



Heather McCarty - *Ride the Vote!*

2024 SF Community College Board candidate questionnaire

1. What office are you running for?

Community College Board Trustee

2. What is your name?

Heather McCarty

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

N/A

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.

It depends on where I'm going. I rely on the J church to take me to Noe/Glen Park/Bernal borders areas. I use the 14 or the 49 if I am heading downtown. I use BART for downtown routes and to regular commute to the East Bay.

5. How often do you ride public transit?

Almost every time I leave my neighborhood.

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

My top transportation priority would be to establish free transit passes for all CCSF students. This initiative would:

- + Increase Accessibility: Remove financial barriers to education, potentially boosting enrollment and retention.
- + Promote Sustainability: Encourage public transit use, reducing carbon emissions and aligning with San Francisco's climate goals.
- + Enhance Student Success: Reliable transportation can improve attendance and reduce stress, contributing to better academic outcomes.
- + Support Equity: Particularly benefit low-income students who may struggle with transportation costs.

To achieve this, I would:

- + Partner with SFMTA to develop a program similar to AC Transit's EasyPass, tailored for CCSF students.
- + Advocate for SFMTA and BART to provide free transit for students, expanding beyond the current Clipper START program.
- + Explore regional collaborations, drawing inspiration from UC Berkeley's Bay Pass pilot program.
- + Seek funding through grants, partnerships with local businesses, and potential reallocation of CCSF's transportation-related budget.
- + Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the long-term value of such a program to both CCSF and the broader community.
- + Engage with student organizations to ensure the program meets their needs and to build support for the initiative.

While ambitious, this priority aligns with CCSF's mission of accessibility and Green New Deal for City College. It could also serve as a model for other community colleges. By removing transportation barriers, we can make education more attainable for all San Francisco residents.

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. How will you use your position to advance the Transit First Policy for people commuting to and from City College?

As a Board member, I would actively advance San Francisco's Transit First Policy for the CCSF community in several ways:

+ Free Transit Passes: Prioritize providing free transit passes for all CCSF students. This would be a significant step in making public transit an attractive alternative to driving (see earlier answer).

+ Support Bicycle Infrastructure: While the Board previously voted against it, the protected bike lane under construction around the CCSF Ocean campus will hopefully serve as a model we might use at other campus locations. I'd work closely with SFMTA to implement and expand such projects.

+ Pedestrian Safety: Advocate for improvements in pedestrian infrastructure around campuses, including better lighting.

+ Parking Policy: Review and potentially revise CCSF's parking policies to discourage single-occupancy vehicle use while ensuring accessibility for those who need it.

+ Education and Outreach: Implement awareness campaigns about sustainable transportation options and their benefits to the CCSF community.

Partnerships: Collaborate with SFMTA, BART, and other transit agencies to improve service to CCSF campuses.

+ Campus Planning: Ensure that future campus development plans prioritize transit-oriented design and sustainable transportation options.

+ Data Collection: Implement regular travel surveys to understand commute patterns and identify areas for improvement.

By focusing on these initiatives, we can make public transit, cycling, and walking more attractive options for the CCSF community, aligning with San Francisco's Transit First Policy while improving accessibility and sustainability for our students, faculty, and staff.

8. How can City College help make access to campus easier for people who cannot or do not drive?

CCSF can improve access for non-drivers through several initiatives:

- + Free Transit Passes: As mentioned, providing free transit passes to students would be the most impactful way to make public transit more accessible and affordable.

- + Improved Wayfinding: Implement clear signage and digital tools to help students navigate from transit stops to campus buildings, especially for new students or visitors.

- + Bicycle Infrastructure: Beyond the new bike lane at Ocean campus, CCSF could:

- + Install secure bike parking and storage facilities at all campuses

- + Partner with organizations like the Bicycle Coalition to offer bike repair workshops and stations

- + Partner with bike-share programs to locate stations near campuses

- + Pedestrian Safety: Work with the city to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting around all campuses to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.

- + Carpool and Rideshare Programs: Facilitate carpooling among students and staff through a dedicated platform or app.

- + Accessibility Audits: Regularly assess and improve campus accessibility for people with disabilities, ensuring easy navigation from transit stops to buildings.

- + Information Campaign: Launch a comprehensive information campaign about transit options, focusing on the environmental and financial benefits of non-car transportation.

- + Partnerships: Strengthen partnerships with SFMTA, BART, and other transit agencies to advocate for improved service frequency and routes serving CCSF campuses.

By implementing these measures, CCSF can significantly enhance access for non-drivers, promoting equity, sustainability, and alignment with San Francisco's Transit First policy and City Colleges Green New Deal.

9. Earlier this year, the City College Board of Trustees approved a [Green New Deal for City College](#), which calls for City College to “promote mass transit methods, including free public transit for students,” but sets no specific benchmarks toward achieving that goal. How can public transit help meet City College’s climate goals? Should City College set more specific transportation goals to encourage bus ridership over cars and reduce carbon emissions?

Yes, City College should definitely set more specific transportation goals to encourage public transit use and reduce carbon emissions. Here's how public transit can help meet CCSF's climate goals and what specific goals could be set:

- + **Specific Benchmarks:** While the resolution calls for promoting mass transit and free public transit for students, it lacks specific targets. City College should establish clear, measurable goals for increasing public transit use and reducing car dependency.
- + **Alignment with GHG Reduction Goals:** The resolution sets ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets (75% below baseline by 2031, 100% by 2035). More specific transit goals would directly contribute to these broader emission reduction targets.
- + **Fleet Electrification:** The resolution includes goals for electrifying the college's fleet vehicles. This should be expanded to include specific targets for reducing overall vehicle miles traveled by students and staff.
- + **Infrastructure Improvements:** While the resolution mentions making pedestrian and bicycle access improvements, it should set specific goals for implementing these changes across all campuses.
- + **EV Charging:** The plan to develop EV charging infrastructure should be accompanied by specific targets for installation and usage.
- + **Data Collection:** Implement regular travel surveys to establish a baseline and track progress towards mode shift goals.
- + **Integration with City Plans:** Set goals that align with and support San Francisco's broader climate and transit initiatives.

Public transit can significantly help meet City College's climate goals by:

- + Reducing per-capita emissions from commuting
- + Decreasing congestion and associated emissions around campuses

- + Supporting the college's broader sustainability initiatives
- + Aligning with city-wide environmental goals
- + Potentially reducing costs associated with parking infrastructure

By setting more specific, measurable transportation goals, City College can more effectively track progress, adjust strategies as needed, and demonstrate its commitment to climate action in line with its ambitious Green New Deal resolution.

10. What role do you think law enforcement, fare enforcement, community ambassadors, and private security should play, if any, in patrolling the transit lines that serve City College?

I am NOT an expert on policing, and I would not want to make decisions about patrolling without first gathering data and consulting with experts. That said, in addressing the role of various security entities on transit lines serving City College, I believe we should prioritize a community-based approach that emphasizes safety while minimizing intimidation. Community ambassadors, trained in de-escalation and assistance, should be the primary visible presence. Mental health resources should be readily available to support individuals in crisis. Fare enforcement should be minimized, especially if a free transit pass program for students is implemented. Law enforcement's role should be limited to responding to serious incidents, with a focus on de-escalation. If expert advice was to utilize private security, they need to be trained in cultural sensitivity and customer service. Regular input from CCSF students, especially those from marginalized communities, should guide these policies. The goal is to create a safe, welcoming transit environment that supports CCSF's diverse community while avoiding over-policing. This approach should be data-driven and regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the changing needs of the CCSF community.

11. 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 fully intend to abide by this policy and even exceed its requirements. As someone who values sustainable transportation, I've chosen my current residence for its proximity to BART and MUNI. My plan is to primarily use public transit to attend all functions, events, and meetings at the various CCSF campuses. This commitment not

only aligns with the city's policy but also allows me to experience firsthand the transit system that many CCSF students rely on daily. For the monthly Board of Trustee meetings at the Ocean campus, which often run past midnight, I will likely carpool in my plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) due to limited late-night public transit options and safety concerns for biking. However, for all other obligations, I'll utilize public transit or bike. By regularly using public transportation, I'll gain valuable insights into its strengths and challenges, which will inform my decision-making as a trustee, especially regarding transportation-related issues affecting CCSF students and staff.

12. Students are working to get fare free student transit passes for all students at City College.

This year, City College **received discretionary funding** from Senator Padilla (Dem–CA) to start a transit pass pilot program. To fully fund fare free passes, City College will need to find additional funding. Do you support using the funding remaining from past years of the Free City funds to offer fare free transit passes for students who live in San Francisco? What other funding pathways should City College pursue to provide transit passes for all students?

I support using the remaining funds from past years of the Free City program to offer fare-free transit passes for San Francisco-resident students at City College. However, it's important to note that these funds may not be available, as the city has recently reduced its allocation to the Free City program and is likely to reclaim any remaining funds.

Given this situation, City College needs to pursue multiple funding pathways to provide transit passes for all students:

- + State Funding: Advocate for increased state support.
- + Local Partnerships: Collaborate with SFMTA and other transit agencies on a cost-sharing model.
- + Private Sector Partnerships: Engage local businesses to sponsor the program as a community investment.
- + Federal Grants: Build on Senator Padilla's support to secure additional federal funding.
- + Student Fees: Consider a minimal, opt-out fee to partially support the program.
- + Alumni Contributions: Launch a targeted fundraising campaign.

+ Environmental Grants: Seek funding from environmental organizations.

+ City Budget Allocation: Despite recent reductions, continue to work with the Board of Supervisors for city funding, framing it as an investment in education and sustainable transportation.

This diversified approach can help create a sustainable program providing fare-free transit passes to all City College students, supporting both our students and the city's broader equity and sustainability goals.

13. Did you support the SFMTA's [Frida Kahlo Way Quick-Build Project](#), which will remove some curb parking spaces to add pedestrian safety improvements and bike lanes on Frida Kahlo Way and Judson Avenue? Why or why not?

Yes, I strongly support the SFMTA's Frida Kahlo Way Quick-Build Project for several reasons:

+ Safety: The project prioritizes pedestrian and cyclist safety, which is crucial for a bustling campus environment.

+ Sustainable Transportation: It encourages more sustainable modes of transportation, aligning with City College's climate goals and San Francisco's Transit First policy.

+ Accessibility: Improved bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure can make the campus more accessible to those who don't drive.

+ Flexibility: As a Quick-Build project, it can be evaluated after one year and easily modified or removed if it doesn't function as expected. This allows for data-driven decision-making.

+ Campus Integration: It better integrates the campus with the surrounding neighborhood, potentially improving community relations.

+ Health Benefits: Encouraging active transportation can contribute to better health outcomes for students and staff.

While I recognize that removing some parking spaces may cause concern for some, I believe the benefits of improved safety and sustainable transportation options outweigh these drawbacks. Moreover, this project aligns with broader city and college initiatives to reduce car dependency and promote alternative transportation methods.

As a trustee, I would support ongoing evaluation of the project's impacts and be open to adjustments based on community feedback and usage data. This project represents a step towards a more sustainable and safe campus environment, which I believe is crucial for the future of City College.

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.

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