



Dear Candidate:

The San Francisco Democratic Party (SFDCCC) is eager to learn more about your candidacy and invites you to participate in our endorsement process.

If you would like to be considered for an endorsement by SFDCCC, please complete the attached Endorsement Questionnaire and return to [info@sfdemocrats.org](mailto:info@sfdemocrats.org) by **Monday, August 13 at 5:00pm**. Our Endorsement Committee will meet candidates for interviews on **August 18, 2018**. The exact time of your interview and location will be provided to you after we review your completed Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire and have determined that you meet our bottom line requirements to be considered for an endorsement. At the time of the interview, you may also provide additional information to supplement your questionnaire. You are limited to four (4) total pages, and you must provide 5 copies.

SFDCCC seeks to encourage the election of qualified local candidates who will help to advance our shared Democratic values. We are only able to endorse registered Democrats, except in the case of a nonpartisan race in which no registered Democrat has qualified for the ballot. We also seek to support those candidates who express agreement and have demonstrated support for our core issues and priorities, which are included in the California Democratic Party Platform, our Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures Manual (which can all be found at [www.cadems.org](http://www.cadems.org) and [www.sfdemocrats.org](http://www.sfdemocrats.org)).

To qualify for an endorsement interview, all candidates must indicate that they support the Democratic principles in our party platform, complete the Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire, and return it by the deadline of **August 13, 2018 at 5:00pm**.

Candidate interviews will be brief and will be open to both SFDCCC members and members of San Francisco's chartered democratic clubs. Following the Endorsement Committee interview, the full body will deliberate and vote on a final endorsement at our 1 meeting scheduled for August 22, 2018, at 6:30pm, at the Tenderloin Community Elementary School. Meetings are open to the general public and are live streamed on our Facebook page. You are welcome to attend or follow our progress online.

The following rules also apply to the SFDCCC endorsement process and any violation may be subject to further actions, including a revocation of the endorsement:

1. Candidates may only use the “SF Democratic Party” name and image after the full membership endorsement;
2. Once endorsed, the SFDCCC will provide a high-resolution copy of our logo which may be used in your materials **only** for the race for which you were endorsed;
3. In the case of elections in which Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is employed, listing of the SFDCCC endorsement must accurately reflect the ranked endorsement as detailed in our Policies and Procedures Manual;
4. Third parties wishing to utilize the SFDCCC name or logo in their campaign materials must submit a request to our Executive Director.

Thank you very much for your interest in the SFDCCC endorsement. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions. We look forward to learning more about your candidacy and your campaign.

Respectfully,  
The San Francisco Democratic Party

By signing below, you acknowledge that you will comply with the SFDCCC’s Bylaws and Policies and Procedures and you will not utilize the SFDCCC name, the San Francisco Democratic Party, or its logo without written permission.

Janice Li  
(name)

BART Board, District 8  
(position you are seeking)

Janice Li  
(signature)

August 13, 2018  
(date)

**SF DCCC Candidate Questionnaire  
BART Board**

Name: Janice Li

Address: 1870 43rd Avenue (home address)

City, State, Zip: San Francisco, California 94122

Campaign Phone Number: n/a

Cell Phone Number: (716) 725-1533

E-mail Address: me@janice.li

Are you a registered member of the Democratic Party?                    Yes                    No

Have you read the California Democratic Party Platform?                    Yes                    No

Will you fight for its implementation in policies?                    Yes                    No

What office are you running for? BART Board, District 8

Are you running for re-election?      Yes                    No

What other elected positions have you held previously?  
None

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Please complete this questionnaire and bring 5 copies (for the 31 Committee members and for Democratic Clubs) with you to be distributed just prior to your interview appointment on **August 18, 2018**
- **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Please send electronic copies to [info@SFDemocrats.org](mailto:info@SFDemocrats.org) by **5:00 PM on August 13, 2018**
- **With the possible exception of a Democratic candidate filing to run after the questionnaire due date, only candidates who return a completed questionnaire electronically by the due date will be allowed to present before the committee.**
- At the time of the interview, you may also provide 45 copies of up to 4 pages of supplemental information attached to your questionnaire for distribution to SFDCCC members (materials are not to be passed out during the meeting).
- We may distribute the questionnaires in preparation for event and post them on the SFDCCC website for the public to view.

- If you have not heard from the committee by **Thursday, August 16**, please contact Executive Director, Adam Mehis at 415-626-1161 or [info@sfdemocrats.org](mailto:info@sfdemocrats.org) to schedule a time slot during the Endorsement Interview Meeting.

## **PART I: GENERAL QUESTIONS (200 words or less)**

### **Why are you committed to serving on the BART Board?**

I am running for BART Board because I believe that west siders have consistently been left out when it comes to transportation and public transit decisions.

If elected, I would be the first woman to ever serve in the BART District 8 seat. I would also be the first Asian woman to serve on the BART Board ever, in all of the nine seats. I believe that representation matters, and I am proud to run for BART Board to break these barriers and better represent San Franciscans.

Over the past five years, I've built and led coalitions around transit justice, particularly as it relates to funding so that we could expand low-income fare programs, defend against service cuts and really reinvest into our public transit system (while we watch Uber, Lyft, Chariot, etc. pull dollars away from our public resources). I bring a unique perspective as a queer woman of color, a community organizer's heart, and a transit-oriented brain that can parse transportation budgets, legislation and plans given my years of experience.

### **What stake do you have in decisions made at the BART Board (e.g. transit rider, BART employee, etc.)?**

- 1) I am a west sider that pays into the system through sales tax and general obligation pass-throughs to tenants as a renter.
- 2) I am a regular BART and Muni rider, and when I take BART, I am often connecting via bike on either or both ends of my trip.
- 3) In my role at the SF Bicycle Coalition, I have led our BART advocacy work. I participated in the BART Bond Citizens Advisory Committee (the committee to help develop the bond measure, including the expenditure plan, prior to being on the ballot), campaigned hard to win Measure RR, and have helped make recommendations for individuals to serve on the BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force.

**Please describe your contributions to the Democratic Party and/or increasing civic engagement in the democratic process at the local, state and or/national level in the most recent years.**

I am a member of a variety of democratic clubs. I also believe strongly in being a member also means regular involvement, so of the following clubs, I am both a supporter and regular event attendee.

- Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club
- Rose Pak Democratic Club
- New Avenues Democratic Club
- Richmond District Democratic Club

As one of the largest membership-based advocacy organizations in San Francisco with over 10,000 members, I recognize that the organization plays a major role in more deeply engaging our citizenship in civic and political processes. Given my role in leading the advocacy/policy team as well as the political endorsements process, I play a leadership role in what that engagement looks like. We regularly bring our members into city processes, particularly as it pertains to SFMTA projects or Board of Supervisors legislation, and we also host a variety of civic engagement workshops to build develop leaders. Through our political endorsements work, we educate our members on political processes and strongly push for voter registration as part of our “Bike the Vote” campaign.

**Are there any other civic causes or organizations that you are involved with? Please describe.**

Along with the democratic clubs listed above, I also am a regular volunteer with:

- Bay Area Urban Debate League: I regularly volunteer to judge high school debate tournaments, having been a coach/judge for City University of New York’s team when I was living in Buffalo, NY.
- Chinese Progressive Association: For over two years, I attended regular Friday workshops/sessions of Youth MOJO, CPA’s youth leadership development program. I still regularly volunteer and recently sponsored their 45th anniversary gala.
- Port of SF’s Waterfront Working Group: As co-chair, I have led a 33-person committee to develop new land use, transportation and resilience policies for the 7½ miles of waterfront land the Port owns and controls and have served in this role for the past three years.

Additionally, I am a member of a variety of bike/walk/transit groups, including the SF Bicycle Coalition, Walk SF, and SF Transit Riders.

**Please summarize your qualifications and experience for the office you are seeking.**

I have a substantial background in transportation and transit policy, with a focus on funding. Out of the current candidates, I am the only one who actively championed 2016's Measure RR to bring investment to BART's critical infrastructure needs and served on the citizen advisory committee to ensure oversight of the \$3.5 billion bond measure.

BART District 8 has a significant Asian-Pacific Islander population. As an immigrant who was born in Hong Kong, speaks Cantonese and has been well-connected within San Francisco's Chinese community, I believe I can represent the district better than the other candidates.

I am the only candidate to secure the endorsement of current BART Director Bevan Dufty. If elected, we would work closely together to represent San Francisco interests and our communities on the BART Board.

**Please list any organizations or elected officials who have endorsed you.**

Current endorsements:

- Assemblymember Phil Ting
- District 1 Supervisor Sandra Fewer
- District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin
- District 4 Supervisor Katy Tang
- District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim
- BART Director Nick Josefowitz
- BART Director Bevan Dufty
- Sierra Club
- Rose Pak Democratic Club
- Harvey Milk PAC\* (final endorsement decision expected at 8/21 general meeting)
- Former BART Director Tom Radulovich
- Former District 1 Supervisor Eric Mar
- Former City Administrator Rudy Nothenberg

**If you are elected, what are your top concerns? How would you address these concerns?**

- Keeping BART stations clean, safe and welcome: The recent deaths of Nia Wilson and Jessica St. Louis are a tragic and very real reminder that BART is facing serious problems and is unable to keep their stations safe. I am committed to knowing what's happening on the ground and bringing the resources and funding needed to keep BART clean, safe and welcome. I would push on BART management to not accept the status quo as a permissible by forcing full investigations when serious incidents occur and demanding change.

- Bond oversight and fiscal responsibility: Many west siders do not depend on BART as part of their daily commute but they still pay into the system. I would hold BART accountable to their timelines of delivering critical maintenance and upgrades as part of Measure RR (\$3.5 billion bond approved by voters in 2016) and push for transparency in how BART's budget is developed.
- Affordability: This means overhauling BART's fare policy to expand discounted/free fare programs and ending the wasteful enforcement for fare evasion. This means using BART's 200+ acres of land to build affordable housing to take a stand against massive gentrification and displacement.

**The California Democratic Party Platform mentions building healthy, livable, and sustainable communities, what does this mean to you?**

The platform reads: "California Democrats seek to build healthy, livable, and sustainable communities that conserve natural resources, promote smart growth, are economically prosperous, and are socially equitable."

To that end, I am proudly endorsed by the Sierra Club, who have been leading advocates for a more environmentally-friendly, sustainable Bay Area. Much of their legislative agenda is in line with the platform that California Democrats established for sustainable communities, and I would look to advance that as BART director, if elected.

But for me, "healthy, livable and sustainable communities" really speaks to the sorts of spaces we create and who can or can't access those spaces. I believe that our city and region is only as healthy as the most marginalized people in our communities, and I believe that it should be the role of government, including agencies such as BART, to always find ways to serve our most vulnerable constituents. No one should live in the fear of deportation or displacement, or be prejudiced by institutional oppression. This is why I attended the recent July 25th meeting of DCCC to speak out against the hateful rhetoric of the "Violent Felony Reporting Act" put forward by one of DCCC's own members.

**Would you support the idea of BART using its land throughout the Bay Area to develop affordable housing?**

Yes, absolutely. I am conceptually supportive of AB 2923 (Chiu) to bring transit-oriented development to BART property, but I am disappointed to see that percentage of affordable housing is at a 20%. With that said, while that 20% may be disappointingly low in SF, the majority of land that BART owns (somewhere between 200 to 300 acres) is tied up in surface parking lots in East Bay. I know it'll take a mix of consensus building and continued to pressure to bring East Bay cities along.



Do you believe in ending mass incarceration and supporting the abolishment of capital punishment?

Yes No

Will you support the full restoration of funding for the Courts?

Yes No

Do you support the use of tasers by law enforcement?

Yes No

Do you support using jails as mental health facilities and substance abuse treatment programs?

Yes No

Will you commit to encouraging “ban the box” to ensure that those formerly incarcerated are given an equal opportunity for housing and employment?

Yes No

### **EDUCATION**

Do you believe in a “debt-free college” and free community college (i.e. Education financed entirely without student loans)?

Yes No

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Do you oppose new fossil fuel infrastructure projects and supporting the divestment of fossil fuels?

Yes No

Do you believe in Free MUNI for youth?

Yes No

Do you agree with safe routes to schools?

Yes No

### **HEALTHCARE**

Do you support a publicly funded single payer health care system for all people?

Yes

No

Do you support the idea that women have access to safe and reliable access to reproductive services without their spouse, judicial, parental, or guardian consent?

Yes

No

### **CIVIL RIGHTS AND IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES**

Will you support Sanctuary policies and Due Process for All -- limiting the ability for local authorities to collaborate with Federal government on immigration enforcement which incites fear in immigrant communities?

Yes

No

Do you support speaking out in public against all forms of racism, discrimination, hatred and violence and support standing in solidarity with movements that promote equity, including Black Lives Matter?

Yes

No

Will you protect the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of society regardless of their true gender identity and the gender assigned at birth?

Yes

No

### **LABOR**

Did you support the push for a statewide minimum wage for at least \$15 per hour and will you support living wages for areas that have high cost of living?

Yes

No

Are you committed to fully funding our public employee pensions and opposing attacks to convert defined benefit programs to defined contribution programs?

Yes

No

Do you support employee rights to organize and collectively bargain and support enforceable organizing agreements?

Yes

No



self-determination over these developments. (See more in my answer above re: affordable housing.)

When it comes to fares, a core belief of mine is that mobility is a human right. Public transit should be in the business of helping people get around.

Given that, it's stunning to me that fare integration doesn't exist, and with 27 public transit agencies across the nine-county Bay Area, the people that are impacted the worst are the transit-dependent folks that are paying too much for the transit service that's needed. While Clipper has increased access and convenience of paying fares at the point of sale, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission has failed at forcing coordination between transit agencies. I would bring leadership at the BART Board to force the issue and work to develop an equitable fare policy.

## **2) What would be your budget priorities for BART?**

My top three budget priorities are in line with the top three issues I listed above: station safety and cleanliness, fiscal oversight and accountability, and affordability.

Additionally, with upcoming labor negotiations, ensuring that BART workers are earning fair pay and are given the protections and benefits they deserve is a top priority of mine.

I believe that the answer to funding the resources we need is to be creative about raising revenues that are flexible. While Measure RR was urgently needed for safety and reliability of the system, that \$3.5 billion was spent entirely on capital infrastructure upgrades. Dollars from RM3 are going into new BART cars and second transbay tube planning. What we need are operating dollars, and as a leader in the Transit Justice Coalition in San Francisco, I did just that.

We negotiated as part of Propositions J&K in 2016 to include operating dollars for affordability programs and late night service as part of the expenditure plan, and we've been able to fight to keep that as the baseline framework for new transportation revenues. In 2017, I worked to identify gross receipts tax on commercial property rents (what eventually was June's Prop C) as a viable revenue mechanism and brought a large coalition including community-based organizations, labor unions, and advocates across the board as part of these efforts. I know how funding works and would fight hard to win those investments we need for BART.

**3) Do you believe that BART's transit system needs reform? If not, why? If so, how would you change it?**

"Reform" can mean a wide range of things. I don't believe the system map itself needs to be reformed because BART is already at its limits of being able to maintain safe and reliable transit service.

I do believe that BART needs to change its perspective as to what kind of agency it is, and I believe that leadership begins with the BART Board. For decades, BART has always been an agency that runs trains and considered itself successful if trains ran from Point A to Point B. However, they did not consider the human impact of their system and now we are seeing an untenable status quo worsen by the day.

My vision for BART is that it needs to be a government agency that helps people and our communities, and they do this by running a high-quality, affordable transit service. This reframing would shape policies, budget priorities and the sort of resources that BART as an agency needs to bring to keep their stations safe, develop their land, and serve their passengers better.

**4) Do you believe BART should focus on expanding its service to more urban areas, or metropolitan areas (ex. San Jose)? If not, why?**

While I want to begin talking about what expansion to the core system could look like, my immediate priorities are to focus on the maintenance and upgrade of our existing core system.

Expansion for expansion's sake foregoes funding upgrades and maintenance to the core system, which is the primary reason that I actively opposed the BART extension to Livermore. I preferred Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) options for Livermore and was disappointed to see that was not an option approved by the Board. Expansion is often discussed in terms of how to expand the rail network itself, with inadequate consideration of the network of alternate public transit modes. There is tremendous value in building local support and funding for high-quality, affordable surface transit/buses.

With that said, the BRT option presented for Livermore did not connect people to actual destinations. Something I've been saying a lot is *mobility is a human right*. What I mean by that is our livelihoods depend on how we get around and what is accessible to us.

Therefore, I think BART's expansion service is driven by responsible budgeting but that BART also can be more active in pushing for transit options and service that better serve the region, whether that's urban, metropolitan or suburban areas.

**5) What is your belief on the fare evasion officers? Do you believe they are effective in retrieving the lost funding when riders evade paying for fare?**

I believe this is an absurd and racist policy, which is wasting \$62,000 a month on the taxpayers' dime. I believe that mobility is a human right, and no person should be penalized for using public transit to get to where they need to be, which is why I have always supported the expansion and investment of discounted fare programs for Muni. I am a strong advocate for seeing those programs expand to BART.

BART already has one of the highest fare box recovery rates across the region, and they had that without having to spend \$62,000/month. If we are proactively fining people (who likely cannot pay those fines, anyway) for taking public transit, we're probably doing something wrong.

**6) BART ridership in the Bay Area has hit its highest point ever, with increased population in the area relying on its transit systems to get around. However, our transit systems are strained and overcrowded. What would you do to fix this?**

A lot of this comes down to funding for BART aimed at increasing the availability of the system.

I've been extremely active in local funding measures in SF in order to identify funds for new BART cars. We know what we need to fund, and the work has been around finding the right mechanism to get there. I've supported gross receipts tax options to fund transportation, including Peskin's recent TNC tax proposal.

Funding will open up the ability to purchase new BART cars. I am meeting with BART Bond Oversight Committee members to learn how the BOC has been functioning and if critical infrastructure maintenance and upgrades to the system will be delivered in a timely fashion. Those will be the most immediate improvements to the reliability question.

At the end of the day, I'm a strong believer, active proponent and regular rider of public transit. All new forms of mobility options are good insofar as they open new ways for people to get around that are not car-dependent, but any privately-owned service (from Chariot to Uber and Lyft) should directly benefit and increase public transit. It is not good enough to simply "complement" public transit. State and local electeds need to do far more to make sure private mobility companies pay their fair share; otherwise, they're taking trips away from public transit without paying into the system.

**7) Do you think BART needs a second Transbay Tube into San Francisco? Why or why not?**

Yes.

Given significant 2016 Measure RR and 2018 Regional Measure 3 dollars were allocated to study the second transbay tube, there is clearly desire and political will to see the second transbay tube move forward. The need is known for system redundancy in the advent of major failures and would open the door realistically to 24/7 BART service, something that the region has ached for for a long time.

Funding will be the ultimate decider on the timeline. A recent workshop back in February put the pricetag between \$12 to \$15 billion, which is overwhelmingly the most expensive transportation project to date in the Bay Area for one single piece of infrastructure. There are no existing funding streams to be able to raise that amount of revenue.

Fortunately, there are a variety of advocates and local/regional stakeholders who acknowledge that our region needs to raise major transportation revenues to be able to fund projects like the second transbay tube. We will have to be creative about funding mechanisms; as an early proponent (well before June's Prop C was developed) for examining gross receipts tax as a revenue source, I have the knowledge and experience to take this funding question seriously if elected to the BART Board.

**8) Currently, fare and bonds are the two main income resources for BART. What other funding resources would you examine to bring additional funding into the system?**

(And the sales tax! AB 1107 funds bring in over \$250 million to BART annually.)

The funding outlook is filled with opportunity but also controversy. I'm in strong support of Prop 13 reform, which would bring in billions of funding at both the state and local level. The statewide coalition working on this is now seeking inclusion on the 2020 ballot. I also am supporting the formation of an SF public bank, which would be able to allow the City and County of San Francisco to earn interest from fees and taxes, rather than giving taxpayer money to major banking corporations. The most aggressive timeline would have a public bank form in the next five years, and given SF's budget just topped \$11 billion for the first time, creating a public bank could potentially bring in incredible amounts of new revenues.

Locally, I've led coalition efforts to develop and pass funding measures in SF that abide to an expenditure plan that focuses funding to increase affordability and safety of our transportation systems. We know what we need to fund, and the work has been around finding the right mechanism to get there. Along with Supervisor Peskin's office, I was the chief advocate and partial architect to using gross receipts tax options to fund transportation through the Transportation Task Force 2045. I know what it means to be creative but I also know the coalition that needs to be built for a measure to be successful.

**9) After the death of Nia Wilson at its MacArthur station, BART has recently proposed using facial recognition technology to catch riders who commit crimes on its system. Do you support or oppose this? Why?**

Noting that this item, as part of the BART safety action plan proposed by BART GM Grace Crunican, was not approved at the August 9th board meeting, there is clearly not support for the use of this technology yet.

I have two chief concerns: 1) I share the opinions of groups like Electronic Frontier Foundation and the ACLU in that the acceptance and use of facial recognition technology is on the pathway to a total surveillance state, which puts marginalized communities further at risk and 2) I am not convinced that BART has developed an adequate data privacy and sharing policy to ensure the information they collect is safeguarded against ICE or other such agencies.

Assuming implementing this technology would be costly, I would rather spend those funds on increasing resources for BART workers, hiring social workers, and finding proactive solutions to ensuring our BART stations are safe and dangerous situations are identified and deescalated immediately. No amount of facial recognition technology would have stopped Nia Wilson or Jessica St. Louis from being killed.

**10) Riders complain of open air drug usage and the cleanliness in stations, in addition to the overall safety of the BART system. What would you do to ensure riders feel safe, and how would you maintain clean stations and train cars?**

I think the conversation about safety and reliability begins and ends with the workers who are operating and maintaining the system every day, whether as maintenance staff, janitorial services, station agents, etc. BART workers understand the on-the-ground constraints better than anyone, so I would be committed to better understanding what BART workers face and actively advocating for resources so that stations can be kept safe and clean.

Also, in line with my answer above, I believe that BART needs to fund proactive solutions, including hiring social workers to staff their stations. The SF Public Library system recently underwent an effort to bring on social workers to address their issues around personal safety at their libraries, which has already led to a 50% decrease in incidents since that time. We know it works; we just need to urgently fund these solutions.

Lastly, see my answer above regarding the use of land that BART owns to immediately open temporary housing, such as Navigation Centers. This has proven to work if the resources are adequately provided to help individuals.

**11) How would you improve accessibility for BART especially for riders with disabilities and families with children?**

BART does have an accessibility task force (BATF), and if elected as BART Director, I would make sure to meet with BATF members and understand their priorities in recent years.

As an advocate at the SF Bicycle Coalition, I've worked closely with senior and disability groups (namely Senior & Disability Action and Independent Resource Living Center of SF) around transit equity and safe street design. For people who have a physical/mobility disability, the issues are very similar to people with bicycles -- fare entrances and gates aren't wide enough and the vertical circulation (namely escalators) is terrible at stations. While BATF and the BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force (BBATF) have had joint meetings, I would push to see more active commitments from BART staff to improve station access, especially given Measure RR will bring approximately \$350 million over time for station access improvements.

During the "pole debacle" a few years back regarding the designs of the new cars, BART staff often pitted bike advocates against accessibility advocates. To break down the barriers and better understand issues, I met with IRLCSF, whose staff educated me on the complex issues of accessibility given the wide range of disabilities that exist. If elected, I'm committed to continuing to listen and be present so that we find the right solutions rather than pit different riders against one another.