



Ernest "EJ" Jones - *Ride the Vote!*

2024 San Francisco Board of Supervisors candidate questionnaire

1. What office are you running for?

Board of Supervisors, District 11

2. What is your name?

Ernest "EJ" Jones

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

Yes. But would love to consult with you all and add more information to our website.

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 use public transit to and from work to reduce emissions from my vehicle. I typically walk to the K or the M Muni lines to get to work downtown. I'm also a frequent BART rider depending on what's most convenient. I do own and operate a vehicle like many District 11 residents but I try my best to take advantage of our public transit system and I tap my Clipper card frequently around San Francisco. Since a recent Achilles tear, I use my vehicle more frequently because my nearest stop requires me to go up hill and a tough angle to use transit.

5. How often do you ride public transit?

I ride Muni almost daily, particularly during the workweek. Whether for commuting to meetings downtown, attending community events, or simply traveling through the district, I'm on public transit several times a week. As someone who's lived in San Francisco my entire life, I've always understood the importance of reliable public transportation in this city.

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 terms of transit, reliable public transit is one of the most essential aspects of our community. We need to prioritize clean and safe efficient transit that caters to all ages. While we have many bus lines running through the District, there is room for improvement in service delivery. During school mornings, the 29 line often becomes overcrowded and has to skip stops, especially with many students traveling to schools along Ocean Avenue or the Sunset. The route also serves Balboa and Denman middle schools, leading to increased ridership. I propose prioritizing more buses during peak times to ensure that students are not skipped and can arrive at school on time.

Despite having several bus lines accessible in our district, there is still inadequate connectivity in the residential areas. This complicates residents' ability to reach the necessary stops for transit access, largely due to the hilly terrain. I suggest exploring a shuttle service to connect residents to bus stops throughout the district. I would closely monitor the effectiveness of a pilot program that has been launched in District 10.

One major challenge with SFMTA is its community engagement process. I would urge SFMTA and its leadership to spend more time engaging with the community at the neighborhood level, through attending meetings, hosting discussions, or utilizing social media to better understand the needs of District 11's ridership.

Many residents have expressed serious concerns about traffic safety on several streets, including San Jose, Alemany, and residential neighborhoods. I would collaborate closely with SFMTA department heads to establish and implement traffic safety measures to ensure the protection of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. This engagement would also involve considering innovative methods to reduce reckless driving in our neighborhoods.

The leadership of SFMTA must be ready to collaborate on all these projects and truly value the input of our community members. We should create transit plans that

effectively cater to all members of our city without prioritizing certain groups over others.

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 strongly support the Transit First Policy. If elected, I will champion policies that prioritize public transit improvements, expand bike lanes, and enhance pedestrian safety. I would advocate for better community engagement to ensure transit plans meet the needs of all residents, including seniors, students, and people with disabilities.

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?

Increase the presence of ambassadors on trains to support safety initiatives and ensure safe passage for seniors and children. This should include crisis intervention specialists available to address mental health issues.

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?

SFMTA should close budget deficits by making the MUNI rider experience better. People must first trust the service and the safety of the service in order to get back on the system. Enforcement of fares is important and creating passes for free riders is key in identifying who has paid and who has not on the aboveground system.

They must incentivize riders to return to their system as many have opted to pay more for rideshare and AI operated vehicles. MUNI needs to highlight the ease in accessibility to major events like the SF Giants, Warriors, and Chase Center.

Some funding mechanisms I would propose are a Rideshare tax and a regional transit bond.

In order to address SFMTA's upcoming funding shortfalls, we need to take a multi-pronged approach that prioritizes sustainable revenue sources and efficient financial management. One solution is to push for increased state and federal funding for public transit infrastructure and operations. We can also seek grants and collaborate with regional agencies to get crucial financial support. Additionally, we should consider innovative funding sources like fees on ride share companies. It's crucial to improve transparency and accountability in budget planning and spending to use taxpayer dollars effectively. Furthermore, forming public-private partnerships for particular projects can supplement funding. Lastly, conducting thorough community outreach and education on the importance of investing in public transit can help gain support for potential funding measures.

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 recognize that fares are necessary for funding transit services, but they should be balanced with equity concerns. Implementing fare-free transit for low-income riders could be an option, funded by alternative revenue sources. It's crucial to ensure that fare increases do not disproportionately affect those with limited financial means.

Yes, I support fare freezes and even fare-free transit, especially for our low-income residents, students, and seniors who rely on public transportation. To offset any lost fare revenue, we need to think creatively and strategically. Implementing a rideshare tax could capture funds from the growing rideshare industry, while a regional transit bond could provide dedicated resources for improving transit infrastructure.

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?

To achieve this, the City should expand programs like free or subsidized Muni passes for low-income residents, seniors, and students. It's also important to invest in transit infrastructure that accommodates people with disabilities, such as ensuring all transit stations and vehicles are ADA-compliant. Additionally, we must ensure transit services are distributed equitably across neighborhoods, particularly in underserved areas, so residents aren't left behind due to long distances from key transit lines or infrequent service.

I strongly support the development of protected bus lanes, transit-only lanes, and increased bus frequency on high-demand routes like the 14, 29, and 49, which serve diverse communities. I also support regional projects that improve connectivity, such as BART expansions, but it's crucial to ensure these projects don't displace vulnerable communities or raise the cost of living for low-income residents.

At the same time, I oppose any policies that would reduce transit service in underserved areas or delay critical improvements in safety and accessibility, as this would exacerbate existing inequalities.

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 will fully abide by this policy. I already rely on public transit regularly and will continue to do so as a Supervisor to lead by example and stay connected to the challenges our riders face.

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 maintaining SFMTA's independence from direct political control while ensuring strong accountability to the public. SFMTA needs to engage more transparently with the community and be held accountable for delivering on its promises. I would advocate for regular performance audits and more community input to ensure they are meeting the needs of all San Franciscans.

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?

Yes, if elected, I would work to expedite the creation of new transit-only lanes. In District 11, I support creating transit-only lanes on the K route along Ocean Avenue to improve timing and enhance safety with boarding islands. I would also prioritize bus lanes along Mission Street for the 14 and 49 routes to speed up transit and reduce car speeds.

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?

Yes. It took a while for me to come around to roadway closures because I often used those roads as passthroughs. However, it wasn't until I could use those spaces that I supported the closures. In the long term, I support the November 2024 ballot measure

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

Yes. Answer above.

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. Do you think the City should be doing more to improve public transit and encourage transit ridership in District 11? If so, how can the City better meet those goals?

District 11 is a District made up of working class neighbors. Reliable public transit is one of the most needed parts of our community. We must first prioritize efficient transit that is clean and safe for all ages. I believe that while we do have many lines that run through the District we can improve on our service delivery as well. During the school year mornings, the 29 line often is overcrowded and forced to skip stops. This happens as a result of many students traveling from various stops along the line to school along Ocean Avenue or the Sunset. The Route also drops off close to Balboa and Denman middle schools which increases ridership. I would prioritize access to more buses during the peak time so students are not passed up and can get to school on time.

Even with the number of bus lines with access to our district, we still are missing a lot of connectivity through the residential portions of our District. This makes it complicated for residents to get to the stops that will ultimately allow them to access transit. Much of this is due to topography and hilly terrain. I would explore a shuttle that could connect residents to bus stops throughout the District. A pilot program has been launched in District 10 and I would monitor that closely for effectiveness.

One of the biggest challenges with SFMTA is its community engagement process. I would challenge SFMTA and its leadership to spend more time at the community level having conversations with our residents. This may mean attending neighborhood meetings, hosting discussions, or engaging on social media to deeply understand the needs of the District 11 ridership.

Many neighbors have expressed serious concern about traffic safety along many of our streets. San Jose, Alemany, residential neighborhoods as well. I would work closely with the SFMTA department heads to create and implement traffic safety to insure the protection of our pedestrians, bikers, and drivers. Part of this engagement would

include thinking of out of the box methods for reducing stunt driving in our neighborhoods.

The leadership of SFMTA must be prepared to collaborate on all of these projects, and also be willing to truly value the input of our community members. We cannot prioritize certain groups of people over others, instead we should be prepared to create transit plans that are effective for all members of our city.

Our leadership will need to ensure that each city department operates efficiently and meets the needs of San Francisco residents. While opinions on SFMTA's performance may vary, it is crucial for the new mayor to establish clear standards and expectations for the department. Evaluating whether the current leadership is meeting these standards will be an essential part of this process.

23. Earlier this year, the SFMTA Board approved the M Ocean View Transit and Safety Project, which aims to improve transit reliability and accessibility and enhance safety for people walking on San Jose Avenue. What are your opinions on the project and its final design? What is your vision for the future of the M? Are there other transit lines in your district that you would like to see outfitted with similar improvements?

While the project has good intentions. It did not address the access issues that are faced by Lakeview OMI residents. The biggest issue is the ability for seniors to access community spaces via transit. Many seniors live on a hill and the walk to various stops is too far to make it realistic for them. Additionally, the removal of parking spots in front of the senior center specifically hurts the seniors who drive there for their food bag pick ups. Some improvements that improve experiences for the community are the additional stop lights and quick build landings. It is important to include community's access when thinking about these projects. The planning of this project did a good job but could have done a better job of diving deeper into the needs of the Lakeview OMI community.

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

[Donate to SFTR to support more projects like this one!](#)

Follow us @SFTRU: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)