



## Dean Preston - *Ride the Vote!*

### 2024 San Francisco Board of Supervisors candidate questionnaire

**1. What office are you running for?**

Board of Supervisors, District 5

**2. What is your name?**

Dean Preston

**3. Do you have a section on your website about public transit, transportation, or mobility? If so, please provide a link.**

Yes. Here is the link: <https://dean2024.com/public-transit-and-pedestrian-safety>

**4. How do you usually get around San Francisco? Please tell us when and why you use cars, trains, Muni buses, bikes, walking, wheelchairs, or any other mode you frequently use for transportation.**

I'm the only SF supervisor who is an everyday public transit rider. I also walk extensively in the district every day.

**5. How often do you ride public transit?**

Every day.

**6. If elected, what would be your top transportation priorities? This can include priorities related to public transit, active transportation, driving, or any other mode of transportation.**

In my second term, I plan to continue to lead on Transit First efforts at the board, including supporting efforts for increased service and reliability, pushing for free and reduced fare transit (like Free Muni for Youth!), and increasing public transit ridership.

We need to work with our state and local lawmakers, the governor, transit agencies, MTC, labor unions, and advocates to pass a regional transportation measure in 2026. We also need to support local efforts like the Community Transportation Act and a future Muni bond. I will prioritize getting these measures passed.

At the same time, I will continue to lead efforts to push state and federal lawmakers for funding, similarly to my work to pass a Resolution in 2023 calling on Governor Newsom and the state legislature to provide much-needed public transportation funding. The passage of the Resolution came at a critical time, as Governor Newsom had a May deadline to revise his budget, which included a \$2 billion cut to public transit. We successfully worked with transit advocates across the Bay and Bay Area transit agencies such as BART, Muni, Caltrain, and many others to win state funding for public transit.

At the same time as I continue to prioritize public transit, I will also continue to be a strong voice on the Board of Supervisors to create a robust and comprehensive citywide network of safe and slow streets for pedestrians and cyclists. I've been a leading voice on this issue and will continue my advocacy in a second term.

7. San Francisco's [Transit First Policy](#) applies to all officers, boards, commissions, and departments of the city and county, and states that within San Francisco, travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot must be an attractive alternative to travel by private automobile. Do you support the principles laid out in the full Transit First Policy? If so, how will you use your position to advance the policy?

I absolutely support our city's Transit First Policy, and have pushed consistently to make sure it is implemented in decision making at City Hall. I believe public transit is essential for a sustainable and equitable city. I've been a leading voice on the Board of Supervisors for public transit and a green transportation network. My extensive Muni work includes leading Transit-First efforts at the board, including restoration of suspended Muni lines and service, stopping fare hikes, making Free Muni for Youth permanent, and eliminating parking at over 1000 bus stops so Muni stops are accessible.

**8. What role do you think law enforcement, fare enforcement, community ambassadors, and private security should play, if any, in patrolling transit? What should Muni do to improve safety and the sense of safety for riders?**

Every public transit rider should feel safe on public transit. The same is true for operators and MTA staff. Any physical or verbal attacks or harassment of passengers, operators, or other MTA staff is completely unacceptable. While crime on Muni is relatively low system wide, incidents do happen, concentrated on particular lines, and operators and passengers are apprehensive.

I support having transit welcome ambassadors on coaches to assist passengers, assist operators, and create a greater sense of order on public transit. MTA workers and their unions should be consulted to develop a plan for transitioning fare enforcement officers to ambassador roles to the greatest extent possible.

I believe the future of transit is fare free, which is why I passed a fully funded free transit pilot in 2021 that the mayor vetoed. It breaks my heart when working class people lose an entire day's pay as a punishment for riding transit without paying, and it makes it even worse that those most marginalized are often the ones who get ticketed. Currently, farebox revenue accounts for approximately 8 percent of SFMTA's annual revenues. With ridership lower than pre-pandemic levels, we are recuperating less money than before the pandemic.

My goal is to maximize the number of people riding public transit. Great service, safety, bus stop amenities (such as lighting and seating), and affordability all help increase ridership. High muni ridership helps ease traffic congestion, create safety in numbers, and combat climate change. I am also supportive of teams such as BART's Crisis Intervention Specialists, who are trained to help people in crisis and get them connected to the resources they need.

**9. Muni is facing a budget deficit of up to \$322m starting in 2026. How would you work towards financial stability for Muni? What new revenue sources should be on (or off) the table? How should the City address the deficit if funding from other levels of government do not materialize? If new sources of funding are not found, what kinds of SFMTA cuts would you support or oppose?**

We need to work with our state and local lawmakers, the governor, transit agencies, MTC, labor unions, and advocates to pass a regional transportation measure in 2026.

I'm also a strong supporter of the Community Transit Act which would tax Uber, Lyft, Waymo, etc to fund public transit. I also supported the transportation bond that failed, and believe we need a major green transportation bond in 2026.

At the same time, we need local advocacy to push state and federal lawmakers for funding. I will continue to help lead those efforts, similarly to my work to pass a Resolution last year calling on Governor Newsom and the state legislature to provide much-needed public transportation funding. The passage of the Resolution came at a critical time, as Governor Newsom had a May deadline to revise his budget, which included a \$2 billion cut to public transit. We successfully worked with transit advocates across the Bay and Bay Area transit agencies such as BART, Muni, Caltrain, and many others to win state funding for public transit.

10. Since the pandemic, different Bay Area transit agencies have adopted a variety of fare policies to help recover ridership and revenue. This year, **Muni approved** a 14% fare increase for most of its riders. On the other hand, San Francisco Bay Ferry **lowered fares**, and has seen ridership grow quickly as a result. Petaluma Transit also expects to see **large increases in ridership** since using the city's general fund money to make fares free this year

Currently, only about **8%** of Muni's total revenue comes from fares.

What role should fares and fare increases play in the future of Muni? Do you support raising fares to balance Muni's budget and keep up with the cost of inflation, or should Muni consider lowering or freezing fares to grow ridership? If you support raising fares, how should Muni address equity concerns for low-income riders, most of whom are not enrolled in Muni's Lifeline discount program? If you support fare-free public transportation or fare freezes, what alternative funding sources do you support?

I do not support raising Muni fares to balance the budget. Instead, I advocate for freezing or even lowering fares as a strategy to grow ridership and support those who are financially struggling. During the pandemic, I led the Board of Supervisors successful efforts to freeze fares and reverse MTA-approve fare increases.

Addressing the budget constraints of the SFMTA is crucial, but it should not come at the expense of the riders who rely on Muni every day. Instead of increasing fares, we should explore alternative funding sources to support Muni. These could include increasing contributions from businesses that benefit from a well-functioning transit system, seeking state and federal grants, or exploring new revenue streams like congestion pricing or dedicated taxes that do not directly burden riders.

My priority is to work with MTA leadership and workers to find solutions that improve service and reliability while easing the financial strain on riders. Ensuring that public transit is accessible and affordable for all residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable, is essential for building a more equitable and sustainable city.

**11. How should San Francisco work toward equitable access to public transit for all people, no matter their race, gender, abilities, neighborhood, income, or other characteristics? Do you support or oppose any local or regional transportation projects or policies because of the effect they will have on equitable transit access?**

There is a lot of work to be done to get more people back on Muni and create a transportation system that is accountable to all San Franciscans. We know Muni must increase frequency and reliability and reduce fares in order to maximize ridership.

We must come together behind a more robust vision of our public transit system. We need a vision that inspires people to ride muni and to support bold funding measures. A vision that includes fare relief on a path to free muni, investment in our workers, and better, more reliable service. A vision of a world-class public transit system for our city for generations to come. We can do this by requiring our largest companies to provide their workers with Clipper Cards, taxing the wealthy to pay their fair share, and electing leaders that ride public transit every day.

**12. A [1993 ballot measure](#) made it official city policy that all elected city officials must ride Muni or other public transit to work at least twice a week. If elected, how closely will you abide by this policy?**

I would abide by this policy as I already do.

**13. San Franciscans have strongly supported SFMTA's independence from the city's electoral politics in two separate elections over the past several decades, including Prop E in 1999 and Prop A in 2007. What are your positions on SFMTA's independence from the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's office? How would you make SFMTA more accountable to San Franciscans?**

I support SFMTA independence from the Mayor and the Board, however, because the Mayor appoints all of the MTA Board members, there are often concerns about the agency's true independence. I believe the MTA board should have split appointments, rather than exclusively Mayoral appointments.

**14. Transit-only lanes provide faster and more reliable service. They prevent buses from being stuck in traffic and save money that can be reinvested in additional transit service. If elected,**

would you work to expedite the creation of new transit-only lanes in San Francisco? What streets in your district would you prioritize for transit-only lanes and other needed transit improvements?

Since taking office, I have supported the Transit Only Lane on the Geary Rapid Project in District 5, the Van Ness TOL, and worked closely with the Tenderloin Traffic Safety Taskforce to strongly urge the SFMTA to add a TOL on Hyde from Market to Geary. I'm also eager to get a transit only lane, even if just for the congested areas, on Masonic to alleviate the bottleneck around Oak and Fell.

I will continue to work with the community and the SFMTA to prioritize Transit Only Lanes whenever possible.

15. Did you support [Proposition A \(2022\)](#), which would have authorized up to \$400m in general obligation bonds to support SF transportation infrastructure projects?

Yes

16. Did you support [Proposition I \(2022\)](#), which would have reopened the Great Highway to cars at all times, and reopened JFK Promenade to cars on weekdays?

No

17. Did you support [Proposition J \(2022\)](#) which codified a permanent car-free JFK Promenade?

Yes

18. Did you support [Proposition L \(2022\)](#), which approved a new 2022 Transportation Expenditure Plan and extended an existing half-cent sales tax for transportation for 30 years to fund the plan?

Yes

19. Did you support [SB 1031 \(2024; Wiener, Wahab\)](#), the authorizing legislation for a regional transportation funding measure?

Yes

20. Do you support this year's [Proposition L \(Fund the Bus\)](#), which will tax ride-hail companies to generate up to \$30 million annually for transit in San Francisco?

Yes!

21. Do you support this year's [Proposition K \(Ocean Beach Park\)](#), which will create a new park by permanently closing the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard to cars?

Yes

22. District 5 residents rely on Muni routes 31-Balboa and 21-Hayes, which both connect the Tenderloin to other communities on the west side of the district and beyond. Neither of these routes have yet returned to pre-pandemic ridership levels, and the 21 currently has the lowest ridership recovery out of all of Muni's active lines. Will you work to keep the 31 and 21 running in the face of Muni's budget deficit? If so, how?

Yes, I will absolutely work to keep the 31-Balboa and 21-Hayes lines running, despite Muni's budget deficit, and I will also push to restore the full routes and increase the service which is undermining the recovery of these lines. One route that was not mentioned was also the 2 - Sutter, which is a critical Muni line for the seniors in my district. These are critical routes that serve District 5 residents, and their restoration has been a priority for my office.

When the temporary suspensions of the 2, 21, 31 and other lines dragged on during the pandemic, I worked with riders, advocates, and Muni operators to push for restoration. In July 2021, I authored a resolution that was passed by the Board of Supervisors, urging the MTA to reinstate all transit lines and restore pre-Covid service hours by the end of 2021. This resolution included a directive for the MTA to prepare a written plan and timeline for this restoration, emphasizing the critical nature of these services for our community. I also held hearings that put pressure on MTA to restore these lines, rather than having de facto route abandonments.

We have fought hard to bring these lines back, and will make sure full service is restored. The 21-Hayes, for example, has anemic service and has struggled to regain pre-pandemic ridership levels, but that does not diminish its importance. It provides essential connections to Ida B. Wells High School, St. Mary's Hospital, and Golden Gate Park.

I was the first Supervisor to support the Community Transit Act, and am committed to passing a 2026 Regional Transportation Bond to ensure the MTA has the funding to not only keep our existing lines but to also expand service and make transit more affordable.

23. Masonic Street, Divisadero, and most of the Tenderloin are all part of San Francisco's [High Injury Network](#) – the 12 percent of city streets where 68 percent of severe and fatal traffic injuries occur. For transit riders, accessibility and pedestrian safety are concerns when traveling to and waiting at bus stops. How will you work to help people have safe access to, from, and at bus stops, especially in areas on the High Injury Network?

Pedestrian safety is a priority for my office. I led the Board's efforts to reconvene the dormant interdepartmental Vision Zero Task Force, eliminated parking at over 1000 bus stops so Muni riders - especially important for senior and disabled riders – have uninhibited access to transit, authored a unanimously approved Resolution calling on the SFMTA to implement No Turn on Red citywide, supported the addition of Leading Pedestrian Intervals at District 5 intersections, and have consistently supported the Essential Trip Card and San Francisco's Paratransit van and taxi program for people unable to independently use or access public transit because of a disability or disabling health condition through funding at the SFCTA.

I have also advocated for \$17.6 million in federal funding for safe streets improvements in the Western Addition, including traffic signal upgrades, quick builds, and speed reduction work, and for \$8 million through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program to improve traffic safety and connectivity in the Tenderloin neighborhood.



*Note: This Ride the Vote! questionnaire is provided to the public for informational purposes only and does not imply endorsement by San Francisco Transit Riders. San Francisco Transit Riders does not endorse electoral candidates. Responses to this questionnaire are presented as submitted by the candidate unless otherwise noted.*



San Francisco Transit Riders is the city's member-supported, grassroots, nonprofit advocate for excellent, affordable, and growing public transit. We believe that empowering everyday transit riders to speak up for rider-first policies will bring us the world-class transit system we need for a livable, sustainable, and accessible San Francisco.

[www.sftransitriders.org](http://www.sftransitriders.org)

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