

September 24, 2020



PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF CLIPPER START FARES TO INCLUDE MARIN LOCAL RIDES ON GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT BUS SERVICE

Thursday, September 24, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Teleconference Number: (415) 569-6446

Public Comment Note: In light of Executive Order N-25-20 and N-29-20, issued by the Governor of the State of California, in which portions of the Ralph M. Brown Act are suspended and allows, all Board members, staff and the public to participate by telephone. During the public hearing comment period, your name will be called in the order received. Public comments may also be submitted by e-mail to publichearing@goldengate.org. Comments submitted before the Public Hearing will be provided to the Directors before or during the meeting. All comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 25, 2020.

Introduction

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's Board of Directors (Board) policy identifies that establishing a new fare requires a public engagement process that includes a formal public hearing. The public hearing on September 24, 2020, to receive public comment on the proposed expansion of means-based fares, known as "Clipper START" fares, to include local rides within Marin County on Golden Gate Transit buses is in accordance with this policy.

The proposed expansion of means-based fares would establish a fifty percent reduction from the regular cash fare for low-income persons for local travel within Marin County on all Golden Gate Transit buses. The means-based fare program already provides a fifty percent reduction from the regular cash fare for most other travel on Golden Gate Transit buses and the Golden Gate Ferry. These fares are available only through the use of a Clipper card.

Background

Transit affordability has been identified as a key issue in the Bay Area. In 2018 the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) proposed implementation of a pilot program lasting 12 to 18 months, to provide means-based fares for low-income persons on participating transit systems. Persons with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$75,000 per year for a family of four in the Bay Area) would be eligible to enroll in the program. The program would issue special Clipper cards to qualifying persons that provide discounts of 20% or 50% off current adult cash fares.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) Board of Directors (Board) voted in September 2019 to participate in the means-based fare program with a 50%

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discount for primarily regional trips on Golden Gate Transit buses and regular (non-special event) Golden Gate Ferry service. The program, which was subsequently branded “Clipper START,” began on July 15, 2020. MTC identified the District, BART, Caltrain, and SFMTA for participation in program.

Multiple additional Bay Area transit agencies have expressed an interest in means-based fares, and MTC recently offered to expand Clipper START to these agencies. As part of this expansion, Marin Transit would join the program starting in November 2020 and offer a 50% discount off the current adult cash fare for travel within Marin County.

The District observes Marin Transit fares for local travel within Marin County on Golden Gate Transit buses, due to the historical relationship between the two agencies. Therefore, in order to provide a seamless experience for passengers who use Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit interchangeably for local travel within Marin County, and would be eligible for Clipper START fares, the District needs to match those local Marin fares. However, the discounts for Golden Gate Transit bus service authorized by the Board in September 2019 excluded local travel in Marin County, so further action by the Board is required.

Public Comment Process

Public comments on this proposal to offer means-based fares for Marin local rides on Golden Gate Transit buses can be submitted in several different ways:

1. Attend the audioconference public hearing;
2. E-mail publichearing@goldengate.org; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.

The District’s practice is to treat all comments equally without regard to the manner in which the comments are submitted or received. Therefore, individuals do not have to attend the audioconference public hearing if they have commented through email or written forms. All comments received through the above methods will be considered in the final recommendation. Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 25, 2020.

Title VI Equity Analysis

Because this proposal creates a new fare, the proposal is required to have a Title VI equity analysis to accompany the final recommendation to the Board, which is expected to occur on October 23, 2020. This analysis will be completed after the public hearing in order to reflect any public comments received on the proposal to implement this new fare.

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Public Notification

Outreach on the proposal to create the new means-based fare began after the Board authorization to hold this public hearing on August 28, 2020, and continued into mid-September prior to the public hearing.

Public notification activities included:

- Displays posted on board buses;
- Advertisements in local publications (*Marin Independent Journal* and *La Voz*);
- Press releases to local media;
- Social media postings on Facebook and Twitter; and,
- Email blast to customers and community-based organizations.

Translation of all printed materials and handouts in Spanish were available, per the District's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

Next Steps

Following the public hearing, staff will evaluate all comments received and determine whether changes or modifications need to be made to the proposal to establish a means-based fare for Marin local rides. A final recommendation will be brought to the Finance-Auditing Committee at its October 2020 meeting and subsequently to the full Board.

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