Speak Out Now at BART (10/24/2022)

Easier Said Than Done

Everyone appreciates a clean station, especially those whose job it is to maintain it. But do those at BHQ really think they know what it takes to keep a station clean? Every day is not the same.

It’s easy to point at this or that when someone does a walk-through. But do they know what the platform looked like that morning or at the end of the day? Do they know what it takes to clean up the kind of mess that some people leave behind?

Do they know what it means to clean during revenue time and how many people it really takes to keep a large, busy station clean? Instead of showing up to pose for pictures for this and that event, how about spending a day cleaning a station!

They might be surprised about what actually goes on and develop some respect for the people who really make the BART system run.

What Goes Up?

What happens at BHQ if there’s a power failure or if the elevators break? Do you think they just put a sign up saying “elevator out of service for the next few weeks” and life goes on with people taking the stairs, especially to the 10th floor?

That’s doubtful. But at some stations (currently Civic Center 10/10-10/28 - at least) that’s the BART solution. And what’s the solution facing riders who are handicapped?

In The News?

A recent article on the website The SFist, said that according to the BART Board of Directors, “nearly 20% of riders did not arrive at their destination on time.” The article mentions that, in addition to catastrophic equipment failures and the slow process of replacing aging infrastructure, staffing shortages are to blame.

It’s true that the hiring freeze during COVID had an impact. And with promotions and retirements, BART is losing more people than it’s hiring. A key question is, “why can’t it hire enough people?”

Is it true that the HR Dept. is rejecting qualified candidates for unknown reasons? And while many people come to BART for the benefits, wages are not sufficient to survive with a family in the Bay Area.

Need workers? Improve working conditions, decrease workloads and increase compensation and chances are there’ll be no staffing problem.

Work to Live?

Few people live near where they work. So when travel time is added in, an 8-hour-day often becomes a 9 or 10 or even longer day. And that assumes there isn’t traffic or public transit is running on time.

And that doesn’t include the time to shop, make lunch, or launder a uniform. And it doesn’t include working OT which many of us feel forced to do. And so work hours can easily add up to more than half of our waking day.

Then with the time that remains, it is a tug of war between getting all the other things done or getting a chance to relax, socialize, and try to enjoy life.

We are told that we work to live - but it feels a lot more like we live to work!

Clipper Magic

BART announced that there is an “acute” shortage of Clipper cards and is encouraging riders to load Clipper onto their phones. The stop-gap, for now, is to sell paper tickets at SFO to unsuspecting visitors.

How is this working out? Just ask Station Agents or System Service Workers who are usually asked questions by bewildered passengers. There are people on the platform who are traveling with large bags, a child, or are in a wheel chair and need to take the elevator which requires a Clipper card, but they don’t have one.

Since BART created this mess, why not issue a “get out of town free” card and put an end to this headache for everyone involved?