

# LPoV Candidate Questionnaire Nov 2022

## General Questions

Candidate Name \*

Rafael Mandelman

Candidate Website

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Why are you running for *this* office?

Serving as a District Supervisor in the city where I grew up has been the honor of my lifetime. I have had the privilege of working with neighborhood groups and community organizations to address neighborhood issues and to address some of the larger citywide challenges confronting San Francisco, including homelessness (campaigning for Proposition C and authored Shelter for All legislation), mental health and substance abuse (co-chaired 2019 Methamphetamine Task Force, helped push for Street Crisis Response Teams, championed expansion of conservatorship and addition of board and care and locked beds for people with serious long-term behavioral health needs), housing (sponsored legislation to limit monster homes, allow fourplexes, and sixplexes on corner lots, citywide and helped secure additional funding for affordable housing in District 8 and across the City), transportation (co-convened the Muni Performance Working Group, chairing the County Transportation Authority, working to pass extension of transportation sales tax on November ballot) and environment (sponsored San Francisco's declaration of climate emergency, banned natural gas in new construction, expanded City's water onsite water re-use requirements and secured General Fund support for the Department of the Environment). I am proud of the things I and my office have accomplished over the last four years, and I look forward to continuing and building on that work in a second full term.

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

It is my intention to serve a full term.

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

I moved to San Francisco in 1985 when I was eleven years old. My mother, with whom I had been living, was succumbing to mental illness, with which she would struggle for the remainder of her life. I had a grandmother living in San Francisco, with whom I lived for a couple of years, and when she was unable to have me living with her, I was fortunate to be taken in by families at the schools I was attending in a series of informal foster care situations. I spent the last three years of high school living with one of my teachers and her husband. At a time when I needed help, a community came together to help me get through my adolescence and allow me to go on to lead a productive and pretty happy life. My mother's experience was quite different; decades of struggling with intractable mental illness in a variety of placements, including hospitals, other institutional settings, board and cares and a homeless shelter. My own experience of getting help at a difficult time has informed my commitment to ensuring that every person gets the same support I did to get through the difficult times, while my mother's has informed my belief that public policy must account for the reality that some people will require ongoing care and support through all or much of their lives.

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

District 8 includes: the Castro, Glen Park, Noe Valley, Cole Valley, Diamond Heights, Twin Peaks, Duboce Triangle and Mission Dolores. These neighborhoods hold me accountable via regular elections, and in between elections, my constituents are not shy about sharing their opinions about my performance.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

San Francisco Democratic Party, San Francisco Labor Council, and former District 8 Supervisors: Mark Leno, Bevan Dufty, and Scott Wiener.

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

1. Homelessness: No issue has occupied more of my time and attention over the last four years than our City's homelessness crisis, and especially the mental health and addiction challenges experienced by many of our unhoused residents. I have strongly supported and will continue to fight for additional resources to end homelessness for as many people as we can. I will also continue to push for immediate exits from the street for any unhoused, unsheltered people willing and able to accept them and for a more assertive response (through case management where possible, conservatorship where necessary) and appropriate placements for people who need higher levels of care.

2. Housing Affordability: San Francisco has increasingly become a city unaffordable to most people. I have worked to secure additional funding for affordable housing development and to locate new affordable developments in my district. I also believe we must create additional opportunities for development of market rate housing across San Francisco, have authored fourplex legislation to allow multi-unit development in areas that have not historically seen much of it and support and will continue to argue for other zoning and permitting changes to allow more market rate development that respects the character of existing neighborhoods and avoids displacement of existing residents.

3. Climate Change: I do not believe there is any issue more important for the wellbeing of today's young people and future generations. I am proud to have authored San Francisco's ban on natural gas in new construction and other significant environmental legislation, but we have a lot more work to do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing buildings as well as to fully electrify our automobiles and trucks.

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

Prior to being Supervisor I served on a variety of public and private boards, but upon my election I resigned from almost all of these extracurricular roles. I have continued to serve on the Democratic County Central Committee (to which I was first elected in 2006), and I joined the Equality California Institute Board in 2020. Before becoming Supervisor, I served as a CCSF Trustee, a commissioner on San Francisco's Building Inspection Commission and Board of Appeals, a member of the Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council, Chair of the Board of Directors of Livable City, and Co-Chair of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center Board. I was also a past president of the Noe Valley and Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Clubs.

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

In addition to serving on the Board of Supervisors and the County Transportation Authority, I represent San Francisco as a member of the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments and as Vice-Chair of the Transbay Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors. I am also an alternate member of the California Coastal Commission.

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

Prior to joining the Board of Supervisors in 2018, I had a nearly-two-decade track record of activism within the Democratic Party in support of tenants, labor and various social and economic justice campaigns. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I had helped lead the fight to save City College from an over-zealous and unreasonable accreditor and to restore responsible and effective local control of the governing board. I am proud of the work I have done since 2018 as a member of the Board, including:

1. Campaigning for Proposition C;
2. Authoring and passing Shelter for All legislation), mental health and substance abuse; Co-chairing the 2019 Methamphetamine Task Force;
3. Helping establish Street Crisis Response Teams;
4. Championing expansion of conservatorship and addition of board and care and locked beds for people with serious long-term behavioral health needs);
5. Passing legislation to limit monster homes, and allow fourplexes, and sixplexes on corner lots, citywide;
6. Helping secure additional funding for affordable housing in District 8 and across the City;
7. Co-convening the Muni Performance Working Group;
8. Working to pass extension of transportation sales tax on November ballot;
9. Sponsoring San Francisco's declaration of climate emergency, banning natural gas in new construction, expanding City's water onsite water re-use requirements and securing General Fund support for the Department of the Environment.

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

I have supported and championed a number of Board appropriations to support immigrants at risk of deportation, including to provide attorney representation to unaccompanied children, immigrant families, and immigrants in detention facing deportation proceedings and funding for legal services and representation specifically for trans and gender non-confirming asylum seekers.

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

I strongly support and have co-sponsored resolutions calling for reparations for the enduring injustice of slavery, segregation, and other forms of entrenched and ongoing structural racism. I also co-sponsored the legislation establishing the Office of Racial Equity.

I also believe that a strong Labor movement is one of the most effective bulwarks against systemic racism and white supremacy. Prior to joining the Board of Supervisors, I had participated in many Labor actions, including getting arrested on several occasions, and I have continued to try to show up for Labor as a member of the Board. One of the pieces of legislation of which I am proudest is an ordinance I authored, along with President Shamann Walton, to require employers at San Francisco International Airport to provide platinum tier healthcare benefits to airport workers and their spouses and dependents. Airline industry interests sued the City and County of San Francisco over these requirements and in April of 2022, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in our favor.

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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.

It has been my great honor to hold Harvey Milk's seat for the last four and a half years (much of that as the only queer member of the Board of Supervisors). I am proud of the work we have done during that time to support queer San Franciscans, including:

1. Helping secure millions of dollars in funding for Jazzie's Place, Open House, the LGBT Community Center, LYRIC, Our Trans Home SF, Lyon-Martin, the Castro Country Club and others;
  2. Helping secure millions of dollars in investment in HIV/AIDS funding, including housing subsidies for people living with HIV/AIDS, mental health and wellbeing programming for long-term survivors, and support for the essential (but at-risk) prevention work of organizations like the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and AGUILAS;
  3. Working with the Mayor to acquire the property at 1939 Market for development of a third 100+ unit affordable housing development for LGBTQ+ seniors;
  4. Repealing the ban on bathhouses and passing zoning updates to create a permitting pathway for bathhouses to reopen in San Francisco;
  5. Repealing a 37 year old ban on permitting new bars to open in the Castro District, allowing more diverse bar ownership in the historically queer neighborhood within my district;
  6. Authoring the ordinance that established the Castro LGBTQ+ Cultural District;
  7. Landmarking the Lyon-Martin House and leading the charge to preserve queer representation on the Historic Preservation Commission;
  8. Making the Lesbian & Gay Freedom Band the official band of the City and County of San Francisco;
  9. Sponsoring regular hearings on City departments' collection of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity data;
  10. Helping secure funding for acquisition of an LGBTQ+ History Museum in the Castro;
  11. Working with the Mayor to begin collecting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) data for all City employees and applicants for City employment.
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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?

No issue has occupied more of my time and attention over the last four years than our City's homelessness crisis, and especially the mental health and addiction challenges experienced by many of our unhoused residents. I have strongly supported and will continue to fight for additional resources to end homelessness for as many people as we can. I will also continue to push for immediate exits from the street for any unsheltered person willing and able to accept an exit and for a more assertive response (through case management where possible, conservatorship where necessary) and appropriate placements for people who need higher levels of care.

I worked to open a Hummingbird Navigation Center in my district (which to my regret was re-districted out during this year's redistricting process). I also worked to open a safe sleep site at Everett Middle School during the worst days of the pandemic. I have tried without success to get the City to purchase either of two hotels on Market Street for use as housing for homeless youth (the owner was not interested in selling).

What is your favorite park, and why?

I don't know that I have a favorite, but I do have a number of pretty amazing parks in my District – Glen Canyon, Dolores Park, Duboce Park, Corona Heights Park, Twin Peaks, to name just a few – that bring joy to countless San Franciscans and visitors.

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

The League puts out the smartest election guide in San Francisco. We do not agree about everything, but we agree about a lot. The League endorsed me in 2018, and as the most progressive Supervisor District 8 has had since at least Mark Leno's second term (and maybe since Harry Britt), I would be honored to have your support again in 2022.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

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?

I don't have an absolute rule. For example, I supported the Balboa Reservoir project, which was a 50% affordable project. In general, I believe in trying to maximize the affordability of projects built on public land, and generally, I believe those projects should be build on a long-term ground lease (so that they eventually return to public ownership), which was unfortunately (in my view) not the case for Balboa Reservoir.

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Other:

Probably, "Other." I don't think real estate support should be disqualifying. I also think private financing of elections is not great and that we ought to be moving toward full public financing of campaigns.

Do you support the City funding community land trusts?

Yes.

Do you support congestion pricing for the downtown core?

I have been a supporter of congestion pricing for the downtown core, although in the wake of the pandemic we are still far from having the level of economic activity and congestion in the downtown core to justify it to a skeptical public. At the moment, I think the idea is pretty much of a political nonstarter and a distraction from other important public transportation projects.



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

As Chair of the County Transit Authority, I directed our staff to work with SFMTA to increase the pace at which it collected and analyzed data for the High Injury Network Map, as our current Map reflects data that is five years old. We cannot realize Vision Zero without first knowing which corridors are the most at risk of vehicular manslaughter. I co-sponsored the legislation to make JFK permanently car-free and am the lead sponsor for the ballot measure to reaffirm car-free JFK and preserve car-free weekends on Great Highway. I have supported the Slow Street programs in my district and look forward to creating more car-free spaces where opportunities may present themselves across the city. I have strongly supported the Upper Market Safety Project and have identified additional funds to support installation of a new protected left-turn phase for outbound Market to southbound Castro motorists to try to protect pedestrians in what had become a very dangerous crosswalk. Additional improvements to make Market Street safer from Octavia to Castro are currently underway, which I hope will in fact succeed in making the corridor safer for pedestrians and cyclists, although I suspect additional improvements will be needed. Prior to the pandemic, I worked with Sandy Fewer to highlight the understaffing of SFPD's traffic company and to push the Department to add additional traffic company officers to allow for enforcement of "Focus on the Five" traffic safety violations. Post-pandemic, I am concerned that there appears to be even less of that enforcement than there was prior to the pandemic. At our first Board meeting after the August recess, I will be calling for a hearing to look at the state of traffic enforcement in the City and the role of traffic enforcement in achieving our Vision Zero goals (which at the moment) we plainly are not.

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

SF USD faces many many difficulties including: hiring and retaining teachers and other staff, significant racial disparities in academic outcomes, and declining enrollment. The District has also had significant governance and leadership challenges. The City and County has long contributed to SFUSD from our General Fund, and as a member of the Board I have supported augmenting those transfers using ERAF and other funds. I am a supporter of (and co-sponsored) Supervisor Ronen's proposed charter amendment to provide additional financial support to District schools on this November's ballot.

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

I believe that it is too easy to build extremely large single family homes in San Francisco and too hard to build multi-unit residential buildings for less affluent folks. During my time in office, I have passed laws to constrain the development of "monster homes" in District 8 and to create a path to allow development of up to four units on any RH-zoned parcel in San Francisco and up to six units on corner lots. I wish that we had been able to get a more robust "fourplex" measure through the Board; I was disappointed that my colleagues felt they needed to limit it to long-time property owners, rather than allowing developers to participate in the program, and more disappointed that the Mayor chose to veto the measure. Nonetheless, I will continue to push for reasonable upzoning that allows increased density in areas of the City that have not been producing much new housing, while still respecting the character of our existing neighborhoods.

We will need to make many and far bolder moves than "fourplex" if San Francisco is to meet the 82,000 new units needed to meet our Regional Housing Needs Allocation for the next Housing Element cycle. I worry that the current highly polarized debate between YIMBY and neighborhood activists gets in the way of our pursuing reasonable middle-path housing solutions, and I regret that I have not yet found a way to break through that ideological impasse, although I intend to keep trying.

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

I generally support mixed commissions with a Mayoral majority and a Board minority for most commissions overseeing executive departments.

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

I think it's something like success in life: is the place (San Francisco municipal government, District 8) better for my having been there, better than it would have been if I hadn't been?

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