



## Myrna Melgar - *Ride the Vote!*

### 2024 San Francisco Board of Supervisors candidate questionnaire

**1. What office are you running for?**

Board of Supervisors, District 7

**2. What is your name?**

Myrna Melgar

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

While I do not currently have a section on my website dedicated to those issues, the On the Issues section gives a high-level overview of my stances, which includes the work I've done on transit and traffic improvements.

**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.**

My preferred mode of transportation is biking, and I use my bike as much as I can, including on my commute to City Hall. Among my constituents and those who know me, I have the reputation of being a cyclist, and I aim to lead by example by promoting an environmentally friendly and efficient means of transportation throughout the city.

If I can't use my bike or walk to my destination, I aim to use trains and Muni buses as much as possible.

**5. How often do you ride public transit?**

Multiple times per week.

**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 top transportation priority has been and will remain ensuring that our public transit infrastructure is safe, accessible, green and efficient for all city residents. I authored and am proud of the legislation we passed to make MUNI free for youth, and have advanced initiatives to incentivize alternative methods of transportation during my time on the Board. I think there is much more that we can do to make transit systems better and more accessible for all residents. Foremost, we must continue to prioritize that our transit systems and infrastructure are funded and staffed, and that the city is responding adequately to its maintenance and upkeep. We can make it easier for riders of public transit to pay for their fares without resorting to punitive measures that only make matters worse for some of our most vulnerable residents. We can build a protected bike network to give cyclists a connected, safer path to navigate the city, and we can do a better job of regulating and creating infrastructure improvements for bike and scooter shares, including more designated parking and drop-off locations.

**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 fully support the principles laid out in the Transit First Policy. In my time as supervisor, I have been an advocate for strengthening our public transit infrastructure and incentivizing alternate methods of transportation that align with the principles of the Transit First Policy. I will continue to do so if I am re-elected. I will legislate with an aim towards reducing dependence on carbon burning transportation, developing car-free spaces where they make sense, and supporting our bike infrastructure so that San Franciscans truly have transit options.

**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?**

Wherever we can, we must take steps to make our public transit safer and easier to use so that there isn't the same need for law enforcement, fare enforcement, and private security in ensuring that San Franciscans have a safe and reliable experience. As I mentioned above, this means funding and staffing our public transit systems, making it easier for transit riders to pay their fares, keeping MUNI free for youth, and giving riders as many convenient and reliable options as possible to incentivize more ridership.

While we work towards the goal of making our transit system better and more efficient to increase ridership, public safety officials such as law enforcement and private security should play a role focused on making the transit experience safe for every rider. Muni can help improve safety by collaborating with law enforcement and community-based organizations, as well as by providing and maintaining accurate schedules, and using technology to upgrade transit stations and communications with riders.

- 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?**

Muni's projected budget deficit is the symptom of two broader issues brought about by the pandemic - the revenue loss the city has experienced due to the decrease in tax revenues from commercial properties as companies left Downtown during the pandemic, and the decrease in tourism revenue from business travel as a result of those companies departing. Ensuring that our tax base continues to recover will be essential in securing the future financial stability of Muni. We need to find ways to incentivize the return of businesses to downtown, diversify the use of Downtown space to prevent future downturns, and think about how we can update our tax codes to strike the right balance between establishing a friendly-enough business environment while making sure that our public services are fully funded.

In the meantime, as I have in the past, I will work collaboratively with my fellow members of the Board of Supervisors, along with the Mayor, to strategically address the budget shortfalls that the City is facing. We will need to cut vacant positions, attrition and some services, though we must do everything that we can to preserve

essential services and make cost of living adjustments in line with the commitments we have made in our collective bargaining agreements.

I am a supporter of Prop L due in part to this budget shortfall. While it is not a long-term solution to closing the gap, it would provide Muni with much needed revenue from taxes on rideshare companies, and ensure that core operations remain intact while service reductions are kept to a minimum.

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?

Muni should prioritize increasing ridership, not fares. We need a transit system that works for everyone, and is easier and less costly for riders than private car options. That's just not the system we have now. The better the system, the more people will use it, and the more funding the system will generate and receive. I wrote the legislation to make MUNI free for kids in San Francisco, and I am very proud of that. While the system is still recovering from the pandemic, the Board of Supervisors should fund the difference in the MTA operations budget so that the system can recover. We should also work with state and regional partners to ensure we are examining every possible funding option, particularly when Muni plays not only a vital role for our city, but for the broader region that relies on San Francisco as an economic anchor. The consolidation of some of the region's public transportation agencies is another option that could provide for a more efficient use of funds, and is something that I am open to exploring if it means closing our funding gaps and 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?**

In addition to making our public transit system affordable for everyone, regardless of their economic situation, we need to make sure it is accessible and efficient. That means higher frequency, reliable service times, a safe ridership experience and transportation lines that are accessible to all of our neighborhoods and well-connected with each other to allow for easier travel across a multitude of routes.

**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?**

As the current supervisor for District 7, I take this policy seriously. I think it is extremely important that elected officials in our city have an understanding of the state of our public transit infrastructure from personal experience. It is also vital that our leadership does its part in helping the city achieve its Vision Zero and Climate Action Plan goals, and this can only be accomplished by regular ridership on public transit and by the use of alternative transportation.

**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?**

It is important that the SFMTA maintain independence from the city's politics. While the agency must be held accountable by lawmakers for the decisions it makes that affect us all, maintaining SFMTA's independence is crucial in allowing it to make decisions separate from electoral politics that are in the best interests of the transit system and the city.

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?

I will always be a proponent of creating transit options that are faster, more reliable, and help us work towards our Vision Zero and climate goals, including transit-only lanes. Throughout my time as supervisor, I have worked hard to make our bus routes and transportation thoroughfares more efficient, such as securing improvements for the 29 bus route, and gaining improvements and bike lanes on Lake Merced Blvd., Winston Ave., Ocean Blvd., and Frida Kahlo Ave. I have worked with the SFMTA to develop and fund the planning process to make improvements to the Ocean Ave. corridor, and I am committed to continuing to develop solutions for much needed transit improvements throughout District 7.

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?

No

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

Yes

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. Earlier this year, a speeding driver hit and killed the Oliveira-Pinto family while they were waiting for a bus near West Portal Station, leading to the [West Portal Station Safety and Community Space Improvements project](#). What aspects of that project did you support or oppose? What is your vision for the future of West Portal Station, and what additional public transportation and safety improvements do you support around the station, if any?

I supported the redesign of West Portal Ave and Ulloa St. In my capacity as D7 supervisor, I worked with the mayor and SFMTA officials, as well as neighborhood leaders, to develop the improvements project at West Portal. I am proud of the project's outcome, in part due to the collaboration that took place to develop a solution born of a compromise on an extremely divisive issue. I believe this outcome is representative of how we should approach our public transportation and safety challenges. Often, there isn't one clear best answer. Our job as local leaders is to find the solution that works best for the greatest number of affected people.

23. How should the SFMTA build trust and transit ridership in San Francisco's western neighborhoods?

SFMTA can build trust by demonstrating to Westside residents that it can manage a transit system that is safe, reliable and efficient for its riders. It must continue to improve quality of life for residents, and be responsive to the needs of residents as they change. It must also show that it can accomplish these goals by being adaptable in making the necessary improvements to the city's transit infrastructure, while finding compromise with those who are concerned about how infrastructure changes will affect neighborhoods.

*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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