



Jon Soderstrom - *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?

Jon Soderstrom

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

Votejonsoderstromformayor.com

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 generally walk everywhere, including for most shopping by only buying what I need for the next day. I have a car I use once to twice a month to travel where public transit is not possible to use outside the city. Working downtown in the 1990's or attending City College in the early 2000's, I used Muni and BART in town almost daily. If I had a mobility impairment, I would immediately be reliant upon Muni and maybe paratransit.

5. How often do you ride public transit?

I generally ride public transit about five times a year, as I prefer walking for most of my daily activities and errands. Public transit is typically used for specific trips where walking isn't practical or for travel outside the city, like the East Bay.

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 purpose in redeveloping the use of important buildings and locations is to make them as highly accessible by public transit as possible. Specifically, museums, shopping, tourist attractions, and community colleges should be sited at Muni Metro and BART transit stations. This includes siting SFUSD and CCSF offices at Civic Center Station and UN Plaza, all health sciences and biological sciences being sited at Powell Station with the Asian Art Museum being doubled in size to 350,000 square feet to attract visitors to use BART, Muni, and the Cable Cars, including attendees at Moscone Center, as well as a section of the de Young museum in the rotunda at the Emporium to attract visitors to take Muni to Golden Gate Park for the museum, Academy of Science, and the F-line to Fisherman's Wharf and all attractions along the Embarcadero and Market Street.

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 support the Transit First Policy and will work to enhance its effectiveness by ensuring that key public buildings and locations, such as museums, shopping areas, tourist attractions, and community colleges, are highly accessible via public transit. I propose locating these facilities near Muni Metro and BART transit stations to facilitate easier access. This includes placing SFUSD and CCSF offices at Civic Center Station and UN Plaza, situating health and biological sciences facilities at Powell Station, expanding the Asian Art Museum to attract visitors using public transit, and integrating museums and attractions with existing transit routes to encourage their use.

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?**

I would seek candidates with a strong background in public transit operations, a proven track record of enhancing service efficiency, and a commitment to financial transparency and stability.

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'm proposing that MTA be responsible for Vision Zero enforcement as county deputized Marshals with fines collected for use by MTA to make the city safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. I would defer to MTA and the county Board of Supervisors regarding what makes travel safest for passengers and am interested in what funding mechanisms might make Muni free for travel throughout the city.

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?

My proposals for UN Plaza and SF Centre are focused on increasing ridership of both Muni and BART from all parts of the city and Bay Area.

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?

Since I believe raising fares may negatively impact ridership, I support exploring fare-free transit options. Alternative funding sources could include leveraging hotel partnerships, increasing grants, and exploring other innovative revenue models.

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?

Ensuring equitable access involves maintaining and possibly expanding Lifeline passes while actively improving safety measures based on MTA's expert recommendations. I will work towards better integrating safety and accessibility initiatives to ensure all San Franciscans benefit equally.

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?

Unless I walk to work, I will take Muni. If I don't take Muni to get to City Hall, I would plan other early morning and late afternoon appointments that would require me to use Muni and/or BART to fulfill the spirit of riding at least twice weekly.

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 would seek candidates with a strong background in public transit operations, a proven track record of enhancing service efficiency, and a commitment to financial transparency and stability.

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?

To expedite the creation of new transit-only lanes, I would focus on identifying corridors with the highest potential for improving service reliability and reducing congestion. This would be based on a comprehensive review of current traffic patterns and ridership needs.

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?

Specifically for the Southeast and Geary corridors extending to Lincoln Park and the VA at Fort Miley, I'm interested in examining whether an aerial gondola system would offer more reliable faster cross-city transit, while retaining bus service as more localized to improve on-time performance while reducing traffic and increasing capacity per hour, as has been successful in numerous cities around the world, including La Paz, Bolivia. Each of the two cited aerial routes are intended to meet at the TransBay Terminal. Additionally, the Third Street Bridge is an urgent priority for repair.

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. I supported Proposition A, J, and L due to their focus on essential infrastructure and long-term funding for transportation. I opposed Proposition I because reopening the Great Highway to cars conflicts with our goals of sustainable urban planning.

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?

N/A

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

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

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