

LPoV Candidate Questionnaire Nov 2022

General Questions

Candidate Name *

Gordon Mar

Candidate Website

<https://www.gordonmar.com/>

Why are you running for *this* office?

In 2018, I was proud to have been the first progressive ever to win election as Supervisor in District 4, which had previously been represented by moderate to conservative Supervisors since district elections were reinstated in 2000. I'm running for re-election to continue my work moving the Sunset forward and as a champion for working people, affordable housing, climate action, sustainable transportation, social justice and for a diverse and inclusive Sunset District and San Francisco that supports everyone to thrive.

If elected, do you commit to completing your entire term?

Yes

What are your values, and how did you get them?

My immigrant parents taught me and my siblings the values of education, family, and respect. The San Francisco values of diversity and community brought me here in 1988, after I graduated from UC Berkeley. As an economic justice organizer, thousands of people in labor, community, senior, small-business and neighborhood groups have taught me the value of solidarity: what it really means to care for, rely on, and work with one another for the common good.

What communities do you represent, and how do they hold you accountable?

As Supervisor, I represent the residents of D4: elders, families, small business owners, workers, renters, homeowners and students. As an elected official, I also represent the people of San Francisco as a whole, and work every day with other leaders to make our city a stronger, fairer place for all. As an organizer and community leader, I directly represented working class immigrant families (Chinese Progressive Association) and the workers who make our city run (Jobs with Justice), and I represented the diverse communities with whom we forged alliances.

I am face-to-face with the residents of my district all the time, and engage regularly with San Franciscans who have opposing views on very conflictive issues. I was the first D4 supervisorial candidate in this election cycle to be certified by the SF Ethics Commission to receive public campaign financing– a way of strengthening candidates’ accountability to voters.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

I’m most proud that I’m endorsed by the voters of my district–a diverse group of neighbors who are committed to our vision of a vibrant, affordable, and thriving Sunset. I’m proud of the endorsement of nurses’, firefighters’, and so many trades and service workers’ unions. I’m proud to be endorsed by colleagues on the Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Democratic Party, and the Rose Pak Democratic Club.

What are the top three issues you will work on, and how will you implement solutions in a timely manner?

Housing affordability, sustainable transportation and climate action, community safety.

I will build on the concrete work I've been doing:

1. Housing affordability: In my first term, I championed the Sunset District's first two 100% affordable housing developments, one for SFUSD educators and one for low-income families. I've also facilitated the Sunset's first two Small Sites Program acquisitions, which converted two small apartments buildings to permanently affordable housing and prevented the displacement of two dozen low-income senior tenants. I've created new financial incentives and technical assistance programs for single-family homeowners who want to add new housing units to their homes to meet the needs of multi-generational families. In March of this year, the Board of Supervisors adopted my legislation to create the Housing Development Incentive Program, which will scale up and expand the District 4 ADU pilot program citywide, and also support the creation of duplexes and fourplexes as allowed under SB9.

I initiated the Sunset Forward community-based planning process with the Planning Department and District 4 Youth and Families Network, which led to the creation of a comprehensive community plan for the future of our district focused on housing, transportation, neighborhood services and small businesses and commercial corridors. In July 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted my legislation giving an affordable housing preference to low and moderate-income veterans, more than 85% of whom are people of color. I support balanced housing development based on our updated RHNA goals and affordability targets including 43% market rate and 57% affordable units. I believe we urgently need to focus on innovative tools to create more housing for the "missing middle" in low-density neighborhoods so that we can stabilize, protect and grow our working middle class.

The SF Planning Department recently estimated a need of \$517 million annually in 2020 dollars to meet our affordable housing and preservation targets. I will continue to prioritize aggressive and creative revenue and financing strategies to ensure that we are able to subsidize the creation of the social housing urgently needed for extremely low to moderate income households. I strongly supported 2018 Proposition C Gross Receipts Tax, actively supported the Affordable Housing Bonds of 2015 and 2019, co-sponsored 2020 Proposition I Real Estate Transfer Tax and supported 2022 AB 2053. I also support cross-subsidy strategies that are thoughtfully crafted to maximize affordability.

Drawing on my many years of work in the labor movement, I have also advocated for use of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust Fund and other union pension funds to support financing of affordable housing development for moderate income households and essential workers. I am currently working with the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council and AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust Fund on new models of workforce housing financing and development.

2. Sustainable transportation and climate action: I actively supported the major L-Taraval Improvement Project, now in its second stage of construction, and have advocated for the fast-tracking of the N-Judah Forward project to better connect the westside to the regional transit network. I also joined with Supervisor Myrna Melgar to commission a planning study for a new Geary-19th Avenue subway, as an important first step towards our long-term goal of bringing BART to the westside.

I also initiated two new sustainable transportation projects in the District. Sunset Neighborways is a network of 9 streets prioritized for bicycle and pedestrian use; and we also developed a business plan for a

new on-demand micro-mobility community shuttle service.

I initiated the Great Highway Promenade at the beginning of the pandemic to support safe recreation and the physical and mental well-being of community members. I worked with residents and SFMTA to address the traffic impacts of the Great Highway closure and the eventual reopening of the Great Highway to vehicles on weekdays. I supported successful legislation keeping the JFK Promenade car-free, and initiated amendments to make the City improve accessibility and parking options for people with disabilities.

San Francisco is extremely vulnerable to disruption from climate change, and I'm working on many fronts to help protect our residents from fire and flooding, and to meet our climate action goals. I authored legislation to ensure the Emergency Firefighting Water System covers all unprotected neighborhoods, including the entirety of the Sunset District, and have actively supported the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project, one of the City's first major infrastructure projects to enhance resilience in response to sea level rise and climate change.

I declared a climate emergency to fast-track City efforts to reduce and eliminate carbon emissions, co-sponsored the All-Electric Building Ordinance, and have led efforts to decarbonize our existing building stock and to increase our budgetary investments in climate action priorities.

3. Community safety: As chair of the Board of Supervisors Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, I've made community safety a top priority in my first term. I sponsored the Crime Victim Data Disclosure Act, which required SFPD to begin reporting on the demographics of crime victims on a quarterly basis. (The most recent report showed a 567% increase in anti-Asian hate crimes over the past two years.) I also sponsored the Crime Prevention through Community Policing Act, which requires SFPD to work in partnership with community and merchant groups to create a community policing plan for each District Police Station. The District Community Policing Plans will include expanded foot and bike patrols, community engagement and language access strategies, and proactive problem-solving and crime prevention initiatives.

What for-profit or non-profit boards do you serve on, including political organizations?

I have previously served as Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, Executive Director of Jobs with Justice, Executive Director of the Northern California Citizen Project, and Campaign Director for the Bay Area Environmental Health Collaborative. I've served as Advisory Board Member to the UC Berkeley Labor Center, as a Board Member and member of the Executive Committee of National Jobs with Justice, as co-chair of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, and a Board member of Causa Justa/Just Cause.

What local and state commissions or policy bodies do you serve on?

I am a member of the Association of Bay Area Governments Executive Board and Housing Committee and the SF Local Area Formation Commission. I previously served on the San Francisco Commission on the Environment.

Please describe specific accomplishments in your activism. What did you get done, and what was your role?

As Supervisor, I'm proud of my accomplishments on education. I secured the next decade of Free City College, knowing that expanding educational access is key to the fight for economic and racial equity. I won raises for our public school teachers, knowing their essential role in empowering students and strengthening communities.

I authored the strongest dark money disclosure law in the nation, authoring a number of ordinances reforming San Francisco's electoral system and addressing money in politics, including 2019's Proposition F addressing pay-to-play politics, corporate contributions, and dark-money donations, and Public Financing 2.0, which tripled the impact of San Francisco's public financing program for elections.

I created the Sunset Chinese Cultural District, the City's ninth official cultural heritage district and the first one on the westside and focused on the Chinese community.

I authored the Crime Prevention through Community Policing Act, and helped protect Asian residents from crime and violence by supporting the creation of new victim services for the AAPI community. I also sponsored the Crime Victim Data Disclosure Act, which required SFPD to begin reporting on the demographics of crime victims and which led to the finding that anti-Asian hate crimes rose by over 500% over the past two years in our city.

During the most difficult periods of the COVID-19 pandemic, I helped win crucial protections for San Francisco's essential workers and small businesses, including authoring the Back to Work Emergency Ordinance and the Public Health Emergency Leave Ordinance, which was made permanent as Proposition G on the June 2022 ballot. Significantly, Public Health Emergency Leave is now supporting workers to care for themselves and their loved ones during the ongoing COVID pandemic, as well as during the Monkeypox health emergency and on unhealthy air quality days.

As a labor and community organizer for over 25 years, I fought alongside my neighbors to win real, lasting change. I helped found Justice San Francisco, a coalition of over 30 labor, community and faith-based groups, and served as its Executive Director for eight years. Before that, I spent fifteen years as the Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, a grassroots community organization empowering immigrant Chinese families to improve their working and living conditions. I was an environmental commissioner, helping make our city cleaner and greener for everyone, and I have been an active public-school parent advocating for quality education for our students in San Francisco.

Please list specific ways you have shown up for immigrants at risk of deportation.

In my work as Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association and Jobs with Justice, I was a strong advocate for immigrant justice through community organizing and coalition building. Following Trump's election in 2016, Jobs With Justice co-initiated Bay Resistance, a regional movement organization that played a key role in strategic mobilizations and campaigns to defend immigrants, people of color, trans folks and other vulnerable communities targeted by the extreme right.

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Please list specific ways you have fought against racism and white supremacy.

I have worked within the API community for my entire adult life. As a person of color, racial justice and the dismantling of white supremacy has always been very personal for me. I know that white supremacy is pervasive in every system that people of color interact with, and that racism is present in every policy area. My father was an immigrant from China and raised me to value serving my community. This upbringing has always guided my career: first in Chinatown, where I organized for better living conditions for working families, seniors, and immigrants. I was active in the Asian Student Union at UC Berkeley, and joined the Chinese Progressive Association in the 1980s. Our struggle for bilingual education and increased school funding led to profound connections with students and families from other communities, and helped us build anti-racist coalitions together across San Francisco. CPA –where I was executive director for fifteen years–was instrumental in fighting against anti-Asian violence, building economic power in Chinese neighborhoods, and connecting the rights of immigrants with the rights of all workers. From there, I co-founded Jobs with Justice, a coalition of over 30 labor, community, and faith-based organizations, where I served as Executive Director for eight years, expanding access to good jobs, better pay, quality public education, affordable housing, and healthcare for working families, students, and seniors. As a longtime community and labor organizer, I believe we need to work together to directly tackle white supremacy and racism. We must overcome anti-Black racism within our movements, elect more people of color, and continue to pass legislation that concretely (not just rhetorically) addresses racial injustice and protects the dignity and safety of all San Franciscans.

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Please give us some examples of situations you've encountered where gender and LGBTQ inequity was evident and what you did or would do to address it.

Throughout my decades as a progressive organizer and activist and as District 4 Supervisor, I've been a consistent ally of women and the LGBTQ community. I've led many campaigns for social justice where gender and LGBTQ rights were integral issues, along with our fights against systemic racism and economic injustice. For example, as Executive Director of Chinese Progressive Association in the late 90s, I worked with other organizers to create strategic organizing campaigns and workforce development programs to support the final wave of San Francisco garment workers dislocated because of corporate globalization. Through these campaigns, thousands of mostly middle-aged, immigrant women workers were supported to fight for fair severance packages, retraining benefits and pathways to new jobs in the service sector.

I am proud to be an ally to the LGBTQ community, even when my campaign was smeared for it. The LGBTQ community is under attack, thanks to an emboldened far-right and the politicians and candidates who stoke bigotry and division—even in San Francisco. I have a simple message for them: We refuse to go backward. We refuse to be divided or distracted.

Amid a homelessness crisis, how can the City and County of San Francisco improve the effectiveness of our city's homelessness and supportive housing services?

First of all, we have to house people. The history of exclusionary racial covenants, redlining, property confiscation, and dislocation in San Francisco is shameful, and our city is paying the price for pushing elders and families of color out of their neighborhoods, and replacing affordable homes and small businesses with office towers and luxury housing.

We also need to think much more creatively about preventing homelessness, with proven strategies that strengthen eviction defense for low-income tenants, keep our growing population of elders and people with disabilities in their homes, and develop sensible rent control and protections against unjust eviction. We need far more social housing, especially on city-owned land. I support an expansion of tenant-based rent vouchers to help keep working and low-income people, especially seniors, in their homes and neighborhoods. I was proud to sponsor Supervisor Dean Preston's Social Housing Budget Package, and to secure additional investments in affordable housing for the west side.

We also need transparency and accountability from HSH, and we must adequately staff homeless services so that people can get the support they need. We must improve HSH's wait-time to move formerly homeless tenants into available apartments; there is little excuse for years-long waiting lists of approved tenants, while hundreds of our supportive housing units sit vacant.

I supported adding millions more to our current budget to address urgent issues: badly needed repairs and improvements in existing affordable housing sites, funding for the ongoing operation of 410 new adult shelter beds, acquisition of shelter-in-place hotels, housing subsidies for low-income communities, and an expansion of the City's behavioral health treatment bed capacity.

I have worked to create transitional housing on the westside, specifically a vehicle triage center to meet the needs of unhoused community members. At the same time, I recognize that shelters are a temporary solution. I co-sponsored Supervisor Rafael Mandelman's "A Place for All" proposal requiring HSH to quickly develop an implementation plan to provide shelter for all those in need of it, and to require city officials to conduct an inventory of available city buildings and lots that could be used as shelters. I insisted on amendments to make sure that no funds intended for permanent housing be diverted to setting up shelters.

A growing number of San Francisco's unhoused residents are elders. I personally fought for and won funding to develop a Citywide Housing Master Plan for Seniors and People with Disabilities, as well as funding to develop a new Residential Care Facility for the Elderly pilot project in the Sunset.

What is your favorite park, and why?

The Great Highway Promenade. Because– well, it’s just great and I’ve played a key role in creating it! The ocean, the sky, the people, the dogs. I love walking and biking among such incredible human diversity, listening to conversations in a dozen languages, watching birds and surfers skim the waves, talking with old ladies and little kids, admiring the ice plants in the dunes, stopping for coffee. I even love the fog.

Why do you want the League of Pissed Off Voters’ endorsement?

It matters to me to be endorsed by a group that makes its decisions based on research rather than soundbites. I have worked hard for transparency and ethics in City government, and believe the League’s support will signal that I intend to fight corruption and pay-to-play politics.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

I’ve been a progressive community and labor organizer, nonprofit executive and social justice activist in the Bay Area for over thirty years. In 2018, I was elected to my first term on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors representing District 4, the Sunset and Parkside Districts. My election was made possible through broad support from progressive community and labor comrades. It represented a watershed moment for our movement, electing a progressive leader for the first time in one of the most conservative districts in San Francisco.

I’m proud of our accomplishments over the last 3+ years fighting for more affordable housing, economic justice, better transit, safer streets, a cleaner and greener City, and a stronger democracy. I secured the next decade of Free City College, championed the Sunset’s first two affordable housing projects (one for educators and one for low-income and formerly homeless families,) authored the strongest dark money disclosure law in the nation, and have consistently stood up to special interests on behalf of working families.

As the co-founder and Executive Director of Jobs With Justice, a coalition of over 30 labor, community, and faith-based groups, I’ve worked to expand access to good jobs, education, and healthcare. As the former Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, I’ve fought for access to housing and clean air and water, and worked alongside some of our city’s most vulnerable communities. I’ve gained a deep understanding of how to honestly work across divides, bring people together, compromise, build coalitions, and win positive change.

Do you support requiring 100% affordable housing on public land? If not, under what circumstances would you support allowing a percentage or all market-rate housing?

Yes

Do you believe the amount of real estate contributions to a candidate impacts their fitness as a candidate?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

Do you support the City funding community land trusts?

Yes

Do you support congestion pricing for the downtown core?

Yes

What are your ideas for a comprehensive plan for the city to achieve Vision Zero?

We are not making significant progress towards our Vision Zero goals and must increase investments in public transit and sustainable transportation. I'm proud of some transformative projects that we've initiated in District 4, including the Great Highway Promenade and the Sunset Neighborway Network--nine streets in District 4 prioritized for biking and walking. I've also initiated planning for a new Sunset community shuttle service that will be a new model for app-based public micro-transit, as well as a westside subway study that is a first step towards bringing BART to the westside.

What role should city government play with regard to SFUSD, and what policies would you support / have you supported to support our public schools?

Schools are facing unprecedented challenges. San Francisco's students and families deserve excellent, safe schools, and our overworked educators deserve the City's full support. As a Supervisor, I've made helping SFUSD and City College one of my top priorities. I've led efforts to secure nearly \$200 million in funding from the City's General Fund to support critical SFUSD programs that improve educational outcomes for communities of color. I also supported forgiveness of a \$26 million loan the City made to SFUSD.

In 2019, working closely with AFT 2121, I negotiated an agreement with Mayor Breed to fund Free City College for the next decade. In 2019, I secured City funding to SFUSD to cover the cost of raises for teachers and staff, while the legal challenge to 2018's Prop G Parcel Tax was being litigated.

I created City College Sunset through an annual City budget allocation which has funded OLAD, ESL, Child Development and dual enrollment high school classes for District 4 residents.

Over the past two budget cycles, I've also sponsored \$7.4 million in City funding for SFUSD college and career readiness programs for high school students, including City College dual enrollment classes.

What is your plan for addressing the housing needs in the city's Housing Element?

We are not simply in a housing crisis, we are in an affordability crisis. As SF Planning's Draft Needs Assessment for the 2022 Housing Element makes clear, San Francisco is far from meeting its current, let alone projected, RHNA goals, and fewer and fewer of our people can afford to live here. San Francisco remains a majority-renter city, yet nearly 40% of all renters are currently rent-burdened, with most of those households severely or extremely rent-burdened. Meanwhile, the median price for homes is over \$1.5 million, meaning a homebuyer would need to make around \$350,000 per year (or more, as mortgage rates climb) and have at least \$150,000 available in cash as a down payment. Buying a home in any neighborhood in San Francisco has become out of reach for all but the highest-income households or those with inherited wealth.

The primary way we have been creating low- and moderate-income housing is by adding a few below-market rate units to new luxury housing developments. That hasn't been a successful strategy, and as a result we are seeing the exodus of our school teachers, nurses, essential city employees and working families in out-migration that is a threat to the stability and sustainability of our city. Meanwhile, with few checks on speculation, nearly 40,000 units in San Francisco sit empty, as do huge swaths of downtown office buildings. There is no single solution for this crisis, and we need to think creatively.

We urgently need to find ways to make San Francisco a place where a diverse range of families can afford to live. I have listened carefully to homeowners and renters on all sides of the issue, and worked hard to find compromises that will increase density while addressing racial equity and community needs.

I have been a strong proponent of infill development, especially with regard to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and underutilized public land. My efforts have helped incentivize ADU construction in single family homes citywide, and I launched the ADU Pilot Program in District 4, a City-funded effort by my office in collaboration with the San Francisco Planning Department and the housing non-profit ASIAN, Inc. The pilot offers homeowners professional assessment of the potential for ADUs, with a focus on multi-generational families and the needs of moderate-income homeowners.

We can't simply build our way out of the housing/affordability crisis: construction of new affordable housing takes many years, and can cost upward of \$950,000 a unit. Construction must be complemented by increased efforts to preserve existing housing, keep rents affordable, and make it easier for homeowners to add ADU units to their existing properties. We need to substantially increase investment in the Small Sites program, use state programs like Project Homekey to purchase and convert more properties, support rent controls and vacancy controls, build social housing on underutilized public land, help homeowners avoid foreclosures, and prevent the demolition of low- and middle-income housing stock.

How would you expand checks and balances in regards to mayoral appointments?

I believe firmly in checks and balances. Our City Charter is written in a way that gives the Board of Supervisors auditing and oversight responsibilities over the executive branch. Right now is the time for the Board to use that authority to restore transparency and public trust. Our city government is mired in scandal: six department heads have resigned after probes into corruption, and four have been indicted by federal officials, with new revelations appearing all the time. The Board has an ethical and practical responsibility to act.

As Supervisor, I've consistently fought for a clean and open government. I increased transparency around campaign contributions and political donations by authorizing the Sunlight on Dark Money ballot initiative, the strongest accountability initiative of its kind in the nation. I helped expose fraud, corruption, and mismanagement in the SFPUC, leading to significant reforms and additional accountability mechanisms. And I worked to ensure fair, open, and honest elections by strengthening the City's public election financing program.

What metrics would you use to determine your success as Board Member in four years?

On a District level, one important framework for my work over the next four years is the Sunset Forward report, which I initiated and helped develop in partnership with the Planning Department and the District 4 Youth and Families Network. The strategies and actions included in the report address the community's needs around housing, small businesses and commercial corridors, and neighborhood services. More information: www.sunsetforward.com

What is your stance on the 2550 Irving project?

In the face of vocal neighborhood opposition, I championed building 2550 Irving as exactly the kind of housing that is needed in the Sunset District. I will continue to support 100% affordable housing developments in District 4 and other high-resource neighborhoods. I have worked with Supervisors Chan and Melgar to fund the creation of the Westside Affordable Housing Network to create development and advocacy capacity to support the many more affordable housing developments needed in Districts 1, 4, and 7.

Do you think the Great Highway should be closed permanently or opened? Please explain.

I initiated the proposal to close the Great Highway to vehicles during the pandemic, in order to create miles of new open space for residents to walk, bike, roll, and improve their mental and physical health. As schools and businesses reopened, I led negotiations with Mayor Breed about the future of the Great Highway. In July 2022, I sponsored new legislation that would keep the Great Highway free of cars on weekends and holidays but open to motorists on weekdays for at least three more years.

What is your plan to manage traffic impacts from the Sloat extension closing in 2023?

I am committed to a planning process for the long term, once the city has begun its climate-erosion project that will convert the Great Highway extension between Sloat and Skyline boulevards into a multi-use pathway. This fall, the Board of Supervisors will be considering legislation I introduced to create a 3-year pilot program for use of the main stretch of the Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat. The legislation calls for the creation of a comprehensive traffic management plan that will consider impacts from the upcoming closure of the Great Highway extension.

What is your opinion on mixing groundwater with Hetch Hetchy water coming to the Sunset?

Safe, clean and reliable water is our most precious resource. As Supervisor, I have supported efforts to recycle water for appropriate greywater uses, and supported the PUC's limited blending of ground water with Hetch Hetchy water to prepare for future droughts. I've worked with SFPUC on a recently completed project to install over a dozen rain gardens on Sunset Boulevard.

We should encourage the development of distributed water resources by promoting rainwater capture, water reclamation, and greywater systems. San Francisco must also work towards developing an independent, resilient water supply. On the Board, I supported a resolution by Supervisor Aaron Peskin calling on the SFPUC to work with the state to protect the Tuolumne River, the source of San Francisco's water.

If re-elected, I will continue to enhance water conservation efforts and innovative water recycling programs for residential, commercial, and industrial consumers. With strong water conservation standards and regional collaboration, our city can meet the challenge of water scarcity and ensure future sustainability.

Should a private school have the right to public land for parking?

☐ Option 1

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