



PUBLIC COMMENT

BART Board Meeting

February 13, 2025

Item 6

From: aleta dupree <tsjoan@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 11:27 AM
To: Board Meeting <board.meeting@bart.gov>
Subject: comments from the eastern side

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

Greetings Board President Mark Foley and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record, she, her.

I bring you my uncategorized thoughts pertaining to the work and mission of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

On Sweaters and Socks.

I share with you my thoughts concerning sweaters and socks, and various other attire relating to diverse systems of Public Transportation. I consider BART offering various clothing items for sale to the Public. I am in full support of this work, such allows the Public to express themselves proudly when it comes to the things of BART. I am fortunate to have several t shirts displaying various themes of BART. I also have some from other Public Transportation systems such as Caltrain, and New York City Transit, which is most known for operating a legendary rail system called the Subway. I seek to approach the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City, for them to offer sweaters for sale that say "Grand Central" on them. You see, I take my Grand Central Terminal very seriously, that which I have discovered things much bigger than myself since my first visit in the fall of 1980. I enjoyed my first helping of raw oysters in the Oyster Bar and then rode a train to the Marble Hill Station in the Bronx. I don't remember which track I took that first train ride from, but I do remember the old track number signs, which may very well have been lost to history. I think back to my last visit to New York, and my visit to the New York Transit Museum, which is located in a decommissioned Subway station in downtown Brooklyn. And there is a store which sells a number of transit themed items. But for those who might not be able to make it to Brooklyn, there is an annex of the New York Transit Museum located on the upper level of Grand Central Terminal, with both exhibits and a retail store.

I do have several pairs of BART themed socks. I admit that I have not worn them yet. You

see, I am often hard on socks, and over time they get worn and discolored, given the amount of walking that I do. And so given my appreciation for BART socks, I keep them on my desk, where I hope to appreciate them for years to come. But I do wear the BART t shirts, which do get worn out over time. You see, I enjoy the things of BART very much, almost as much as I enjoy the New York City Subway. I first set foot in the Subway in early 1970, at the 34 Street-8 Avenue Station. This is one of two Subway stations that adjoin the Pennsylvania Station. And I plan to submit my thoughts to the MTA Board of Directors, in advocating for the offering of sweaters that say “Grand Central” on them. I think back to 13 June, 2019, and our General Manager at the time, Grace Crunican was about to retire. I stated in Public Comment, “I want BART to be a great and legendary railroad, reminding me of the Northeast Corridor, and Grand Central Terminal”. I felt it absolutely essential and relevant to refer to that famous railroad station that is located in New York City. And so I enjoy a number of things that relate to the things of BART. I hope someday we will have a BART History and Visitors Center, where we can showcase the things of BART of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, much like the New York Transit Museum. You see, the Subway is “The System that is Legendary and Stately”, steeped in tradition and mindful of history. And so I seek for this theme to be the basis of all of our BART themed merchandise, that BART is The Peoples System.

On matters of Hospitality.

I consider the importance of approach and hospitality in this transportation ecosystem that is BART. I mention to you that I know an Assistant General Manager and their team, whom I will not name. And this AGM and their team consistently practice hospitality throughout the BART space. You see, in order for us to bring our ridership on BART back to historical levels, the basic ideals of hospitality needs always to be practiced. You see, there are some who are afraid of using BART, and for a number of reasons. And it is much easier to keep a customer than to acquire a new one. And I was taught that a customer is ten times more likely to complain than to compliment. I mention the importance of continuous improvement, and not letting things reach the point of failure. And I am appreciative of the many at BART who welcome diverse communities through the BART space, both in the Board Room and out on the System.

I bring up matters of the BART Accessibility Task Force Meet and Greet (BATF), which convened at BART Headquarters on Thursday, 23 January of this year. I am very appreciative of the several of you on this Board who came to visit, as well as executive leadership, including your General Manager Bob Powers. You see, I am one who lives with profound disabilities, such qualify me for a Reduced Fare Clipper Card. And awareness of disability

is essential when it comes to all things BART. And I share my various thoughts with the BATF and your Board as well. And I do enjoy spending brief times with the elevator attendants in the various stations in downtown San Francisco. I admit that sometimes I am afraid of elevators in public transit spaces. This comes from many of these elevators being unattended, and often abused and vandalized by patrons. I think back to when I was in New York, at the 190 Street Subway Station (A service, B Division, IND). And this is a very deep station, and to access the entrance above required an elevator ride. And I boarded the elevator and everything was fine, the first time I was by myself, on the return trip, a few others rode with me. This station is a popular way to access The Cloisters, which is a satellite campus of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I went to the Cloisters that day, and I think the others in the elevator with me had also visited that museum as well.

Yet elevators can be daunting form some people. I think back to April 2008, 34 year old Nicholas White boarded an elevator in an office building in midtown Manhattan, late on a Friday night. And there was a power problem and Nicholas White ended up trapped in the elevator for 41 hours. Unfortunately the ringing of the alarms was not answered in anything near a timely manner. I always carry my phone when using elevators, in the event the alarm is not answered. For some, escalators can be difficult as well, especially with the very long ones in the Washington Metro, Grand Central Madison, and the Union Square MUNI station. There are many things about BART that most take for granted, but for some, there can be insurmountable challenges. I ask of you to be engaged with the BATF and the disability community at large. And one way to be engaged is to build awareness of the RTC Clipper Cards, which offer a 62.5 percent discount on BART. It is essential that all employees of BART remember and practice the ultimate mandate that BART has in serving the People of Bay Area Soil.

On Matters of Gerry Rafferty.

This is what Right Down the Line looks like.

TRACK 23



I often write of the words and thoughts of Mr Gerry Rafferty, a famous Scottish musician most known for his signature works Baker Street and Right Down the Line. I have never been to Scotland, or anywhere in the United Kingdom, when I first heard the music of Gerry Rafferty in 1978, I was in New York.

I considered my first times on Forty Second Street, in the fall of 1980, especially navigating the section between Seventh and Eighth Avenues where there was a collection of low rent adult movie theaters. I discovered many interesting places on and near Forty Second Street, and in previous letters to you, I described some of my experiences. Some places are gone, such as the old Market Diner. The low rent theaters have been replaced by what are known as “legitimate” theaters. I often passed through Times Square, both on the street, and in the Subway. In the fall of 1980, I discovered Grand Central Terminal, the world’s largest railroad station for the first time. I had my first helping of raw oysters on the half shell and then rode on a train. And even then I was mindful of the profound messages of Gerry Rafferty, who was surely thinking of New York City in working on his songs. I have no idea if Mr Rafferty ever visited New York, and used the Subway. I have not been able to meet Mr Rafferty, and he passed away in 2011. Yet I always consider the importance of discovering things much bigger than ourselves, and that first time came for me in that first visit to Grand Central Terminal in the fall of 1980. I think back to April of last year, when I attended one of your Meetings while having lunch in the Oyster Bar in Grand Central Terminal. I made mention of my location to you, to let you know that in some ways wherever I go BART is always with me. I assure you that was not a stunt for publicity, but instead a way to share my time with you from a place that has held deep meaning for me since the fall of 1980. And just as the Subway is The System is Legendary and Stately, this ideal I share wherever I go, that BART is The Peoples System.

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