



# **PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **BART Board Meeting**

**March 28, 2024**

**Item 6**

**From:** aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 22, 2024 8:24 AM  
**To:** Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments for the Board Meeting

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

Greetings Board President Bevan Dufty and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her.

I bring you my thoughts concerning the Board level business of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

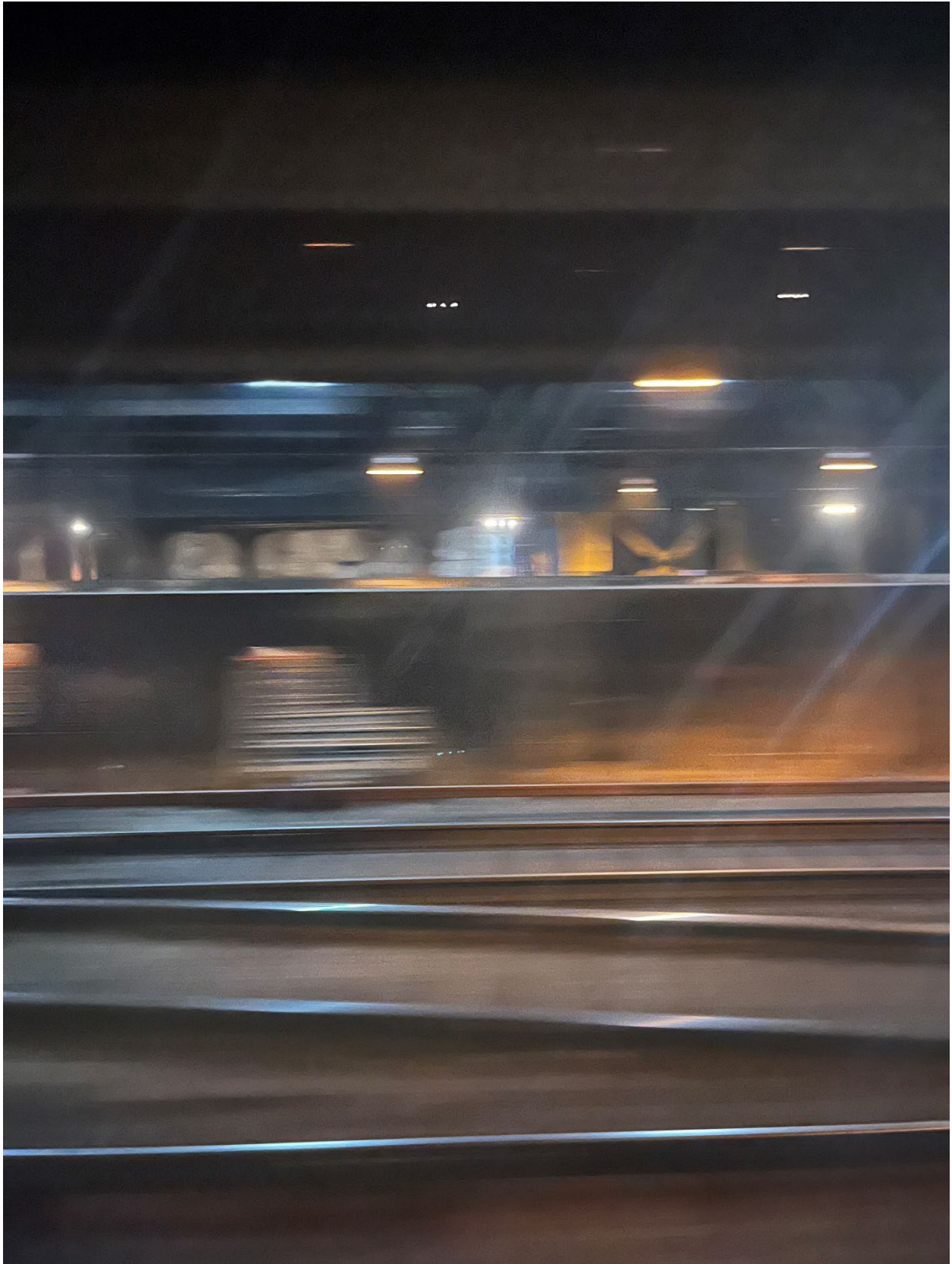
On matters of things spherical.

I consider my time at a recent Board Meeting where I attended in person. A major reason why I prefer attending Board Meetings in person is the chance to converse with people who are deeply involved in the matters of BART. And so during a time of closed session, I was able to converse with a member of the BART family, serving in a position of leadership, who I will not name. We conversed about a number of things. I shared of my living in a solar powered all electric home, and of my using direct deposit. And we ended up sharing thoughts about Las Vegas, and an intriguing architecturally significant structure called The Sphere.

And in passing by The Sphere on the Las Vegas Monorail, I thought back to my time in the BART Board Room with this individual. In our conversation we considered a number of particulars about The Sphere, 28,000 kilowatts of electrical demand at its peak, for operating thousands of LED lights and various sound systems. I considered that the energy usage of The Sphere could very well power a substantial portion of the BART system. I have not yet been inside the Sphere, given my concerns about crowds and fear of heights. We reflected on a number of other things, about energy, electric vehicles, and direct deposit.

But in thinking back to my time with this person, this one thing stood out most to me. You see, this unnamed individual welcomed me into BART and respected me fully as the person that I am. I thought back to my time in New York, when an MTA employee called out my name and welcomed me into the new railroad terminal that is Grand Central Madison. It is my hope that I will see this member of the BART family, and we can converse again. I ask of you as a Board to also practice the basic ideal of equity and welcome, and a value that I wish to have company in, that BART is The Peoples System.

On matters of underground transportation.



(This is the upper level yard of Grand Central Terminal, which is located in New York City.)

I think back to September 2023, when I was in New York, and I decided to use Metro North to have lunch in Stamford, Connecticut. I began my trip in the legendary and historic public transportation facility that is Grand Central Terminal. It wasn't easy passing up the Oyster Bar, where I had my first helping of raw oysters on the half shell in the fall of 1980. But I felt that seafood in Stamford was calling me, and offering me a chance to visit the Stamford Town Center. And as the train departed the platform, I was considering the words of Gerry Rafferty, and getting Right Down the Line.

And so more recently, I was at a BART committee meeting that was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum. And so I sought to get an earlier flight, and the time frame seemed tight. I considered the song "Time is Tight", by Booker T and the MG's as I thought about the possibilities. I felt that rideshares were a distinct possibility for me to get to the Oakland International Airport. Yet I decided to use BART, from the Nineteenth Street Station. And I found myself immediately on a Berryessa train, and entered the Oakland Wye. I decided to try changing my flight while in the tunnel and the cell reception worked, as if I was above ground. Things were tight, not just the timeframe, but that only two seats on that flight were left. And so I made the change, and considered the timeframe going forward toward the airport.

And so we surfaced south of Lake Merritt, and the noise level was lower, and I decided to listen to some Right Down the Line. I looked at the picture of the yards in Grand Central Terminal that I had passed through on my Stamford trip. I considered the importance of essential facts, to always remember that the proper name of that famous railroad station is Grand Central Terminal, and the equally important fact of such being located in New York City.

And so BART worked well for me that day, even exceed my expectations a bit. And most of the time BART works well for me. I enjoy sharing of my good experiences on BART. Yet there are things that concern me, and such should be addressed. You see, the importance of safe, timely and affordable transportation should never be underestimated. I ask of you to consider the realities of those who use BART. I acknowledge responsibility for planning a trip to allow for the unexpected, but the question is of how much. It is better to wait in an airport than to miss a flight. Yet how much should one feel they need to wait in an airport. I consider my time in military service, the idea of hurry up and wait. For each person the answer is different. I don't really like spending a lot of time in airports, and one does not know how long security screening will take. And so I depend on BART as an important means of interregional transportation for me to navigate the Bay Area even with its various challenges.

It gives scant comfort.

I often speak of policies and procedures, their importance, and holding to the basic ideals of being safe, timely, and equitable. Yet policies and procedures give me only scant comfort, because such are only as good as those who follow and oversee them. I would like to see a BART where everyone can follow the appropriate policies and procedures that are outlined in the various handbooks and manuals throughout BART.

I would like to see policies and procedures in place that ensure our users of the System, the Public, can enjoy the System and have positive travel experiences, and to expect accountability of those employed by BART. Yet I often hear and read of a lack of accountability. I read of several employees of BART who have been accused of time card theft. Given the basic principle of innocent until proven guilty, I will not comment on the specifics. But I ask myself, if such things are happening on BART, I conjecture such could negatively impact my experience on BART. Could employees of BART who engage in negative behavior cause me to have a negative experience on BART? I consider such possibilities, and negative outcomes are indeed plausible. I would like to see a policy in place that ensures that anyone who pays

appropriate fare and follows the rules of conduct should be able to use the System in its intended manner. Yet I live with the possibility that I could be turned away from BART because I am different and wear a skirt. Some might not like my wearing of a Raiders t shirt, or my having COVID-19 vaccinations. And so how do we have accountability at BART. I ask that you not think less of the Public, but to fully welcome the Public into this System. Yet I hear things from some of you that imply that the Public is not as important as other specific constituencies and interests. Yet I think that I as an ordinary member of the Public should have equal standing when it comes to the matters of BART. And so how can we have policies and procedures that ensure fair and equitable access to the System? I stand in full support of Clipper Start, a very helpful program for those in economic need, and I would like to see this program become permanent. But I ask that you not curtail the 62.5 percent RTC discount to pay for other things at BART. And so there must be accountability in all things BART. I ask that we ensure strict adherence to policies and procedures. I expect every tender of cash to make it to the bank, and that we not waste electricity. I expect all who work at BART when on the clock to be at their work stations and performing their assigned tasks and duties. Some might think I'm expecting too much, yet I think I am advocating for things that are reasonable. I ask of you to consider what is most important, the People, and to remember and practice this value that supersedes everything else, that BART is The Peoples System.

Words of wisdom.

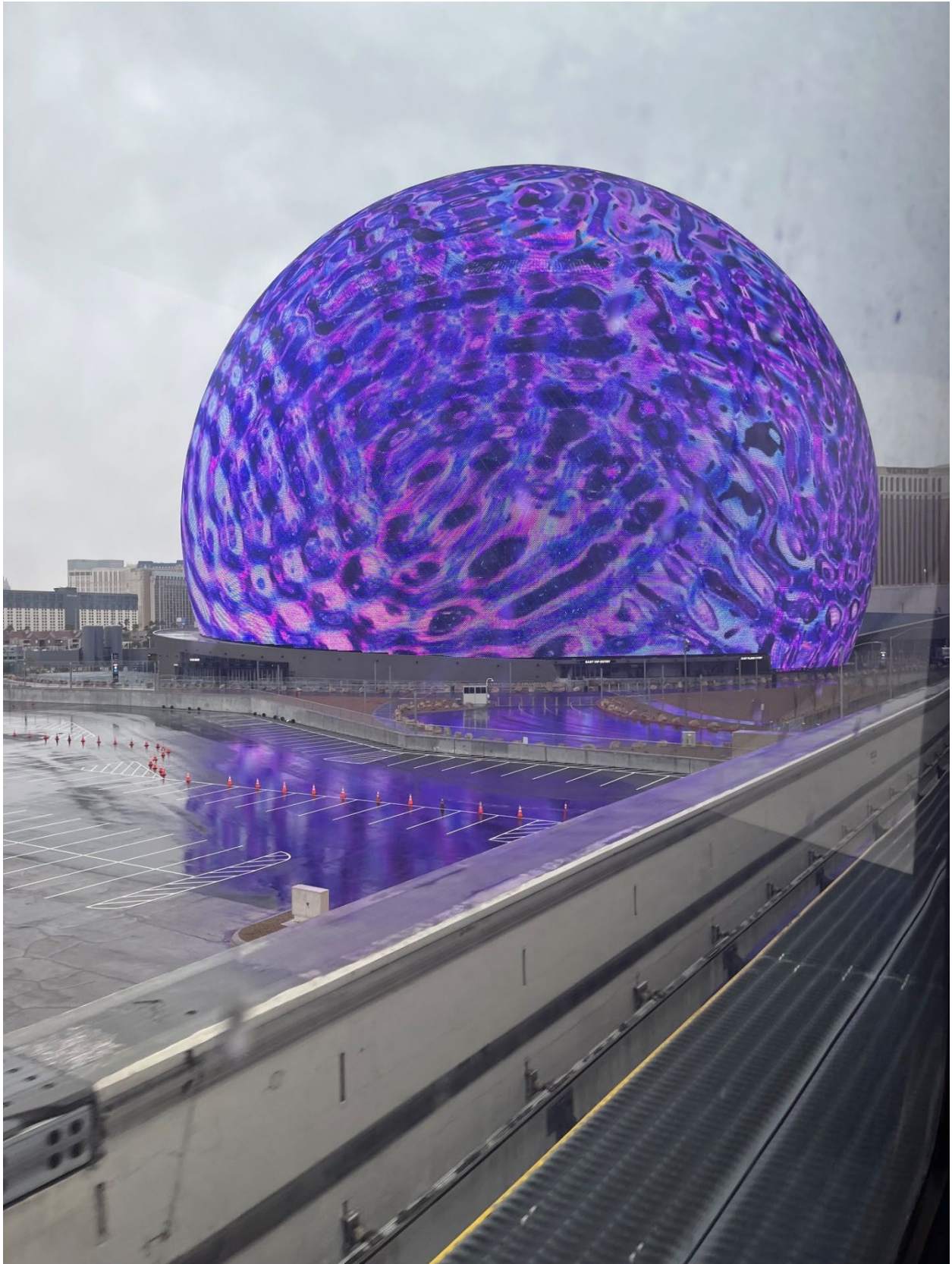
"We're making up for thirty years of do-nothingism in mass transportation." - Dr William Ronan.

"I fear that in every elected office, members will obtain an influence by noise, not sense. By meanness, not greatness. By ignorance, not learning. By contracted hearts, not large souls. There must be decency and respect." - John Adams.

"Love is the Answer." - England Dan and John Ford Coley.

This is what a Sphere looks like.





Thank you.