



## Dylan Hirsch-Shell - *Ride the Vote!*

### 2024 San Francisco Mayoral candidate questionnaire

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

Mayor of San Francisco

**2. What is your name?**

Dylan Hirsch-Shell

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

Yes, on my Priorities page I discuss the importance of investing in public transit in the sections on "Revitalize Downtown" and "Eliminate Traffic Fatalities and Severe Injuries". Link: <https://www.dylanforsfmayor.com/priorities>

**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.**

My primary mode of transportation in San Francisco is a combination of walking, biking, and public transit. Whenever possible, I choose to walk or bike, as it's not only good for my health and the environment but also allows me to experience the city in a more intimate way. I rely on Muni buses and BART for longer distances and when time is a factor. Occasionally, when time is critical, I am forced to use a taxi or a ride-sharing app. I own an electric vehicle, which I primarily use for trips outside the city.

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

I ride Muni or BART several times a week, often choosing it over driving, even when I have my car available.

**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.**

My top transportation priorities are:

- **Making Public Transit the First Choice for More San Franciscans:** We need to create a public transit system that is so reliable, affordable, and convenient that it becomes the preferred mode of transportation for the majority of residents.
- **Expanding Muni Service:** We need to increase service frequency, expand routes, and improve connectivity to ensure that all neighborhoods have access to high-quality transit, particularly those that have been historically underserved.
- **Creating a Seamless and Equitable Transportation Network:** We need to integrate different modes of transportation, including buses, trains, bikes, scooters, and walking, to create a system that is easy to use and accessible to everyone, regardless of their income, ability, or neighborhood.

**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?**

Yes, I wholeheartedly support the principles of the Transit First Policy. As Mayor, I will be a vocal champion for public transit and actively work to advance the policy by:

- **Prioritizing Funding for Muni:** I will ensure that Muni receives adequate funding to expand service, improve reliability, and maintain its infrastructure.
- **Creating Dedicated Transit Lanes:** I will work to expedite the creation of dedicated bus and transit lanes to improve speed and reliability, taking cars out of the equation to free up space for buses to move freely and consistently.
- **Investing in Active Transportation:** I will expand our network of protected bike lanes, make our streets more pedestrian-friendly, and encourage people to choose walking and biking as viable transportation options.

- **Leading by Example:** I will personally use public transit and alternative modes of transportation whenever possible, demonstrating my commitment to a transit-first city.

**8. The Mayor appoints members to the SFMTA's Board of Directors, which provides oversight over agency policy and the Director of Transportation. If presented with a vacancy on the Board of Directors, what qualities would you look for in a candidate for SFMTA leadership?**

In a candidate for the SFMTA Board of Directors, I would prioritize the following qualities:

- **A Passion for Public Transit:** They must be a strong advocate for public transit and understand its importance for a thriving and equitable city.
- **Experience with Transportation Issues:** They should have a deep understanding of the complexities of transportation planning, operations, and funding.
- **Commitment to Equity and Accessibility:** They must be committed to ensuring that all communities have access to high-quality transit, regardless of their income, ability, or neighborhood.
- **A Vision for the Future of Transportation:** They should have a forward-thinking perspective and be able to envision a sustainable and innovative transportation system for San Francisco.

**9. 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?**

I believe that public safety on transit should prioritize a multi-faceted approach that balances the need for security with the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all riders.

- **Law Enforcement:** SFPD should focus on addressing serious crimes and ensuring the safety of riders and transit workers. However, their presence should be balanced and targeted to avoid creating an atmosphere of over-policing, particularly for communities that have historically been disproportionately targeted by law enforcement.
- **Fare Enforcement:** Fare enforcement is necessary to maintain the financial viability of the system, but it should be conducted fairly and with respect for riders. I

support exploring alternative fare enforcement models that prioritize education and outreach over punitive measures, especially for low-income riders.

- **Community Ambassadors:** I believe that community ambassadors can play a valuable role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment on transit, providing assistance to riders, de-escalating conflicts, and promoting a sense of community.
- **Private Security:** Private security should be used sparingly and strategically, primarily to address specific security concerns and deter criminal activity.

To further improve safety and the sense of safety for riders, Muni should:

- **Increase Visibility of Staff:** Deploy more transit workers and ambassadors on trains and platforms, particularly during peak hours and in high-crime areas.
- **Improve Lighting and Visibility:** Ensure that stations and vehicles are well-lit and that there are clear lines of sight to reduce opportunities for crime.
- **Invest in Security Technology:** Utilize security cameras and other technologies to deter crime and provide evidence for investigations.
- **Engage with Riders:** Create opportunities for riders to share their concerns and provide input on safety improvements.

**10. 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?**

The structural deficit facing Muni is a serious threat to the future of public transportation in San Francisco. We must find sustainable solutions to address this challenge and ensure that Muni has the resources it needs to provide high-quality service.

Here's my approach:

- **Prioritize Transit Funding:** I will make funding for Muni a top priority in the city budget, working to allocate a larger portion of general fund revenues to support transit operations.

- Explore New Revenue Sources: I am open to exploring a range of new revenue sources, such as:
  - o A dedicated regional transit tax: This would provide a stable and reliable funding stream for Muni and other Bay Area transit agencies.
  - o Congestion pricing for downtown San Francisco: Charging a fee for driving into the city center during peak hours would discourage car use, reduce congestion, and generate revenue for transit.
  - o Parking tax increases: Increasing taxes on parking would discourage driving and generate revenue for transit.
- Advocate for State and Federal Funding: I will work with state and federal representatives to secure additional funding for public transportation.
- Oppose Service Cuts: I will oppose any cuts to Muni service. These cuts would disproportionately impact low-income communities and essential workers who rely most heavily on public transit, and they accelerate the decline of fare revenue by discouraging ridership due to reduced usefulness of the system overall.
- Focus on Efficiency and Cost Savings: I will work with SFMTA to identify opportunities for efficiency improvements and cost savings, such as streamlining operations, reducing administrative overhead, and negotiating better contracts with vendors.

I am committed to finding sustainable solutions that prioritize the needs of riders and ensure that Muni remains a vital part of San Francisco's future.

11. 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 believe that fare increases should be a last resort, not a primary strategy for addressing Muni's budget shortfall. Raising fares disproportionately impacts low-income riders, who rely most heavily on public transit, and can lead to a decline in ridership, ultimately undermining the goal of a thriving and accessible transit system.

I support exploring a fare freeze or even a reduction in fares, particularly for low-income riders and essential workers, to encourage ridership and make Muni a more attractive transportation option.

To offset the loss of revenue from fare reductions, I would prioritize:

- **Securing new, dedicated funding sources for Muni:** As outlined in my response to Question 9, this could include a regional transit tax, congestion pricing, or parking tax increases.
- **Increasing City funding for Muni:** I will work to allocate a larger portion of the city's general fund to support Muni's operating budget.

We must invest in public transportation as a public good, making it affordable and accessible for everyone.

**12. 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?**

Equitable access to public transportation is essential for creating a just and thriving San Francisco. We must ensure that all residents have the opportunity to access jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services, regardless of their background or circumstances.

I will prioritize the following:

- **Expanding Service to Underserved Communities:** Increase frequency and expand routes in neighborhoods that have historically lacked adequate transit service, ensuring that all residents have convenient and reliable access to Muni.
- **Improving Accessibility for People with Disabilities:** Commission specialized Muni vehicles that are designed specifically to provide a highly accessible and ultra

convenient transportation solution for people with disabilities, and work to remove any and all barriers to access to these vehicles for seniors and others with mobility challenges.

- **Implementing a Fare Equity Program:** Create a program that provides discounted or free fares for low-income riders, seniors, and students, making transit more affordable for those who need it most.
- **Prioritizing Equity in Transportation Planning:** Ensure that equity considerations are central to all transportation planning decisions, from route planning to infrastructure investments.

I will oppose any transportation projects or policies that exacerbate existing inequities or create new barriers to access for marginalized communities. This includes projects that prioritize car infrastructure over transit, walking, and biking, or that fail to adequately consider the needs of low-income residents and communities of color.

**13.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 will wholeheartedly embrace this policy and go beyond the minimum requirement. I will make public transit my primary mode of transportation for getting around San Francisco, using it whenever possible. I believe that it is essential for elected officials to experience the realities of public transit firsthand and to be accountable to the needs of riders.

**14. 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 understand and respect the desire for SFMTA to be independent from political interference. However, I also believe that SFMTA must be accountable to the public it serves.

To improve accountability, I will:

- Appoint qualified and dedicated individuals to the SFMTA Board of Directors: I will prioritize individuals with a proven track record of advocating for riders, a deep understanding of transportation issues, and a commitment to equity and sustainability.
- Ensure Transparency and Public Input: I will work with SFMTA to increase transparency in its operations, budget, and decision-making processes, and to create more opportunities for public input and feedback.
- Establish Clear Performance Metrics: I will work with SFMTA to establish clear performance metrics and hold the agency accountable for achieving its goals, including improving service reliability, expanding access, and meeting our climate objectives.

**15. 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? If so, what corridors would you prioritize for transit-only lanes and other needed transit improvements?**

Yes, I strongly support the creation of dedicated transit lanes and will work to expedite their implementation throughout San Francisco. This is a crucial step toward making Muni faster, more reliable, and a more attractive transportation option.

I would prioritize the following corridors:

- Geary Boulevard: Expand the existing transit-only lanes and implement bus rapid transit (BRT) features to create a faster and more efficient corridor.
- 19th Avenue: Create dedicated transit lanes to improve speed and reliability for this vital north-south corridor.
- Mission Street: Extend the existing transit-only lanes and explore options for BRT or light rail to create a faster and more efficient connection between the Mission District and downtown.

Additionally, I would like to explore the possibility of creating underground tunnels that provide even faster, completely unobstructed routes for certain buses or light rail to provide fast and efficient cross-town service.



16. While transit ridership is very high in some neighborhoods, it remains lower in others, including San Francisco's outer western and southeastern neighborhoods. As Mayor, how would you promote high transit ridership across the whole city?

To promote high transit ridership across all neighborhoods, I will:

- **Expand Service and Improve Frequency:** Increase service frequency and extend routes in neighborhoods with lower ridership, ensuring that all residents have convenient and reliable access to Muni.
- **Invest in Infrastructure Improvements:** Make targeted investments in infrastructure upgrades, such as new bus shelters, improved lighting, and better pedestrian connections, to enhance the rider experience and make transit more appealing.
- **Promote Integrated Fare Systems:** Work with regional partners to create a seamless and affordable fare system that allows for easy transfers between different transit agencies, making it easier to travel throughout the Bay Area without a car.
- **Engage with Communities:** Work with neighborhood groups and community organizations to understand the specific transportation needs of different communities and tailor services accordingly.
- **Promote the Benefits of Public Transit:** Launch a public awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of using public transit, emphasizing its affordability, convenience, environmental sustainability, and role in creating a more livable city.
- **Champion the Funding and Implementation of a San Francisco Subway System:** San Francisco is a world-class city, and it deserves a world-class transportation system, which means a subway. I want to champion the creation of a subway system that services the entire city with fast, efficient, reliable transportation between any two points within 30 minutes or less. I envision a future where someone could take the subway from Hunter's Point to Land's End in less time than it would take to drive. Only then will we truly see a massive increase in ridership of the city's public transit system.

### Rapid-fire questions

*Feel free to expand on your answers to any of these questions, but all that we're looking for is a quick "yes" or "no."*

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

Yes

18. 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

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

Yes

20. 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

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

Yes

22. 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, but I don't think it goes far enough to obtain tax revenues related to automobile traffic. It is unfairly targeting the ride-hail companies without also taxing the cab companies who are using our roads for essentially the same purposes. Rather than this proposed tax, what we should really be implementing is a congestion tax that would do even more to remove cars from our roads and ensure our Public Transportation network is well funded and fully utilized. Additionally, once we have a Universal Basic Income implemented in the City, we should also consider implementing more effective fare enforcement methods, so that we don't disproportionately impact the least privileged riders in our community.

23. 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

*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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