



## Scott Wiener - *Ride the Vote!*

### 2024 California State Senate candidate questionnaire

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

State Senate, District 11

**2. What is your name?**

Scott Wiener

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

<https://www.scottwiener.com/issues>

**4. How do you usually get around? 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've been a daily Muni rider for 27 years – I use public transit to get to and from my home, my district office, and many of the community events I attend. I also love to walk as much as possible. It gives me a chance to see so many different parts of the city each day and to say hi to people on the street.

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

Daily when I'm in San Francisco — mostly Muni but often BART.

**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.**

Supporting our public transportation systems — ensuring they're stably funded, safe, clean, integrated, and reliable — has been a high priority for me for my entire time in elected office. I'm a key ally for various Bay Area public transportation systems, including Muni, BART, Caltrain, AC Transit, and other systems.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I authored Prop B, which tied Muni funding to population growth and has resulted in significant additional general fund support for transit. I also authored San Francisco's residential transportation development impact fee.

As a Senator, I'm a leading voice for transit in the Legislature. I was a key advocate for ensuring that California's 2017 gas tax increase included robust transit investment. I led the effort to secure \$400 million in emergency operational funding for Bay Area transit last year, without which we would already be experiencing significant service cuts. This year, as Chair of the Senate Budget Committee, I successfully protected public transit funding from cuts during a tough budget cycle.

I authored SB 922, which created a new CEQA exemption for light rail, rapid bus service, and bike and pedestrian improvements. This new law is allowing SFMTA to dramatically accelerate various complete streets projects and will be a huge accelerant for dedicated bus lanes. I created and serve as Chair for the Senate Select Committee on Bay Area Public Transportation.

I currently have three bills on the Governor's desk to improve the safety and sustainability of our transportation system. SB 960 requires the state to do much more to implement complete streets elements on state-owned roads, for example, 19th Ave., Park Presidio, Sloat, and Lombard. SB 960 also requires Caltrans to do more to facilitate safe and reliable public transit on our highway system. SB 961 requires new cars to include technology that warns drivers when they're driving more than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit — a proven technology to get people to slow down. And, SB 532 authorizes SFMTA to meter parking spaces without having to utilize expensive physical meters; currently, about half of SFMTA's meter revenue is used to install, maintain, and operate the meters, which reduces available funds for Muni.

I authored SB 1031 this year, which would have authorized a 2026 Bay Area transportation funding ballot measure. Next year, one of my highest priorities will be to reintroduce a new version of that bill, after significant regional stakeholder work, and to do everything I can to pass it in order to empower the region to engage in self help transit funding.

I'm also working closely with advocates focused on removing the southern portion of the Central Freeway, and I asked Caltrans to provide cost estimates for such a project.

I've consistently supported improvements to our streets to make them safer for cyclists and pedestrians, to allow Muni to operate more efficiently (e.g., bus rapid transit and bus-only lanes), and to create more car-free space (e.g., JFK Drive and Great Highway).

Finally, we can't talk about transportation without also talking about housing. Dense housing near transit makes transit more successful, makes housing more sustainable, and reduces the carbon emissions that fuel climate change. During my entire time in the Senate, I've focused intensively on making it easier and faster to build new homes near transit and in other sustainable locations.

7. San Francisco's [Transit First Policy](#) 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, both locally and statewide?

Yes, I strongly support San Francisco's Transit First Policy and have walked the walk on that policy by riding transit as my primary way of getting around the city and by focusing intensively and successfully on pro-transit public policy, as described in detail above.

8. What role do you think law enforcement, fare enforcement, community ambassadors, and private security should play, if any, in patrolling transit?

Community ambassadors and unarmed fare inspectors — in addition to improved fare gates (e.g., on BART) — play an important role in keeping our transit systems safe and running. Various Bay Area transit systems are highly reliant (e.g., BART, Caltrain) or somewhat reliant (e.g., Muni) on fare revenue in order to survive. Fare evasion is one of several factors contributing to decreased revenue and the risk of major service cuts, which is why we must stabilize existing revenue sources and create new ones. We need solutions designed to give people peace of mind when riding transit, while also ensuring that transit remains accessible to those who need it most.

9. 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.

Do you view fares and fare increases as a necessary cost to provide quality transit service? When transit agencies raise fares, how should they address equity concerns for low-income riders?

Alternatively, do you support fare freezes or fare-free transit? If so, how should transit agencies make up for lost fare revenue?

I support keeping fares affordable, which requires robust taxpayer funding of transit systems. I also support fare discounts or waivers for low income people. Our transit systems are imminently facing a fiscal cliff and massive service cuts. Our first priority must be to ensure these systems survive without having to severely curtail service. A free ride on a dilapidated transit system doesn't count for much. I'll say it again: Job one is to shore up the finances of our transit systems so that they don't unravel. Everything else is secondary to that goal — a goal that is my absolute highest transit priority.

10. District 11 includes parts of both San Francisco and San Mateo counties, which sometimes have conflicting needs when it comes to public transit. Recently, Bay Area counties were divided over the distribution of funds in a potential regional transit funding measure, which would have used some tax revenue from the Peninsula to support struggling San Francisco, East Bay, and regional transit agencies. Some San Mateo transit agencies have also opposed efforts to study the benefits of consolidating some of the Bay Area's 27 transit agencies.

If you are elected, how will you balance San Francisco's and San Mateo's transit needs? How will you use your position to help advance regional policies that benefit transit riders, no matter their county?

As the author of the bill that led to this conversation, I worked hard — and will continue to work hard — to bring the region together around a transit funding measure that works for the entire region. With that said, I will also note that San Francisco and San Mateo County are highly integrated in terms of public transit and other forms of transportation. San Mateo County has six BART stations — compared to San Francisco's seven — but doesn't pay into the BART system with sales tax. Caltrain deeply connects the two counties. SamTrans connects both counties as well. I say all of this not out of judgment but rather to note the deep connections between

San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. I'm committed to crafting a measure that works for both counties, but we also need to be very clear that these counties do not exist in a vacuum.

11. Historically, California has **invested more** in cars and highways than in public transportation. This is more apparent coming out of the pandemic, as Muni faces a \$322m deficit and the Bay Area's public transit agencies struggle to find the funds necessary to continue providing the service that riders rely on at prices that they can afford. What policy or budgetary changes, if any, should California enact to move California towards your vision for transportation?

As described above, I've led the effort to secure both operational and capital funds for Bay Area transit systems and, as Senate Budget Chair, to protect that funding. I'm currently co-leading the effort to authorize a funding ballot measure for transit and also for roads. We need to ensure we're using these funds to maintain and improve our existing highways and not to expand those highways. Highway expansions are rarely, if ever, effective.

12. How should California 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, regional, or state transportation projects or policies because of the effect they will have on equitable transit access?

We must always keep in mind the needs of transit-dependent riders, for example, low income people, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities.

My transportation work also focuses on the reality that land use and housing are absolutely tied to transportation needs — without smart land use planning, it becomes harder for working class people to live near public transportation. California's failure to build enough homes near transit and jobs has fueled sprawl and made it more difficult for people to live near where they work. My legislative work seeks to reverse that harmful pattern by prioritizing new multi-unit housing in sustainable locations.

### **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."*

1. Did you support **Proposition A (2022)**, which would have authorized up to \$400m in general obligation bonds to support SF transportation infrastructure projects?

Yes

2. 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

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

Yes

4. 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

5. Did you support [SB 1031 \(2024; Wiener, Wahab\)](#), the authorizing legislation for a regional transportation funding measure?

Yes - I authored the bill!

6. 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

7. 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](http://www.sftransitriders.org)

**[Donate to SFTR to support more projects like this one!](#)**

Follow us @SFTRU: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)