



April 1, 2024

SFMTA Board of Directors  
One South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Please approve a truly transit-first budget without any cuts to the Clipper discount

Dear Chair Eaken and SFMTA Board Directors,

In previous correspondence, San Francisco Transit Riders (SFTR) has urged you not to increase fares for transit riders until all other funding sources have been exhausted. At the March 19th SFMTA Board meeting, we were excited to see the revenue proposals suggested by Chair Eaken, which proposed implementing a 10% parking fine increase and resuming fare indexing, with no reduction to the Clipper discount. While we, as transit riders, are not happy about any fare increase, the proposals from Chair Eaken seemed like a step in the right direction towards a compromise that does not overly burden transit riders while still reflecting the opinion of some board members that as the agency faces a major deficit, resuming fare indexing may be necessary.

Unfortunately, the proposal being presented by staff for this week's meeting is a step backwards from Chair Eaken's proposals when it comes to increasing ridership and advancing many of our city's priorities.

In order to meet our Transit First, climate, equity, and Vision Zero goals, Muni must remain affordable for as many riders as possible. Right now, as Muni struggles to regain past ridership and our city struggles to meet each of the aforementioned goals, we should be doing all we can to ensure that Muni remains the affordable option for as many travelers as possible.

The plan being presented by staff – to halve the Clipper discount in year one and resume fare indexing in year two – still favors drivers and presents a significant financial barrier to low-income transit riders. In year one alone, transit fares would increase 10% from \$2.50 to \$2.75 – still greater than the 8% increase being proposed for parking fines. While it is true that over the course of two years, the percent increase in parking fines is slightly higher than the increase in fares, the true cost of these changes will still be borne by transit riders, who often have to pay their fares multiple times each day, as opposed to drivers who will likely only pay the increased parking fine a few times per year at most.

For example, a worker who takes Muni to and from work five days a week will pay an additional \$175 per year in transit fares under the revenue plan staff is proposing. For many low-income riders, that additional \$175 is an expense they cannot afford to bear. In order for a driver to see similar annual cost increases, they would have to be cited *15 to 30 times* depending on the type of violation.

It should not be SFMTA's budgetary policy to place a larger financial burden on transit riders than even the worst serial parking offenders.



Below we have included an alternative revenue proposal, which accepts a modest fare increase in the form of indexing non-cash fares. This proposal adapts Chair Eaken's option #6 from the March 19th meeting, but does not raise taxi fees on drivers. This still leaves a positive net balance of \$1.5m, which should be used to reduce the monthly pass multiplier from 32 to 30 over two years, potentially with a modest Prop B fund shift from capital to operations to cover whatever remaining balance is needed to fund that change.

The board should also approve an increase of parking meter and garage rates, and direct staff to move forward on the parking meter hour extensions that were already approved by the board. Extending parking meter hours is expected to bring in [\\$18.5 million](#) per year – a significant sum that could be used to support existing discount programs or modest service improvements in a time when we still must remain focused on growing ridership.

Category	Description	Additional 2-year revenue (\$M)
Transit Fares	Apply inflation indexing excluding cash fare	-0.2
Parking Fines	Increase parking fines by 10% each year	10.3
RPP Fees	Implement inflation indexing + add'l costs	2.9
Taxi Fees	Reinstate taxi fees (excluding drivers) and apply inflation indexing	1.2
Total		14.2
Deficit		-12.7
NET		1.5

We know how important it is to shift people out of their cars and onto Muni. Please approve a budget that reflects that reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dylan Fabris".

Dylan Fabris  
Community & Policy Manager  
San Francisco Transit Riders