



Mark Farrell - *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?

Mark Farrell

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

<https://www.markfarrell.com/roadsafety/>

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 live in Jordan Park with my wife, Liz, and our three kids, and we walk, bike, ride Muni, or drive, depending on where we're headed. While I'll usually drive my kids to school or sports, as a family we love to walk to Laurel Village and Clement Street, and I regularly take Muni (especially the 1 or the 38 buses) when I need to run a quick errand Downtown.

5. How often do you ride public transit?

I generally take Muni five to ten times per month.

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.

If elected, public safety will be my North Star. That includes advancing our Vision Zero goals, taking seriously personal safety on Muni, and balancing the safety of everyone using our streets and sidewalks. Sadly, the City's approach to street safety, especially for pedestrians, has been inconsistent and unserious during Mayor Breed's time in office, as we continue to tinker with reactive changes to our streetscapes while moving further away from eliminating traffic deaths. We can't keep putting lives at risk due to poor leadership, and that's why I'll be a forceful advocate for pedestrian and transit-rider safety as Mayor.

Here's what that looks like. As Supervisor, I implemented effective improvements—like traffic-calming measures, stop signs, and bike lanes—to Bay Street, Euclid Avenue, Lombard Avenue, and more, by balancing safety, convenience, and neighborhood concerns. As Mayor, I'll take bold, aggressive action to ensure that everyone using our streets and sidewalks is safe, including by installing bollards on sidewalks at major intersections near places like hospitals, parks, and schools. I'll also add more speed cameras to our intersections and give SFPD additional tools to deter dangerous driving and enforce speed limits. And I'll support more bike lanes in areas where the demand and physical infrastructure makes it feasible to do so.

Additionally, as a dad, I know how tough it can be to get everyone out the door and where they need to be in the morning, and I'll do everything in my power to make public transportation as accessible and stress-free as possible for working families. That's why, in addition to the above safety-oriented transportation policies, I'll permanently fund free Muni for youth and bring the SFMTA and SFUSD leadership together to coordinate bus times and routes to better align with public school schedules.

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'll continue to push for a safer, cleaner, and more reliable Muni, because families and working people rely on our public transportation system to get to and from work, school, healthcare appointments, and other essential destinations. It's not just inconvenient when a bus passes you because it's too full, or you have to get off and wait 15 minutes for the next one because a passenger in crisis started yelling at your kid, or Muni Metro software malfunctions and stops all trains at 8:30 a.m.—it can literally derail your whole day. At the same time, City Hall needs to be realistic about people's transportation choices, because, given these challenges, different modes will work best for different people. As Mayor, I'll always work with communities, rather than doing things to communities, to advance lasting change.

- 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 firmly believe that San Francisco has an embarrassment of riches when it comes to good ideas and a willingness to bring them to fruition. Across the board, I would hope to appoint hard-workers with a history of civic engagement, a close connection to our diverse communities, and a pragmatic approach to problem-solving. In terms of the SFMTA Board of Directors specifically, I would also look for a fluency in government operations, proven leadership experience, and a deep knowledge of our different modes of transportation.

- 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 support increased safety monitoring and fare enforcement on Muni. One of the biggest concerns I hear about Muni, particularly from women and members of vulnerable communities, is that riders don't feel safe, especially at night. Far too many San Franciscans have felt the anxiety of being stuck in a tunnel or on a moving bus with someone behaving erratically. That needs to change, and one way we can ensure that Muni works for everyone is by embedding additional safety resources within our transportation system to prevent and respond to dangerous situations. Additionally, since the SFMTA already provides fare-relief programs for youth, elders, and people

earning low or no incomes, there's no reason to tolerate fare evasion from those who merely prefer not to pay.

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?

When it comes to durable funding streams for day-to-day operations, Muni cannot afford to depend on one-time state or federal bailouts. It's no secret that fare evasion and parking violations, especially from delivery and rideshare vehicles, have skyrocketed in recent years, and I'll prioritize enforcing existing regulations to recoup this lost revenue. Further, the SFMTA should reevaluate how to allocate its resources most effectively, in light of the post-pandemic shift in ridership. In my view, our Transit First policy is best served by getting the basics right, rather than an unending stream of disruptive capital projects that always seem to come in years late and millions over-budget while bringing limited benefits on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

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'm running for Mayor to make San Francisco the best place in the world to grow up and raise a family, and part of that means making Muni permanently free for youth. At the same time, City leaders cannot in good faith decry Muni's budget shortfall on the one hand, while expecting to both cut revenue and expand service on the other. Fare

increases should not be anyone's first idea for plugging budget holes, but the economic realities of running and expanding a transportation network like Muni means that adults who can afford to pay for bus and light rail service should do so. While I'll continue to enforce rules against fare evasion, I'll also ensure that riders who are eligible for fare-relief programs are given the opportunity to enroll before being penalized for failing to pay.

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?

Across all policy areas, I've always believed in working closely with impacted communities, not doing things to communities, because it's the only way to build trust and achieve lasting change. San Francisco's history of redlining and redevelopment makes that all the more important when it comes to urban planning. As Mayor, I'll ensure that SFMTA leadership does not impose ideological ideas on our diverse neighborhoods from on high, but instead works hand-in-glove with neighbors, community leaders, and small businesses to assess and respond to our real challenges. That means preserving and growing our fare-relief programs, to expand access to Muni for youth and lower-income San Franciscans, but also listening to neighborhood voices before deciding to move forward with sweeping service or streetscape changes.

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 strongly believe in the spirit of this measure, since public officials have a responsibility to understand our constituents' challenges, including through firsthand experience whenever possible. Muni's issues aren't academic or ideological; they have all-too-real effects on San Franciscans' daily lives. Although security and scheduling demands can sometimes make it difficult, as Mayor I'll do my best to take Muni as often as possible—both to maintain my current ridership and to get a firsthand look at how Muni is running on my watch.

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?

Over the past six years, San Franciscans have grown accustomed to a familiar routine: the SFMTA proposes or implements a splashy idea, residents voice concerns after the fact, Mayor Breed points a finger at the SFMTA, and the idea is scrapped or reversed without anyone taking ownership. There's a better way to make real, positive change for our communities. But as I see it, the problem isn't the balance of power between the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the SFMTA—it's the lack of effective leadership from the Mayor's office. The Mayor appoints all seven members of the SFMTA Board of Directors, so it's up to the Mayor to ensure that they know what the Mayor's priorities are and how to see them through effectively. The buck stops with the Mayor, and accordingly voters should hold the Mayor accountable for the SFMTA's actions.

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?

Transportation decisions don't have to be a zero-sum game, as we've been led to believe in recent years. I believe we can create more bus lanes in appropriate places to shorten commutes, while making it easier for those who choose to drive to do so—without putting all the burden on our small businesses and neighboring communities. To get it done, the next Mayor must emphasize accountability in all capital projects. Just look at what happened with the Van Ness Improvement Project: while the finished product is now a boon to north-south commuters, the fact that it took years longer than expected, and dozens of millions of dollars more than budgeted, led many residents and small businesses to view the SFMTA with great suspicion, and it will take years to rebuild that trust. As Mayor, I'll ensure that community members, City agencies, and other stakeholders are prepared—on the frontend—for projects that can benefit everyone, and that will be delivered on time and within budget.

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?

City Hall will never succeed in lecturing San Franciscans into waiting 15 minutes for crowded, chaotic, and crawling bus or train rides. Muni will only be an attractive and feasible alternative to driving when it's clean, safe, and efficient. My transportation platform advances our Transit First policy by permanently funding free Muni for youth, coordinating bus schedules with school start times, implementing a balanced but firm fare-enforcement policy, and building consensus and accountability around pragmatic service and streetscape changes that can benefit everyone, regardless of how they choose to commute. Every corner of our City has so much to offer, and it shouldn't feel like a chore to move about our diverse neighborhoods.

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?

no

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

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](#)