

January 16, 2025

Daniel Lurie  
Mayor of San Francisco  
1 Dr Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
Room 200  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Daniel Lurie,

We are writing to express our opposition to the Muni service cuts that may come as a result of SFMTA's looming budget deficit. The City must quickly find a solution to SFMTA's deficit that does not cut service or hurt San Franciscans as you likely know, SFMTA is facing a significant budget deficit of up to \$322 million by 2026. This shortfall is largely due to the reduced performance of the city's general fund and the expiration of federal pandemic aid, which together accounted for nearly half of the agency's operational budget in FY 23-24. Only a small portion of SFMTA's deficit is due to pandemic ridership loss, as fares only account for about 10% of SFMTA's revenue, and Muni's ridership recovery is strong, currently surpassing the ridership recovery of the NYC subway despite San Francisco's slower downtown recovery.

San Franciscans rely on Muni. Last year 210,375 people in San Francisco (57%) voted for Prop L, the ballot measure to fund Muni. Thank you for your support of that measure.

Quick, reliable public transportation is critical for working people and has many benefits to the region's economy, including small businesses and workers. The people who don't own cars in our city tend to be low-income, Black and brown, seniors and disabled people. Where our transit system goes, how much it costs, and how long you have to wait for a bus is both a political issue and a deeply personal one. It determines who gets to work on time and gets to keep their job, who makes it to their critical doctor's appointment on time, who is late and needs to reschedule for several months later, and who gets to spend time with the people they love. Building a strong public transportation system is also one of the most important things we can do to decrease our dependence on fossil fuels and sets the city up for the most efficient transport and mobility options for residents as more housing is built.

However, the city's current response to the deficit has been to balance the budget by implementing service cuts that hurt public transit riders and the system as a whole. SFMTA has already announced several cuts which will be implemented this February, and even more service cuts are expected to come during the summer in anticipation of the massive cuts (of up to 30% of Muni service) that will eventually be required to address the agency's full deficit.

Last year, Muni released a doomsday service cuts scenario that would devastate public transit in our city. These proposed cuts would:

- Suspend lower-utilized routes, impacting 51,000 daily riders and eliminating service in some of the hilliest and most isolated areas of our city;
- Cut frequency in half on the city's busiest routes, impacting 385,000 daily riders and leading to increased crowding and pass-ups;
- Switch to Muni's late-night "Owl" service as early as 9 pm, impacting 21,000 daily riders, including those using Muni to access their jobs and nightlife;
- Eliminate cable car and F-line streetcar service entirely;

Our city cannot afford these cuts. Reducing Muni service to this degree would harm riders, eliminate access to thousands of jobs, exacerbate traffic congestion, increase carbon emissions, and undermine our city's economic recovery, all while solving only about 56% of the deficit. This level of service reduction is unacceptable for a city like San Francisco, where public transit is a vital lifeline for residents, families, workers, visitors, and businesses. Cuts will result in the loss of access to jobs, including union jobs that keep our city running and could lead to a loss of funding for affordable housing that is linked to transit service. If cuts are implemented and ridership drops, those riders may never return to Muni, which would be a major loss for our climate, congestion, and road safety goals.

SFMTA should not balance its budget on the backs of transit riders. Before implementing devastating cuts, the city and SFMTA should consider other revenue sources that remain on the table and have not yet been implemented. Potential solutions include:

- Strong advocacy from San Francisco for a regional funding measure that significantly addresses Muni's deficit, as the plans that are currently on the table will still leave a massive gap in Muni's funding
- Advocating for more funding on the State level given the state's recent budget surplus projections
- Funding Muni more holistically as a public service
- Transferring additional money to Muni from the city's general fund
- Reforming how San Francisco charges for parking
- Introducing a new transit funding ballot measure
- Exploring other innovative funding mechanisms and partnerships

None of these solutions alone will solve the deficit, but implementing even some of them soon could stop the earliest proposed cuts. We urge you to make public transit a top priority for San Francisco and explore funding options that equitably balance Muni's budget without resorting to service cuts. Muni riders and supporters across the city stand in solidarity against these cuts and demand a sustainable and equitable solution. Can we count on your commitment to protecting and improving Muni service for all San Franciscans?

Sincerely,



Sara Johnson  
Executive Director  
San Francisco Transit Riders

## TRANSFORM

Abibat Rahman-Davies  
Transportation Policy Advocate  
Transform



Bob Allen  
Policy & Advocacy Campaign Director  
Urban Habitat



*Transportation  
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Jon Hee  
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Tom Radulovich  
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CC:  
Mayor Daniel Lurie  
SF Board of Supervisors  
SFMTA Board of Directors