



March 4, 2024

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

Re: The SFMTA Board should not raise transit fares until alternative revenue sources are more closely examined

Dear Chair Eaken and SFMTA Board Directors,

In the interest of many of SFMTA's own priorities, including Transit First and Vision Zero, as well as the Citywide Climate Action Plan, San Francisco Transit Riders (SFTR) urges you to reject any transit fare increase until a more thorough analysis of revenue sources available to the agency can be completed.

We find it troubling that while the budget recommendations propose to increase transit fares for most riders by 20% over two years, they only propose increasing parking fines by 10% or less, depending on the fine, over the same period. While the agency's recommendation to increase the cost of Residential Parking Permits is a step in the right direction, no changes are proposed to increase the cost of parking at meters or extend parking meter hours, both of which could bring in substantially more revenue than a fare increase while advancing our city's climate and mode-shift goals. This decision, as well as the decision to distribute new revenue collection across all modes, goes directly against the city's Transit First policy, which calls for parking policies to be designed to encourage travel by public transit and alternative transportation.

Muni already has one of the [highest fares in the country](#), and transit riders [should not be asked to pitch in more than drivers](#) to fill the agency's deficit. A large share of low-income riders rely on Clipper (see attached chart), and removing their Clipper discount could significantly impact their mobility.

We know that getting more people reliant on public transit is crucial to combat climate change and reduce pedestrian fatalities. Why, then, are we considering such a large tax on such a crucial service, when alternative funding sources may still be available?

We understand that the agency is facing an uncertain fiscal future and that there is a need to generate new revenue, but that revenue should be generated in a way that is in line with our Transit First, climate, equity, and Vision Zero goals.

For example, the Board should be presented with a number of options for varied parking rate structures, each clearly defined in terms of floor and increments, and clearly defined in terms of assumptions and revenue generation. With parking revenues between \$200M and \$300M annually (double what comes from fares), it is unrealistic to suggest that only \$0.3M can be realized from altered rate structures. Additional analysis is needed on this front before fares are increased. The same approach should be applied to garage rates.



The agency should also quickly move forward with the Board-approved plan to extend parking meter hours, which has since been quietly put on pause, and should consider how to adjust parking meter and garage rates to accurately reflect the rising costs of administering those programs.

If the most powerful statement of an organization's values is its budget, then the revenue changes proposed in this budget demonstrate that the SFMTA undervalues Muni riders in favor of drivers. Major changes to the agency's revenue policies are needed, especially in the face of Year 3's fiscal cliff, but before fare increases are approved, a more thorough review of alternate funding sources that align with our city's mode shift goals is necessary.

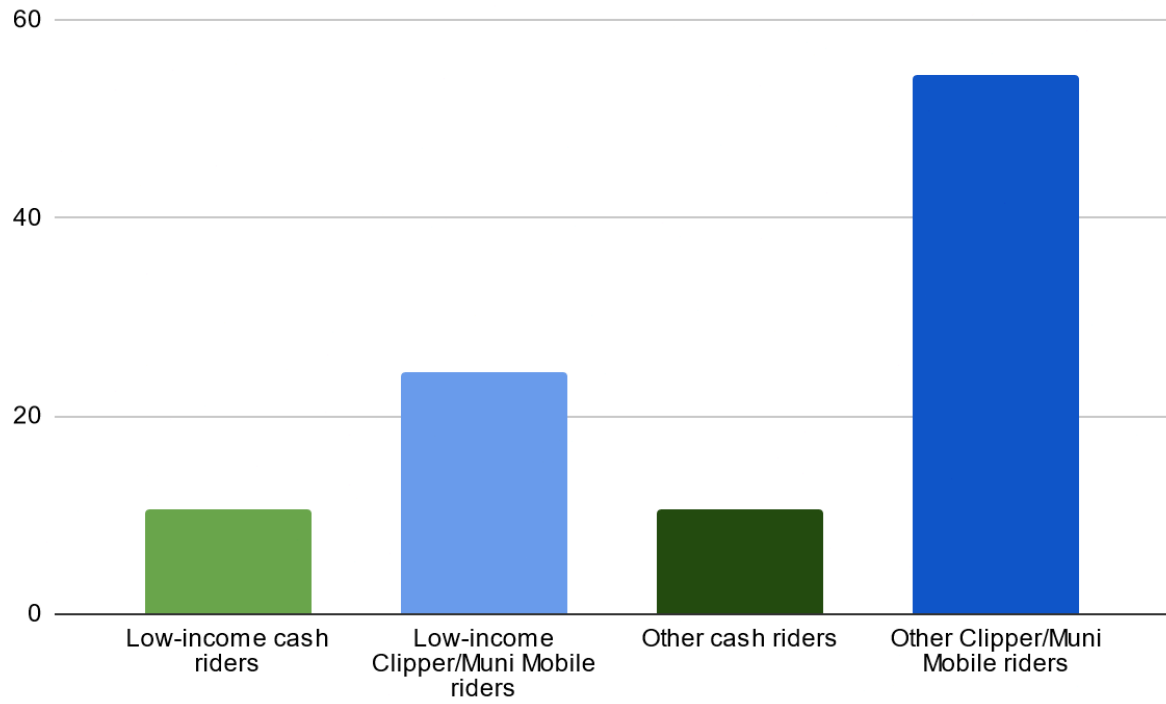
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dylan Fabris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Dylan Fabris
Community & Policy Manager
San Francisco Transit Riders



Share of riders by fare medium ([source](#)):



Eliminating the 50-cent Clipper discount will affect the majority of Muni's low-income riders.