable staff time at BART with my letters and speakings. I’m subject to the two minute speaking limit anyway. Such gives me reason to prepare another letter to you, and to keep the conversation going. I submit to you this basic practice of mine, by upholding and meditating on the ideal that BART is indeed The Peoples System.

Wisdom unconventional.

“Motel, money, murder, madness. Let’s change the mood from glad to sadness”. - Jim Morrison sharing of the story of a young man driving fast along a freeway in the Southern California suburbs, and suddenly finding himself stopped in afternoon traffic.

First Officer: Excuse me Captain, I know this may sound silly, but can you fly?

Harry, playing the part of an airline captain: Nope, never had a lesson. (Magnum Force, 1973).

Well I don’t know why I came here tonight. I got this feeling that something ain’t right. I’m so scared in case I fall off my chair. And I’m wondering how I’ll get down the stairs”. - Gerry Rafferty sharing the story of a young man visiting a friend in upper Manhattan, and dreading that later he’ll have to navigate the stairs in the Subway station to use the “A” train for the long late night trip home to far eastern Brooklyn.

A celebration of the MetroCard in the market hall of the famous public transportation facility that is Grand Central Terminal which is located in New York City.



Thank you.