



October 12, 2021

Dear AC Transit Directors and GM Hursh,

Thank you for ensuring the district participated and contributed toward the ongoing regional fare integration work. On the occasion of the release of the MTC's Regional Fare Integration and Coordination Study outlining options, we write to identify what we see as what the study means for transit riders in the East Bay and to ask the district to bring these benefits to fruition.

The Bay Area transit system is one of the most fragmented of all US metropolitan systems, making for worse experiences and more expensive trips. The MTC study confirmed what we had believed: integration will advance equity, improve experiences, reduce vehicle miles traveled (an urgent climate goal), and make transit more sustainable.

We therefore support the study's initial recommendations for monthly passes and free transfers across all systems, and we urge the Board and GM Hursh to support it at the MTC level both in concept and in bringing them to rapid implementation. We also believe more emphasis should be put on availability of monthly passes for new housing developments, both affordable and market-rate, as both are being built close to transit.

However, the further possibilities the study explored of how to move toward full regional and local fare integration, Bay-wide, must be kept alive. The study found a strong business case and feasibility for these changes; the only missing ingredient preventing them from fully recommending it was a level of investment, but it was clear that these investments would be a net benefit for the entire region. The more support we all give these longer-term goals now, the more capability there will be to bring about investment in a ballot measure. They must not remain wistful if-only-we-coulds.

It is important to note that the study found steps toward fare integration have a positive impact for equity, reducing the average fare payments more for low-income people than for high-income people. While it is true that most trips start and end within the District, this is partly the fault of the fragmented system, not a fixed constant that low-income and marginalized

people are bound to stay in a narrow geographic range. (The demand for a bridge is not measured by the number of river-swimmers.) Integration lets low-income riders get more value for their fare dollar, opening up more opportunities for them across the region. More investment or tinkering may be necessary to ensure clear equity for the longer-term goals, but their potential is clear.

Please join in this concrete work making the Bay more convenient, equitable, climate-friendly, and less car-dependent.

Sincerely,

John Minot
Campaign Director
East Bay Transit Riders Union