



Keith Freedman - *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?

Keith Freedman

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

No

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 usually walk to work or occasionally ride a scooter. If the weather is bad, I'll take MUNI or the F-line. When I'm in a hurry or need to carry stuff, I'll take a ride share (Uber, Lyft, WAYMO).

5. How often do you ride public transit?

Once a week or more.

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.

I believe we should improve public transportation to make it a better choice for people. Currently we handle public transportation by taking punitive measures against cars. Many of which don't improve public transit or make it a better choice. Making it harder to own and use a car (or ride share) doesn't make people want to use or enjoy public transportation.

We have a lot of tools at our disposal to reduce vehicle dependency and car ownership through incentives rather than punitive measures.

We also need to factor in the impact on local businesses when creating alternative transportation mechanisms. As an example, the Valencia bike lane was a disaster. While there are benefits to creating connected bike lanes, this wasn't the right way or place to do this. Just as valuable to cyclists, would have been a protected bike lane on one side of Van Ness avenue. This would have met the mission of a continuous bike lane through the mission without removing parking which is vital to local restaurants on Valencia street. Such alternatives weren't even considered because the champion of this project seemed to have punishing cars as a primary goal when it should have been developing workable solutions that solve the underlying problem.

Similarly, taxing ride share services will not cause people to use muni, but it might prevent them from giving up their personal cars.

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.

However, I see the implementation of these policies differently.

As an example, ride sharing/robo taxis reduce traffic significantly. They don't take up parking spaces and they don't drive in circles looking for parking. As such, they reduce congestion and free up parking spaces for wider sidewalks or parklets.

We haven't built good alternatives to people who have to commute for work. This will require coordination with other Bay Area transit agencies, but if taking public transit to work means giving up twice of one's personal time community vs driving, many will find the cost too high even if they want to use public transit.

Getting buy in for public transit means talking to people who aren't using it, finding out why and solving their problem. This isn't what we do now, but this is what I will make happen.

People who feel they are a part of the solution will work harder to make the solution work.

I also like the idea of having fixed pickup/drop off points (like MUNI has) for delivery services, car sharing and robo taxis. Once we implement those, it makes more sense to cite people for double parking or blocking bike lanes.

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 evaluate board positions based on qualifications, rather than cronyism. For a board such as MUNI, the members should either be people who know how to run a business, have training in municipal transportation, or are active participants in the system who also represent a large coalition of transit users.

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?

Provided there are viable alternatives, we certainly need to do more to prevent double parking and blocking bike lanes.

Muni buses can take pictures and issue automated citations for cars blocking a bus stop, this same tech can be used to cite people for double parking or blocking a bike lane, but we need to provide a mechanism for people to do delivery or passenger pickup/dropoff before we increase our punitive measure.

Pedestrians & bike riders need to also follow the rules. Cyclists shouldn't be in a vehicle lane when there is a bike lane available, they should stop at stop signs and traffic lights.

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 fare evasion rate is estimated at 25%.. From my observation this is probably a conservative estimate. However, fare evaders are at least using public transportation which is what we want people to do. Making them pay may push them off muni and into some other form of transportation like a car.

Certainly, we shouldn't punish people paying their way by raising prices, we should enforce the fares equitably. Or we should find a way to fully fund MUNI and make it free.

I would support a ballot measure to replace MUNI fares with a property tax, while I likely would remain neutral as to its passing, I'm happy to give voters the power to make that decision.

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?

This highlights a fundamental problem with how government decisions are typically made in San Francisco. Seeing a revenue shortfall, raising prices is almost always the go to. It's an easier leap to make and potentially less risky. Lowering costs often makes people more interested in paying for something. We don't need to tax ride share/robo taxi, we need to lower the cost of taking muni. It might solve some of our fare evasion problems.

Once we implement the tap and pay system that is coming soon, that may help a lot. It lowers the barrier to use/payment.

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?

Transportation should be for everyone and It needs to serve all people equally. However, I support prioritizing transit projects based on economic need. People of lower income are more likely to need public transit options as the cost of car ownership and use may be prohibitive. These are good places to start when making public transit improvements.

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 am more likely to walk. But I'm lucky enough to live 2 blocks from a subway stop and I don't own a car, so for me this is easy.

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?

As long as MUNI is operating independently and on behalf of the people and not usurped by special interests, I have no problem with this. But we do seem to lack accountability.

My plan for ALL city agencies is to have outside auditors do periodic reviews on use of funds and adherence to mission.

For MUNI, for which there should be nothing to hide, we may solve the outside auditor problem, by simply making all their financial records publicly available. We would get a free crowdsourced analysis of MUNI operations by people most invested or affected by its operations.

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?

I support BRT lanes and protected bike lanes. I would want to weigh the impact on vehicles and how any changes might impact local merchant corridors.

I haven't studied all the merchant corridors so I can't give specifics. I see these working well along Geary and Van Ness. They seem to work well on mission although there are some problems where traffic has been rerouted, so I see this as a cautionary tale to improve implementation.

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?

We designed and approved a new subway plan, but then we ignored it when doing other things making it more difficult to implement. The neighborhoods mentioned have transit options which don't have good neighborhood bus coverage, require a lot of walking and waiting and make public transit unpalatable. We need to lower the total door to door time by either increasing routes or frequency in order to make public transit a good option in those neighborhoods and everywhere else.

People are more likely to use public transit if they don't have to walk far to catch a bus, wait a long time, or make too many transfers to get where they're going.

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?

No

This was flawed legislation and much of the money looked like a slush fund. It should have been broken up into multiple propositions, in which case some of them likely would have passed.

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?

Yes

The usage of the great highway when it's closed is minimal, the impact on adjacent roadways and neighborhoods is high. This was a bad idea.

In the long term, I support envisioning the great highway into a park/public space, but we must FIRST build better alternatives before we simply punish drivers.

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

No

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?

No.

Punitive measures against alternatives isn't the way to incentivise or fund public transit.

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?

No.

This legislation DOES NOT CREATE A PARK. It's irresponsible to state otherwise.

I support transforming the great highway into a park/public space, but we must FIRST build better alternatives before we simply punish drivers.

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.



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