

Board of Supervisors Questionnaire

1. What should the Board of Supervisors do to address San Francisco's housing problems? What resources should the Board of Supervisors use to address these problems?

First, the permitting process needs to be simplified. According to an SF Chronicle editorial, it requires up to 87 different permits, many of them redundant and contradictory, to gain approval to build one unit of housing. These permits need to be simplified, deconflicted, and reduced in number. The planning approval can remain discretionary, but the building permit should be made ministerial. By doing so we can reduce time wasted and expenses incurred while developers wait to break ground on a project. Second, we need to consider a moratorium on rent control for all new rental agreements (while protecting old agreements). Rent control exacerbates affordability for new tenants. By placing a hold on rent control, we can entice new landlords to enter the rental market, increasing supply and stabilizing prices.

2. What should the Board of Supervisors do to address issues around homelessness?

The homeless issue is first and foremost a crisis not primarily of affordability, but rather a crisis of mental health and drug addiction. The first step to untangling the homeless crisis is nothing less than a complete and total shutdown of the drug markets. We need to end sanctuary protections for drug dealers, a great many of whom are here from Honduras illegally. We need to strengthen penalties for dealing by passing Alexandra's Law. We need to offer treatment to users who accept and evict users who refuse treatment. We need to make it abundantly clear that San Francisco is no longer a playground for open air drug use and sales. Second, we need to offer shelter to those who agree to enter treatment in accordance with Martin versus Boise.

3. What is your stance on public transportation vs TNCs? Are there ways to make transportation more accessible? Should we be increasing or decreasing fares, or even make public transportation free for all? How can the Board of Supervisors effectively address these issues?

I am rather ambiguous about Transportation Network Corporations, but I do recognize that they contribute to traffic even more than if passengers chose to drive themselves. However, it is important to note that they exist partially because of a shortfall in our public transportation system, and have had success partially because leaders have lost focus on the mission of public transportation; to provide for safe, clean, reliable transport. I believe there will always be a market for public transportation if we make strong investments in major public transportation infrastructure upgrades, such as expansion of MUNI metro to include new grade separated light rail lines. I don't believe we need to change fares, but fare collection needs to be strictly enforced. Fares are a valuable revenue source that funds our public transportation system.

4. What should be the role of TNCs and autonomous vehicles in your ideal future San Francisco? How will you work with the other members of the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's office and state agencies to accomplish this vision?

Ride sharing and autonomous vehicles aren't going away. Although I am not personally a user of ride-sharing or autonomous vehicles, they will have a place in San Francisco, whether we like it or not. I generally like to let the free market decide how much success they will have, until there comes a point when they start to have a significant adverse impact on traffic. At this point I'd consider a cap on the number of rideshare vehicles in San Francisco.

5. Should we increase or decrease the number of police on the streets of San Francisco, and why? Please describe the financial impact this would have on the city budget and on other departments.

We should absolutely increase the number of police in San Francisco, but it is not enough to simply hire more police; we must reform the role of the police commission as well. The police commission has become too obstructionist and political by placing excessive limitations on police tactics, police chases, moving violation criteria, and paperwork requirements. Under my proposal, the police commission would no longer have any ability to dictate police tactics. Any change in general orders would originate from the office of the police chief, be approved by the city attorney and immediately enacted on approval. The police commission would not be involved. The fire commission does not dictate the tactics of how firefighters perform their duties, and neither should the police commission. There may be expenses on the front end; however cost savings can be found by cutting non-essential services and non-profit funding.

6. Do police make our streets safer and how? Explain? What alternatives to policing should the Board of Supervisors consider to make San Francisco safer?

Yes, police do make our cities safer if allowed to do their job. Police need to be allowed to be a part of the community so they can establish baselines in neighborhoods and recognize deviations. By doing so, they can be pro-active and mitigate issues before they start. I would support the expansion of neighborhood watch programs as well.

7. Did you support or oppose the March 2024 Measure B, and why?

I opposed measure B – with a 14.6 billion dollar budget, we should be able to provide for the basic services that citizens expect such as a fully staffed police department.

8. Did you support or oppose the March 2024 Measure E, and why?

I supported Measure E – it shouldn't have come to this, but if the citizens have to compel the government to enforce the law, then so be it. Part of this requires that the police be given the requisite resources to do so.

9. Did you support or oppose the March 2024 Measure F, and why?

I supported Measure F. In the words of an anonymous SF resident on a survey, "whatever you're doing, it's not working". We need more accountability on behalf of the addicts – we cannot wait indefinitely for them to agree to enter treatment and get sober. We have too many people dying from overdoses – we need the ability to do stronger intervention.

10. How do the federal and state budgets impact San Francisco?

We need to have a responsibility to provide for our own budget, and not plan our budget on the assumption that there will always be state or federal funding to bail us out.

11. Do you support the proposal to limit the authority of the Board of Supervisors to take action on issues such as the War on Gaza? Why? If yes, please detail the limitations you would place on the Board of Supervisors and explain your response.

Yes, absolutely. Foreign affairs are not in our purview, and any discussion of them in city hall is a waste of our time. I don't care what the opinion is of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the sheer amount of anti-semitism, lunacy, and misinformed self-righteousness on display was disgusting and harmful to our city. If anyone takes issue with our foreign affairs policies, I recommend that they go speak to their representatives at the federal level.

12. There are at least 4 local petitions being circulated for consideration on the November 2024 ballot (<https://www.sf.gov/reports/november-2024/potential-local-ballot-measures>). What is your position on each of them? Explain.

I support the measures to give the mayor the power to appoint and remove commissioners – they need to be made more accountable to the public.

I am undecided on the measure to change the way supervisor elections occur – I'd support a system in which we have a mix of at-large and district representation.

I support the measure to reduce the number of commissions in San Francisco, and I would prefer to see the number of commissions reduced to less than 65.

I do not support the tax on transportation network companies and autonomous vehicles.

13. If the other candidates in your race would agree, are you willing to reject all PAC and “dark money” support for your race and to publicly denounce spending on your behalf through such entities? Are there entities from which you would reject support and/or publicly denounce spending on your behalf? Will you publicly denounce dark money expenditures against your opponents?

I might agree to this if I can get a precise definition of what “dark money” is. If the definition is “Dark money is from PACs I don't like (but not from PACs I do)” then I will not agree to it. If it means all PACs, then I might agree to it.

14. What makes you the most qualified candidate to be your District Supervisor?

Out of all of the candidates, I'm both the most intimately familiar with the district and have been the most involved. I am familiar with every street and neighborhood in district 7 (as well as San Francisco at large), and I have served on several neighborhood and district councils, such as the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association and the West of Twin Peaks Central Council. My campaign is neither a political arrangement nor a political action committee creation. I am running because as a native San Franciscan, resident, and worker, I see the discrepancies between what the intentions of our politicians are and what the actual results are. As a firefighter/EMT, I witness daily the results of how our policies play out and have a perspective that nobody else in city hall has. I will bring a perspective that is based on real-world experiences and a set of policy proposals informed by them. I am running because I care; what is happening now in San Francisco politics is a travesty and I feel like I have to do something about it. We need more citizen representation and there is nobody else who is running in San Francisco right now who is more prepared to represent them. I am not a special interest candidate; I am neither Democrat nor Republican and I am accountable to neither of them. I hope to be a representative of ordinary San Franciscans, not political parties. I am coming with a certain set of honesty and integrity that nobody else running for office has. I say exactly what I think all the time, even if it means losing support sometimes. Although you might not agree with me all the time (rarely even) you will always know where I stand on the issues.

Stephen Martin-Pinto
District 7 Supervisor candidate