Another Year – Another Fare Hike

On January 1, a 5.4% fare hike kicked in. That may not sound like much but it adds up. Shorter trips increased about 10¢. That’s an extra dollar per week. Longer trips, like from Antioch to SF, have gone up about 40¢ each way. That’s an extra $4.00 per week.

BART calls this an “inflation increase” which means the increase is linked to inflation. What that means for riders is as we pay more for everything else in our lives, BART management thinks we should also pay more for BART too. Why? Just because!

$800 Million For What?!

The BART board just approved an $800 million contract to develop a so-called Communication-Based Train Control system so that more trains can run at once and run closer together, mainly during rush hour.

That’s a lot of money. And for what? It might be nice to run more trains but is this the best use of the $3.5 billion bond money to upgrade BART? How about spending money to make sure no frontline worker works alone – ever! BART could easily be cleaner if system service workers weren’t stretched across multiple stations with an insane number of projects. And funds could be used to bring back the scrub crews to every station and not just a few. Also, money could be spent to improve the parts supply problem for the older trains. Since the old trains are still more reliable than the new trains, it makes sense to invest in them from breaking down so often.

Yes, BART needs investment to modernize and improve the system. But this money could be put to work in far more useful ways – especially if workers who run this system actually had a say.

SEIU Elections

Sick of being blasted by political campaign advertisements? Well, at least we don’t have to worry about constant TV ads in the upcoming officer elections for SEIU’s BART Chapter.

No matter what anyone says, a handful of people elected to office can’t change anything alone. And regardless of how many of us vote, it is still OUR union. Getting elected doesn’t have to mean just running the regular operation of the union. It can also mean using your position to do everything you can to help get people involved, and that doesn’t just mean going to a monthly union meeting.

We all know that BART is preparing to go after workers in the next contract. And it’s not just BART, it’s all the forces we faced in the 2013 contract. We need to get our forces together too, that means our forces at BART, but also it means going beyond BART and reaching out to the public, to BART riders.

Housing Crisis in Oakland

The city of Oakland made headlines last week when a group of homeless women (called Moms 4 Housing) was evicted after living in a vacant home for almost two months with their children. The eviction raid came before dawn with about 30 armed sheriff’s deputies and SWAT team who knocked down the door and entered with their guns drawn.

These women occupied the house as a way to bring attention to Oakland’s housing and homelessness crisis. As of December 2019, the median price for a one-bedroom apartment in Oakland was $2,470 per month. At the same time, homelessness in Oakland increased by over 47% from 2017 to 2019. In Oakland, more than 15,500 units are vacant while 4,071 people are homeless – that’s almost four vacant apartments units per homeless individual.

California is the wealthiest state in the country. And the Bay Area is home to the largest number of billionaires anywhere in the world. There is more than enough wealth in this state to make sure every individual has a safe home to sleep in.

Climate Disruption, Migration, and the Rise of Walls

Come to a presentation and discussion with journalist Todd Miller (see reverse for more info).

Sat. February 1 at 7pm (doors 6:30)
2939 Ellis St. in Berkeley, CA
$5.00 admission