



## **NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY COVER MEMO**

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### **SUBJECT**

Resolution Extending the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Clipper® START Means-Based Transit Fare Pilot Program.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the NVTA Board approve Resolution 21-23 extending the Clipper® START Pilot by 18 months until at least June 2023.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At its meeting on October 20, 2020, the NVTA Board approved participating in MTC's Clipper START pilot program and authorized the executive director to approve up to \$80,000 annually for NVTA's participation. The Clipper program is a fare media card used by all Bay Area transit operators, including NVTA's Vine Transit. MTC introduced the Clipper START pilot program to subsidize transit fares for low income adults. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders, participation in Clipper START has been lower than expected. The extension to at least June 2023 will provide additional time for new enrollees to join the program.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Unknown. Staff initially estimated approximately \$40,000 annually for the first year and up to roughly \$80,000 in future years. However, due to the slow roll-out of the program, the costs may be less than expected. So far, it's been roughly 50 uses a month. NVTA has not yet been billed for its contribution.



## NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

### Board Agenda Memo

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**TO:** NVRTA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Kate Miller, Executive Director

**REPORT BY:** Antonio Onorato, Director of Administration, Finance and Policy  
(707) 259-8779 / Email: [aonorato@nvta.ca.gov](mailto:aonorato@nvta.ca.gov)

**SUBJECT:** Resolution No. 21-23 Extending the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Clipper START Means-Based Transit Fare Pilot Program

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the NVRTA Board approve Resolution 21-23 (Attachment 1) extending the Clipper® START Pilot program by 18 months until June 2023.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

None

#### **BACKGROUND**

In May 2018, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopted Resolution No. 4320, establishing the framework for the Regional Means-Based Transit Fare Pilot Program, branded as Clipper® START. The 18-month long pilot program sought to increase access to opportunity and improve transportation affordability for low income adult transit passengers. The pilot program offers a 20 or 50 percent discount fares for eligible adults whose income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The pilot began in mid-July 2020 with four operators, and between November 2020 - January 2021, 17 additional operators including NVRTA joined the program. The 18-month long pilot program is set to expire in mid-January 2022.

The pilot's original framework calls for a 12-month evaluation of the program to assess the project's design, implementation, and impact on improving affordability, mobility, and access to opportunity. In September 2021, MTC staff was scheduled to bring forward recommendations to MTC's Programming & Allocations Committee. These recommendations would inform the next stage of Clipper® START, the program's future, policy, and program design. However, given the low ridership related to the pandemic,

the addition of the 17 agencies mid-year, and limited data available to make a recommendation on program changes, MTC extended the pilot period for an additional 18 months under the current framework.

The extension would:

- Allow time for new enrollees to join the program under a “back to transit” scenario;
- Better align with the timeline of the FasTrak® START pilot for the purposes of decision-making around eligibility requirements and proof of eligibility documentation;
- Coincide with the timing and rollout of the next-generation Clipper® system, scheduled in 2023, which increases the policy and design options for implementing program changes;
- Align with the state fiscal year, which is preferred by the transit agencies for budgeting purposes, and;
- Allow for additional agencies to be fully considered under the evaluation.

Funding for subsidies remains available and MTC staff estimates there are sufficient funds for an 18-month extension for subsidies and program administration costs.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The board could deny staff’s recommendation to approve Resolution 21-23 and the agency would no longer participate in the Clipper START program or receive any subsidies for providing reduced fares to low income adults.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS MET BY THIS PROPOSAL**

Goal 1: Serve the transportation needs of the entire community regardless of age, income, and ability.

Goal 5: Minimize the energy and other resources required to move people and goods.

Almost 80% of NVTA riders are low income. Subsidizing fare costs would support Goal 1 by providing additional assistance. The program could also incentivize additional low income residents to ride transit in lieu of driving which would meet Goal 5.

## **ATTACHMENT**

(1) Resolution No. 21-23

**RESOLUTION No. 21-23**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE  
NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (NVTB)  
AUTHORIZING SUPPORT TO EXTEND THE  
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION'S (MTC)  
CLIPPER START MEANS-BASED TRANSIT FARE PILOT PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the regional transportation planning agency for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to Government Code Section 66500 et seq.; and

**WHEREAS**, transit affordability has been highlighted as a regional issue in MTC's Coordinated Plan, Plan Bay Area and other plans; and

**WHEREAS**, MTC has established the regional framework for the Regional Means-Based Transit Fare Pilot Program to improve transit affordability and access to opportunity for eligible low-income residents; and

**WHEREAS**, MTC has adopted a regional framework for the program, with participating operators, funding guidelines, and program conditions, pursuant to MTC Resolution No. 4320, Revised, to guide implementation of the Clipper START Pilot Program for the 18-month period spanning Fiscal Year 2020-21 and Fiscal Year 2021-22; and

**WHEREAS**, MTC used the process and criteria set forth in f Resolution No. 4439 to program funds appropriated in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the expansion of Clipper START Pilot to operators (Cohort 2) beyond the four (Cohort 1) operators as established in Resolution No. 4420; and

**WHEREAS**, NVTB has followed its Board-adopted fare policies and processes to be in compliance with Title VI analysis prior to implementing the Means-Based Fare Program; and

**WHEREAS**, NVTB recommends that its Board of Directors authorize a resolution of support for NVTB to participate in the Regional Means-Based Fare Program (Clipper START), to be funded in part under the Regional Means-Based Fare Program; and

**WHEREAS**, NVTB agrees to meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the Regional Means-Based Fare Program (Clipper START), and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4320, Revised, and MTC Resolution No. 4439, and

**WHEREAS**, NVTB certifies that the project(s) and purpose(s) for which funds are being requested is in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental

Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and with the State Environmental Impact Report Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 1500 et seq.) and if relevant the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC Section 4-1 et seq. and the applicable regulations thereunder; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no legal impediment to NVTA making the funding request; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no pending or threatened litigation which might in any way adversely affect the ability of NVTA to deliver the proposed project(s) for which funds are being requested; and

**WHEREAS**, MTC will reimburse participating operators based on Clipper START ridership actual trips taken and MTC will take programming action to establish the maximum amount for each participating operator; now, therefore, be it

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that NVTA requests that MTC program funds available under its Clipper START Pilot Program, in the amounts requested for which NVTA is eligible, described in Attachment A of this Resolution; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that staff of NVTA shall forward a copy of this Resolution, and such other information as may be required, to MTC, and such other agencies as may be appropriate.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NVTA shall extend the program to June 2023 or longer if an additional extension is warranted by the actions of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

**THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED** by the Board of Directors of the Napa Valley Transportation Authority, at a regular meeting held on September 18, 2021, by the following vote:

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Alfredo Pedroza NVTA Chair

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent:

ATTEST:

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Laura Sanderlin, NVTA Board Secretary

APPROVED:

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DeeAnne Gillick, NVTA Legal Counsel