



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of October 5, 2023

Correspondence as of September 15, 2023

<u>#</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	RE_ Clipper Card No. 1215737417 Refund Request
2	RE_ Urgent Concern_ Inconsistent Departure Times Undermining Commuter Experience
3	Salesforce Transit Center _ UNESCO

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**From:** Jan Alexis Salandanan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 12, 2023 5:38 PM  
**To:** Aaron Greenspan  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Clipper Card No. 1215737417 Refund Request

To Aaron Greenspan,

Thank you for contacting Caltrain, though we regret it was due issues with our service. We understand how important clear communication is in public transit. We also know supporting multiple capital projects has affected our service, which in turn has affected many of our customers' riding experiences. We do try to minimize the impact these projects have on our service, but we unfortunately cannot eliminate their effect entirely. We sincerely apologize for the trouble. Rest assured, we at Caltrain have not forgotten our responsibility as a public transit agency, and we still strive to provide our community with safe and reliable transit service. To that end, know that your comments on your experience were forwarded to the proper parties for review. Additionally, a copy of this correspondence will be sent to our Board of Directors.

Completing our Caltrain Modernization Project will actually resolve many of the issues you had with our service. This is why, as contradictory as it may seem, we have been pushing so hard to complete our capital projects. Once we are finished, we will be able to run our service more quickly, more safely, and more often. And, of course, it would also mean we would no longer have to balance regular transit service against expansive electrification construction.

Of course, we realize a future solution is not much comfort in the present, but we are working towards completing this goal as soon as possible. Know that we will continue monitoring our trains and our crews' performance as best we can in the interim. We appreciate your patience and understanding, as we work to provide you and the rest of our community with a more pleasant travelling experience going forward.

Kind regards,

**Alexis Salandanan**  
San Mateo County Transit District  
Customer Service Dept.  
1250 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306  
1-800-660-4287  
[www.smctd.com](http://www.smctd.com)

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**From:** Aaron Greenspan <aarong@thinkcomputer.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 13, 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** custserv@clippercard.com  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; MTABoard@sfmta.com; board.meeting@bart.gov  
**Subject:** Clipper Card No. 1215737417 Refund Request

You don't often get email from [aarong@thinkcomputer.com](mailto:aarong@thinkcomputer.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

Last night I returned home from a trip via SFO and took the 9:29 P.M. BART to Millbrae station (\$5.45 fare using a paper ticket, not returned because of exact fare) to catch the 9:42 P.M. Caltrain to 22nd Street Station (\$12.20 fare on Clipper Card No. 1215737417). The relatively new BART train featured a video display that contained a glitchy animation, which was surprising. I tagged in at Millbrae at 9:38 P.M. The 9:42 P.M. Caltrain arrived at Millbrae, stopped, and then would not let on new passengers. The conductor shouted something inaudible to a crowd of people far away from me, and they did not board the train as a result and continued waiting. The train stayed in place. I was aware from checking the schedule on the Caltrain website that the schedule would be modified on August 12th, but the schedule indicated that the 9:42 train would continue to 22nd Street by 10:36. Instead, the electronic screen at Millbrae indicated a 10:15 P.M. train would be on time. There was no other message on the display indicating changes in service except for an irrelevant message about August 7th, which had already passed. Everyone on the platform waited until about 10:00 to board the train when the doors opened.

The train had arrived going north on the northbound track at Millbrae, where it had been idle since its arrival. Much to my surprise, at 10:15, the train began moving south—on the northbound track. There was no announcement that this would happen. There were no signs. There was no indication of any sort that the train was going south until well after the train was already moving. I got off at the first opportunity at Broadway and could not find any signs that displayed the modified weekend schedule. (Also, it was about 10:30 P.M. at night, so it was dark and there is virtually no lighting at the station.) While I was initially hoping to take a different, actually northbound train to San Francisco, I quickly realized that I could not count on any Caltrain service to San Francisco and paid for an Uber, which cost me \$30.98.

In the time between the train arriving at 9:42 P.M. and departing at 10:15 P.M., it could have moved to the southbound track to make clear it was going south. It did not.

When I finally arrived home hours after I should have—including a 30-minute wait for the BART and the extra 33-minute wait for the Caltrain that ended up going the wrong direction for my travel and the track it was on—I looked at the Caltrain website again. The press release about the modified weekend schedule ("Caltrain Suspends Train Service Between San Francisco and Millbrae on Weekends to Expedite Electrification Project," see <https://www.caltrain.com/news/caltrain-suspends-train-service-between-san-francisco-and-millbrae-weekends-expedite>) was issued on August 8, 2023 with only four days of notice, while I was away. The supposed remedy, a bus alternative, was nowhere to be found. There were no signs instructing travelers to go to a bus. There were no verbal announcements regarding a bus, either in the station or on the train while I was waiting for it to depart. There were no electronic displays that mentioned a bus. There was no bus visible from the platform. And the modified Caltrain schedule itself includes only one row that says, "Bus Bridge - For bus stop locations, please visit [www.caltrain.com/Status](http://www.caltrain.com/Status)" after which the schedule continues as it always does, except the times are listed in dark blue. Nowhere does the schedule clearly state that "Bus Bridge" means "NO TRAIN SERVICE TO THESE STOPS" or that dark blue times mean times for a bus. (I interpreted "Bus Bridge" as an optional public transit feature I had no interest in.) There wasn't even a physical copy of the modified weekend schedule posted—the one sign with the modified weekday schedule at Millbrae specifically said that the modified weekend schedule was **not** posted. I took a picture of the sign at Broadway, which provides no information other than the fact that the train is not running as it should on the weekend.

Please refund \$51.63 to my Clipper Card No. 1215737417. The breakdown is below:

\$3.00 - extra new Clipper Card fee I paid when I obtained it because the BART staff incorrectly answered my question about using a paper ticket

\$5.45 - needless BART fare to Millbrae for a Caltrain to San Francisco that did not exist

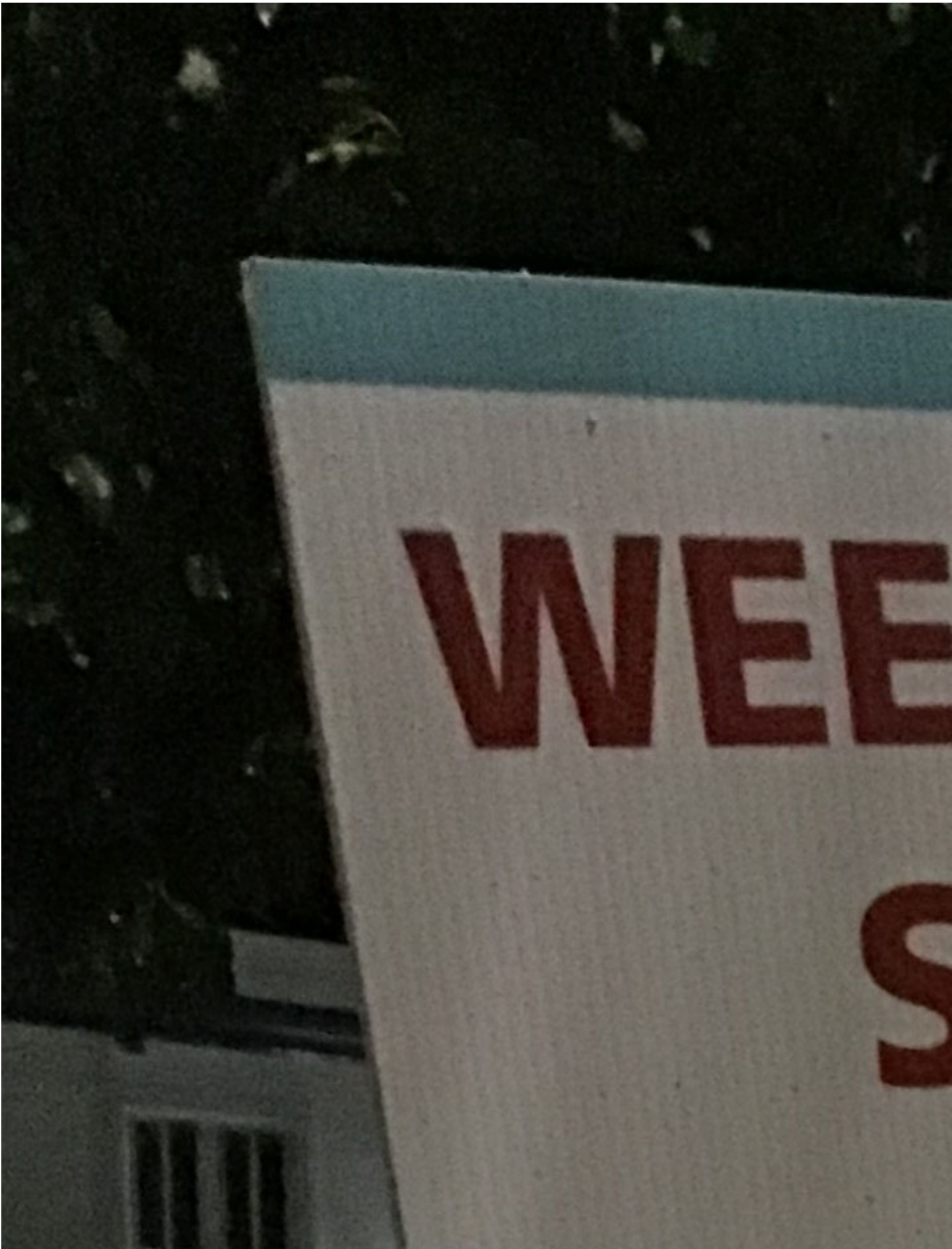
\$12.20 - needless Caltrain fare for a Caltrain to San Francisco that did not exist

\$30.98 - cost of resolving Caltrain's negligent and misleading conduct

If you do not issue a refund I will simply contest all of my Clipper Card transactions from the past two years, up to \$51.63, with my credit card company, and you will be assessed chargeback fees in addition the refund. I am tired of waiting around on your platforms so you can steal my money for dysfunctional service. Every time I use Clipper Card there is an issue. When I take the train in New York, I do not have these kinds of problems. When I take the train in Boston, I do not have these kinds of problems. When I take the train in D.C., I do not have these kinds of problems. Only when I use public transit in San Francisco do I have problems.

Thank you,

Aaron



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**From:** Jan Alexis Salandanan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 12, 2023 4:07 PM  
**To:** Albert Dai  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent Concern: Inconsistent Departure Times Undermining Commuter Experience

To Albert Dai,

Thank you for contacting Caltrain. We agree with your stance on the importance of punctuality and communication in public transit. Rest assured, your feedback on how we can improve in both regards was forwarded to the proper parties for further handling. A copy of this correspondence will also be sent to our Board of Directors.

Know that our Operations Planning team does closely monitor the on-time performance of our service. This, of course, encompasses their own efforts in analyzing ridership trends and system efficiency, but it also includes reviewing feedback from our community. Given time, you can be certain Caltrain, alongside our community, will be able to identify and address any issues with our scheduling.

As for our on-time performance in the field, Rail Operations does take this subject quite seriously. Our conductors are required to maintain the on-time performance of the schedule according to the Passenger Rail Industry Standard. Under this standard, our crew members can be up to 30 seconds plus or minus the printed timetable. This is to compensate for expected slight deviations in performance, like an occasionally slower departure due to mechanical inconsistency or a slightly quicker departure due to minor personnel error. They are also required to synchronize their watches at the start of their shift with the world clock so that the time they operate under is as accurate as possible.

However, our crews cannot depart from this standard. In order to ensure Caltrain can continue providing safe and timely transit service, Rail Operations does conduct thorough investigations of reported incidents, and they do take action appropriate to their findings. This is why it would be unnecessary to include additional training for staff to communicate early departures: they are not allowed to depart early.

In the event a train does leave early, though, riders do have the options you had mentioned in your letter to help address the issue. Caltrain has a Customer Service Center that receives and processes community feedback on a variety of operational topics, ranging from right-of-way work orders to--more topically--on-time performance issues. Customers can reach the CSC by phone (1-800-660-4287), by mail (P.O. Box 3006, San Carlos, CA 94070-1306), and by our online Feedback Form (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.caltrain.com%2Fabout-caltrain%2Fcontact-us&data=05%7C01%7CBoardCaltrain%40samtrans.com%7Cd600c04f031e464f1aa708dbb3e4e683%7C1a34d2f711e24a45b4cd47ceeb1d21be%7C0%7C0%7C638301567939224694%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAilCjQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WzuT%2B6Zpvb4%2BZbNpBmuFt1dRwpVgmHjK4W55hh1fZmA%3D&reserved=0>). We also make efforts to inform our riders of upcoming service changes on our website, including news releases and even an email alert list. As for more immediate public communication, the real-time alerts section on our website is updated regularly; it even displays the Twitter feed of @CaltrainAlerts, which provides riders with updates on possible service disruptions.

Nevertheless, we at Caltrain are well aware we can still improve. We are, for example, working on ways to improve in-person passenger communication during major service disruptions. Community comments are important part of our process in that regard, so, again, thank you for taking the time to send us your feedback. Caltrain will continue to strive to provide our riders with a high-quality transit system, and we hope we will be able to provide you with a more pleasant and more timely transit experience going forward.

Kind regards,

Alexis Salandanan  
San Mateo County Transit District  
Customer Service Dept.  
1250 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306  
1-800-660-4287

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.smctd.com%2F&data=05%7C01%7CBoardCaltrain%40samtrans.com%7Cd600c04f031e464f1aa708dbb3e4e683%7C1a34d2f711e24a45b4cd47ceeb1d21be%7C0%7C0%7C638301567939224694%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1PvgTctPgAc%2BFO2S4rJLntH9ZKouuwsqadE2U8%2BXhI%3D&reserved=0>

-----Original Message-----

From: Albert Dai <szdai2015@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, August 21, 2023 10:07 AM

To: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; cacsecretary [@caltrain.com] <cacsecretary@caltrain.com>; LPMG <LPMG@caltrain.com>

Subject: Urgent Concern: Inconsistent Departure Times Undermining Commuter Experience

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Dear Caltrain Customer Service Team,

I am writing this letter to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the consistently early departures of Caltrain services from their scheduled times. As a regular commuter who relies on your services for my daily commute, I have encountered this issue on numerous occasions, and it has significantly disrupted my daily routine and caused unnecessary stress.

While I understand that delays and scheduling adjustments can occur due to various factors, it is unacceptable for trains to depart prior to their scheduled departure times. The essence of a reliable public transportation system lies in its adherence to its published schedules, ensuring that passengers can plan their journeys effectively. Unfortunately, the recent experiences I've had with Caltrain have not reflected this level of reliability.

On several instances over the past few weeks, I have arrived at the station well in advance of the scheduled departure time, only to find that the train has already left. This has resulted in missed connections, prolonged waiting times, and, in some cases, tardiness at my workplace. As a professional who values punctuality, I find this situation untenable and inconsiderate of the passengers who rely on your services.

I kindly request that Caltrain's management take immediate action to rectify this issue. I believe that the following steps would greatly improve the situation and enhance the overall experience for commuters:

- **Accurate Communication:** Ensure that real-time departure information is promptly updated on your digital platforms, including your website and mobile app. This will enable passengers to make informed decisions about their travel plans, even in the event of unexpected changes.

- **Staff Training:** Train station staff to communicate any potential scheduling adjustments to waiting passengers and provide clear instructions on the steps to take in case of early departures.
- **Improved Scheduling:** Conduct a thorough review of the current scheduling process to identify and address the root causes of early departures. Adjustments should be made to minimize the likelihood of such occurrences in the future.
- **Customer Feedback Mechanism:** Implement a robust customer feedback mechanism, such as a dedicated hotline or online portal, where passengers can report instances of early departures or other service-related concerns. This will allow Caltrain to gather valuable insights and take prompt corrective action.
- **Public Communication:** Proactively inform passengers about any planned changes to the schedule through various communication channels, such as social media, email newsletters, and station announcements.

I am hopeful that Caltrain's commitment to its passengers and dedication to providing reliable transportation services will lead to swift improvements in this matter. As someone who believes in the importance of public transportation and its positive impact on the community, I look forward to a resolution that upholds the high standards that Caltrain is capable of delivering.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that my concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. I appreciate your efforts in enhancing the quality of service for all passengers who rely on Caltrain for their daily commute.

Sincerely,  
Albert



**From:** [Secrétariat du Prix Versailles](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** Salesforce Transit Center | UNESCO  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 13, 2023 7:39:36 AM

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*Letter to the Laureates of the Prix Versailles 2020*

Dear Sir or Madam,

Many Prix Versailles laureate sites are celebrated during Anniversary events or Unveiling Ceremonies.

Please see an example at LaGuardia Airport: <https://news.yahoo.com/laguardia-airports-terminal-b-reopens-172935230.html>

The Official Plaque is an appropriate way to commemorate the Salesforce Transit Center, recognised by the Prix Versailles – the World Architecture and Design Award at UNESCO.

Should you wish to organise a future event at the Salesforce Transit Center, a representative of the Prix Versailles may be asked to participate. (That is not mandatory.)

The Official Plaque can be affixed to be seen by the visitors. It indicates the World Title in the six official languages of the United Nations.

More information on the 2020 Edition: <https://www.prix-versailles.com/2020>

More information on the Official Plaque: <https://www.designs.prix-versailles.com/product-page/official-plaque>

Our team remains at your disposal.

With best regards,

Thomas Delisle

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Secrétariat du Prix Versailles  
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