



Talking Points for April 1 SFMTA Board of Directors Meeting (Item 14)

SFMTA Board of Directors meeting
April 1, 2025, 1:00pm
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
Room 400, City Hall

Important note on timing: The SFMTA Board meeting will start at 1:00pm on April 1st, but *the service cuts item will not be heard until 4:00pm at the earliest!* Feel free to save time and arrive at 4:00 instead of at 1:00.

Public comment during the meeting must be in person,, except for people who cannot attend in person due to disability. To request accommodation, please contact the Board Secretary at MTABoard@sfmta.com or 415.646.4470 before 9:00am on April 1st.

If you cannot attend the meeting, you may send your comment in writing via email to MTABoard@sfmta.com, or by using [our online tool](#).

SFMTA budget deficit overview

- Short term: \$50 Million deficit for FY 2025-2026 (Starts this summer)
 - \$7.2M of this deficit is what SFMTA proposes to address with service cuts
- Medium term: \$322 million deficit starting summer 2026
- Long term: Growing \$322m+ operational deficit (SFMTA faced an operational deficit even before the pandemic)

Demands

Main demand

The Board should approve the use of \$7.2m of the agency's Contingency Reserve to prevent service cuts this year and give San Francisco a longer runway to address next year's larger deficit.

Detailed demands:

1. No cuts to Muni service this summer!
2. To prevent those cuts, use the SFMTA's reserves and/or the City's general fund.
3. Beyond these short-term fixes, commit to long-term local solutions to the deficit THIS YEAR — we can't wait and rely only on a State bailout and/or a regional measure; we must do something now!!

Note: #1 and #2 demand address the short term deficit; #3 demand is regarding the medium and long term deficit.

How to give public comment

1. It is not necessary to fill out a speaker card, but doing so will allow you to talk before other public commenters who do not fill out a card. Speaker cards are located on the front right table and may be left on the front bannister for the Secretary to receive.
2. Take a seat and wait for the item (Item 14) to be called. There will be some discussion by SFMTA staff and board, before they open the item up to public comment.
3. When Item 14 is opened for public comment, line up along the wall and wait your turn. Speakers who filled out a speaker card may be called to speak before speakers who did not submit a card.
4. When it's your turn to speak, approach the podium and begin your comments. You will have two minutes to speak, unless the Board Chair chooses to give us less time. An LED timer on the top right of the podium will indicate how much time you have left. One chime will play when you have 30 seconds left, and another will chime when your time is up.

- Introduce yourself: Include your name, your district/neighborhood, and mention that you are here with the "Muni Now, Muni Forever campaign"
- Mix and match the talking points below, being sure to include the main demand.
- Don't forget to add in your own personal touch! How will service cuts affect you or the people you love?

5. If you are mid-sentence when you run out of time, feel free to quickly finish your sentence, but don't continue beyond that.

Talking Points

Mix and match and add your own – you will have 2 minutes to speak unless otherwise directed by the Chair.

Main demand

The Board should reject the proposed cuts and instead approve the use of \$7.2m of the agency's Contingency Reserve to give San Francisco a longer runway to address next year's larger deficit.

Maintain trust in Muni

- Muni is the SFMTA's strongest and most beloved asset. The agency should not risk hurting Muni's approval ratings when a Muni funding ballot measure will be necessary soon. Additional cuts will reduce Muni accessibility and convenience for riders at a time when the agency needs to be gaining ridership and trust.
- Muni is one of the city's [most-beloved](#) government services, with rider satisfaction ratings [higher now](#) than at any other point this century. It is crucial for the agency to do everything it can to maintain and expand that satisfaction rating, especially since we will need to go to the ballot to find sustainable funding solutions for the agency in the very near future. Preserving service now will prove to voters that Muni's performance is a top priority for the agency, even in the midst of severe financial hardship.
- These constant changes only confuse people and can lead to more people shifting modes or becoming disgruntled with Muni. Muni made great progress in recent years with a high satisfaction rating, we cannot let that slide by implementing more confusing cuts and service changes.

We are already hurting from cuts

- Riders are already experiencing a 20% service cut compared to 2019's levels of scheduled service. Without a detailed service restoration plan, there is a significant risk that cuts implemented today will become long-term or permanent.
- SFMTA has already been belt tightening at the expense of transit riders for several years now, including by increasing fares, slowing hiring and cutting service. SFMTA is doing what it can to address the coming deficit, but with a \$322 million deficit looming next summer, we need you to treat this as the citywide emergency it is and help pitch in to ensure the agency has the funding it needs to prevent service cuts and continue the rest of its important work.

Additional cuts will harm San Francisco

- The public only had a couple of weeks to weigh in on the cuts you're voting on today. That is not enough time to conduct outreach for service cuts that will affect tens of thousands of daily riders. Because of the hurried outreach process, the agency doesn't know what impacts these cuts will have on riders.
- The current proposal will affect 30,000+ daily riders who rely on the 5, 9, 6, 21, and 31. Countless drivers, and riders on other lines, will also face increased congestion and crowding because of these cuts, and they will not thank SFMTA at the polls.
- Muni is popular, with ridership recovery keeping pace with service recovery, both around 80% compared to pre-pandemic. To increase ridership, San Franciscans want better service. The proposed service changes will lead to more crowded buses and decrease ridership.

- San Franciscans are proud of their climate-minded city. Muni is one of the greenest ways to get around the city, contributing less than 1% of our greenhouse gas emissions. As we grapple with a presidential administration that seeks to reverse climate progress, we want to be actively improving green transportation by expanding Muni service and not cutting it.

Using reserves now is the responsible thing to do

- The Contingency Reserve was created exactly for unstable financial situations like we are facing today. Using \$7.2M in reserve funds will only bring the reserve balance one percentage point below the agency's goal of keeping reserves at a level equal to 10% of operating spending.
- Using the reserves to completely prevent cuts now will give the agency more time to conduct public outreach about the [massive service cuts](#) (of up to 30% of total Muni service) that may be required to address next year's deficit.
- Using the reserves now gives the agency more time to find sustainable funding sources that do not hurt riders.
- Muni provides immense economic benefits to the city and will be necessary to foster economic recovery for our city. A 2015 study found that every dollar spent on Muni generates \$2 to \$3 for the local economy. If those numbers hold, using \$7.2m of reserve funding this year could preserve up to \$21.6m for our local economy.