

San Francisco State University
Transit Pass Referendum Voter's Pamphlet

REFERENDUM DATES: April 11th -15th 2016

POLLING TIMES: Online

PROPOSAL

This message is to inform you that during the Associated Students' annual elections, which will take place from April 11 through April 15, 2016, you will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not a mandatory student fee should be implemented. The fee would provide each student with a transit pass as an added function to your student ID card, valid for unlimited travel on Muni trains and buses and a discount on BART fares traveling to and from Daly City Station. If implemented, SF State would be the first university to offer such a program.

BACKGROUND

For many years, SF State students have sought to secure more affordable transportation to get to and from the university. Well over one-half of our students currently rely on public transportation and the costs associated with it are significant. Beginning in 2014, there have been significant efforts made in negotiating a universal transit pass, which would afford students discounted commutes via BART and Muni.

With unwavering support from various student groups, in Spring 2015, Associated Students passed a resolution in support of such an effort. Naming it the "Gator Pass," AS endorsed the concept of a discounted student transit pass for students via a referendum to be held no later than spring 2016. The board also resolved to encourage students to vote in favor of such a referendum to make college more affordable. Similarly, the university's strategic plan, which was the result of broad consultation with the entire campus community, includes the implementation of such a pass as a mid-term goal.

In Spring 2016, the AS Board of Directors approved to hold a student referendum vote during the April 2016 election to ask the student body to approve a universal student fee, effective fall 2017, of \$180 per semester for fall and spring semesters, increasing to account for BART and Muni fare increases upon annual review by a team of SF State students and administrators. This will provide students with a Muni pass (unlimited Muni rides on light rail and bus) and a BART discount of at least 25% on all rides to and from Daly City Station.

Anticipated Fee Schedule:

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018	Fall 2018 & Spring 2019	Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
\$180/Semester (\$45/month)	\$185/semester (\$46.25/month)	\$190/ semester (\$47.50/month)

It is anticipated that the "Gator Pass" will increase by \$5 annually to account for Muni and BART fare increases. Each year, a team of SF State students and administrators will evaluate the program's efficacy and determine appropriate cost escalation, if any, and whether the discount for BART may be modified. The discount would remain at least 25% for students every year.

For a list of frequently asked questions, pros & cons to the Gator Pass, the AS Resolution regarding a student transit pass, transportation survey information, and other background, please visit the AS website (asi.sfsu.edu/transitpass). For any questions or more information, please email us at gatorpass@asi.sfsu.edu.

STUDENT REFERENDUM

Do you support the implementation of a mandatory student fee of \$180 per semester for the fall and spring terms, commencing in the Fall of 2017, which would provide all students with a transit pass ("Gator Pass"), which will include a Muni pass (unlimited Muni rides on light rail and bus) and a BART discount of at least 25% on all rides traveling to and from Daly City Station?

It is anticipated that the fee will increase by \$5 annually (i.e., Fall 2018: \$185; Fall 2019: \$190) to account for Muni and BART fare increases, which will be subject to review by a team of SF State students and administrators who will regularly evaluate the program's efficacy and determine appropriate cost escalation, if any, and whether the discount for BART may be modified. The BART discount would remain at least 25% for students every year. Any university review resulting in a proposed modification to the program will result in a recommendation to the Student Fee Advisory Committee for approval through an alternative consultation process. Should the program enter into a deficit in any given semester, the university may elect to discontinue the program; in any such instance, no fee will be collected.

What your vote means:

A "yes" vote means that you support the implementation of a mandatory student fee of \$180 per semester for the fall and spring terms, commencing in the Fall of 2017, which would provide all students with a transit pass "Gator Pass", which will include a Muni pass (unlimited Muni rides on light rail and bus) and a BART discount of at least 25% on all rides to and from Daly City Station. It is anticipated that the fee will increase by \$5 annually to account for Muni and BART fare increases, which will be subject to review by a team of SF State students and administrators who will regularly evaluate the program's efficacy and determine appropriate cost escalation, if any, and whether the discount for BART may be modified. The BART discount would remain at least 25% for students every year.

A "no" vote means that you do not support the implementation of a mandatory student fee, which would provide for the transit pass "Gator Pass".

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Transit Pass?

- A transit pass "Gator Pass" will provide all SF State students unlimited rides on SF Muni trains and buses (similar to the 'M' Monthly Muni Pass, but excluding cable cars) and at least a 25% discount on all BART rides to and from Daly City Station by using their SF State student ID (One Card). The transit pass will make public transportation more affordable for many students, as well as promote values that are integral to SF State's core such as sustainability, equity and community.

How will we have access to the transit discount?

- Students' ID cards would be upgraded to serve as both SF State ID cards, as well as Clipper cards. Clipper is the all-in-one transit card for the Bay Area. A Clipper card can hold transit passes, cash value, or any combination. The Gator Pass would be available on the SF State ID/ Clipper card, and students could choose to utilize their card for all of their transit needs, as described above. For more on Clipper, visit www.clippercard.com.

Do other universities have transit discount passes?

- Many universities (USF, UC Berkeley, various CSU's) have a public transit discount for students similar to the proposed Gator Pass. However, SF State would be the first university to offer unlimited access to San Francisco through Muni in addition to a BART discount for students traveling to and from the Daly City Station.

How will the Gator Pass benefit the SF State community?

- Encouraging public transit use is good for the environment and is cost-effective for students, especially for those with limited incomes. 15% of SFSU's carbon gas emissions currently come from students driving alone to and from campus. The Gator Pass will reduce the campuses carbon footprint, relieve parking congestion and promote equity for those students most in need.

Why is the transit pass being offered now?

- The idea of a universal discounted transit pass has been discussed for years among various students. The cost of living has reached an all time high in the Bay Area, reinvigorating the conversation about affordability campus wide. Students are living farther away from campus to save on housing costs. Much of those savings are lost on transit and commuting costs. Associated Students passed a resolution in Spring 2015, endorsing the idea of a discounted transit pass to help students with the rising cost of attendance. Additionally, the SF State strategic plan, which was developed through broad consultation throughout the campus community, identified the implementation of a transit pass as an important goal.

Has the student body been consulted in the development of the proposed Gator Pass?

- The idea of a transit discount pass was brought forth by the general student body within the last five years, and has remained a student led project. Polls conducted by both the University and Associated Students support this idea. In the 2014 Transportation Survey, 89% of online survey respondents (2,838 student respondents) said they would support a student fee for a transit fare reduction. This is up from 70% of support in 2011. In a recent survey conducted in February 2016, 94% of student survey respondents (1077 student respondents) said they would support a \$180 transportation student fee to receive a discounted MUNI and BART pass.

How much will students be saving?

- Nearly half of the SF State student population commutes to campus using Muni within San Francisco. Those purchasing a monthly pass currently pay \$70 a month. A Gator Pass would reduce total costs to these students by approximately \$25 a month, when accounting for the cost of the Gator Pass. They would also benefit from the discount on BART rides to and from Daly City Station.
- One in four students take BART. Students traveling on BART to and from Daly City Station would save 25% on each trip. Each student would also have the benefit of using Muni for no additional cost.
- Students, who come to SF State by means other than Muni or BART would still pay the fee, thus may see an increase in their costs.
- Students' individual savings will differ depending on what they currently pay, how often they come to SF State, and whether they will use their pass for travel in addition to coming to and from campus. Students are encouraged to calculate their own current transit costs to determine the value of the program for them. The calculating tool will be provided shortly.

Will my student fees go up?

- Yes. The proposed fee for the Gator Pass will be \$180 per semester and it is anticipated that the "Gator Pass" will increase by \$5 annually to match the Muni and BART fare increases. A team of SF State students and administrators will regularly evaluate the program's efficacy and determine appropriate cost escalation, if any, and whether the discount for BART may be modified. The discount would remain at least 25% for students every year.

Will the fee be reviewed on a regular basis?

- Yes, the fee will be reviewed on a regular basis by a team of students and administrators. Any university review resulting in a proposed modification to the program will result in a recommendation to the Student Fee Advisory Committee, a majority student committee, for approval through an alternative consultation process. Should the program enter into a deficit in any given semester, the university may elect to discontinue the program; in any such instance, no fee will be collected.

What happens if the fee collects more money than is needed to operate the program?

- Student fees such as this one are held in trust and can only be used for the specific program for which they are collected. To ensure the program's long-term sustainability,

initial reserves will be used to establish a stabilization fund to address any anomalies in funding or expenses. Once a sufficient stabilization fund is in place, the regular assessment of the project will take into account how to address any additional reserves. This could include increasing the BART discount, insuring the program, or making other modifications to increase the value of the discount for students.

Why should I have to pay this fee if I do not plan to use the Gator Pass?

- Every student will pay the fee, irrespective of whether they use the Gator Pass. The only exceptions are for those students who have fee waivers. While not every student will use the Gator Pass, it is to the university community's collective benefit to avail all members of the student body with the opportunity to do so. Student fees are considered a cost of attendance; they are not user fees. Their assessment is not dependent on any one student's use of fee-subsidized services and programs, but rather they are assessed based on an understanding that the related services enrich the student experience, help the university meet key goals, and generally create an environment conducive to the university's pursuit of its mission.

Is the proposed transit pass only for travel to and from SF State?

- No. You can use the pass for all travel on Muni buses and light rail. Travel on cable cars would be excluded. You can also use the pass for all travel on BART, as long as you begin or end your BART ride at Daly City Station.

Will my financial aid cover the Gator Pass fee?

Depending on the type of aid you receive, this answer will vary. Since the Gator Pass would be implemented through a mandatory local fee, local fees are not paid for by **State University Grants (SUG)** or **Cal Grants**. However, because the Gator Pass fee would increase the overall cost of attendance, students would be afforded greater eligibility for work-study and loans.

Loans and **Pell Grant** awards may be used to cover local fees like the proposed Gator Pass, as well as other costs of attendance, such as course materials and living expenses. Students who receive Pell Grants will not see an increase in their Pell award if the Gator Pass is implemented. While the amount of a student's award will not increase, it is anticipated that many students will save money with the Gator Pass by lowering the cost of their transportation-related expenses, thereby freeing up funds for other living expenses.

Scholarships may cover local fees but that is dependent on how the scholarship is set up by the donor or founder of the award. Students receiving scholarships should review the criteria for the award to see if local fees are covered.

When would the Gator Pass go into effect and when would it be valid for use?

- The Gator Pass would launch for the fall 2017 term. Each student would have the Gator Pass for fall and spring semester as long as they were enrolled in classes. The Gator Pass would be active for the entire semester. At this time there are no plans to collect a fee and offer the Gator Pass over the January intersession or the summer sessions.

Would the Gator Pass be for full time and part time students? Graduate and undergraduate students?

- Yes. All SF State students-- full-time and part time, graduate and undergraduate-- would pay the fee and have the value of the program.

Why should I have to pay this fee if I do not plan to use the Gator Pass?

- Student fees are considered a cost of attendance; they are not user fees. Their assessment is not dependent on any one student's use of fee-subsidized services and programs, but rather they are assessed based on an understanding that the related services enrich the student experience, help the university meet key goals, and generally create an environment conducive to the university's pursuit of its mission. Thus, while not every student will use the Gator Pass, it is to the university community's collective benefit to avail all members of the student body with the opportunity to do so.

PRO AND CON STATEMENTS, INCLUDING REBUTTALS

Pro-Statement:

The “Gator Pass” will benefit me greatly. As a student of SF State, I personally take the M (Muni) everyday to school. As a student from the East Bay, when I commuted to campus I would spend about \$250/month on public transit. I have many friends who take fewer units on campus, so they can lower their transit expenses.

or

The “Gator Pass” will make my morning travels to school 10x easier and more affordable! I am glad that we are being offered student transit passes like the other universities in the surrounding area as we live in the most expensive city in the country. Even better, we would get unlimited access to Muni as well as a BART discount on all travel to and from Daly City Station unlike any other university.

or

I think using public transportation is a great way for our campus to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly. By having the Gator Pass I can easily save gas money that I would usually spend on my morning commute, while also decreasing my carbon gas emission production. The Gator Pass is not only essential to campus affordability, but is essential to ensuring that the SF State environment has clean air with less toxic emissions being released.

or

Now I can just take BART from Oakland and the free shuttle to campus! Most of my monthly income goes towards filling up my Clipper Card; it will be so much cheaper to pay a discounted monthly BART fare instead!

or

Students largely have wanted and advocated for a discounted transit pass for the last five years due to rising costs. Although you may not personally benefit from it, it will benefit a large amount of students on campus as 70% of students on the campus use Muni and/or BART on a regular basis. Like every student fee, and on a larger scale social welfare programs, people pay to help the greater community at large. We have the opportunity to make a difference on our campus; we have the opportunity to help fellow students.

Pro-Statement Rebuttal:

I live near campus so commuting isn't an issue for me. I do take the bus into the city occasionally, but when I go out with my friends we usually split an Uber or a Lyft. I see the benefit of having transit pass, but realistically it will not benefit me and I think it isn't fair to raise my fees for a service I do not want and seldom use. Fees are high enough as it is and I know there are other proposed fees that will make them even higher. If the intent is to help students and make college more affordable it doesn't help me.

Con Statement:

This “Gator Pass” will not benefit me. I don't take Muni or the BART since I drive my own car. Why should I pay \$180 a semester for something I won't be using?

OR

At first I thought this was a good idea, but I think it is unfair to students who don't use the bus or drive to school to be paying an extra \$180 a semester. It just doesn't seem fair to me and I take the bus very frequently, so I would still like the discount but not at the expense of other students who may not use the bus passes.

OR

If this is to be implemented, it should be only for those who choose to purchase it, not a mandatory fee for all.

OR

I use the Muni Lifeline program (Muni-only monthly pass for qualified customers on a limited income) and already receive a discount on my Muni pass. I would end up paying even more for the monthly pass than I do now.

OR

I don't take Muni and BART while commuting. I take the shuttle and SamTrans so why should I pay extra for tuition (from my pocket) that only benefits other students. If this fee passes, I will still have to pay my SamTrans transit costs while also having to pay an additional \$180 per semester.

Con-Statement Rebuttal:

The transit pass will do more for students than just provide affordable and convenient public transportation. The transit pass is a step towards a more sustainable future for SF State and will set an example for all institutions of higher education. Even though not everyone will use the transit pass, everyone will benefit from it. If we can shift commuting patterns to SF State it will help those that commute by car because it will ease traffic, provide more parking opportunity, and raise the quality of life for all students. The Transit Pass will also increase the esteem of the university, which will increase the value of San Francisco State University Diploma. Other universities have local partnerships with Public transportation, but this transit pass is the first of its kind because BART has never made an agreement with any other institution. Even though someone is a Psychology student, part of their fees still go to funding multiple other courses and having the opportunity to learn other necessary disciplines and having other successful programs benefit both. This will also help some of the students who are most in need of support. Those who have to commute to campus in an effort to save money or those who can not afford to come to campus on a regular basis are at a disadvantage or maybe denied access. If you live further away this will benefit you because they spend the most on their daily commute. It will benefit students who live in the area, because they can use any time to get around the city. It will benefit everyone, because it will make SF State a better place.

TRANSIT DISCOUNT PASS FEE ACTION REQUEST

1. Descriptions, Purpose and Justification of Fee

The Transit Discount Pass is a Category II (Local Mandatory Fee), Transit Fee, to be charged each fall and spring semester. The Fee will provide a monthly Muni pass as well as a 30% discount off BART for students during Fall and Spring Semester, the purpose of which is three-fold:

- A. To provide students with a discount on BART and MUNI rides to increase college affordability, equity and accessibility
 - 1. To decrease the amount of Carbon Gas Emissions the University produces by incentivizing students to take Public Transportation to school, rather than driving
 - 2. To provide funds to create and support administrative cost associated with the Transit Discount Pass

2. Requested amount of fee:

\$180 per semester (4 months), It is anticipated that the fee will increase by \$5 annually (i.e., Fall 2018: \$185; Fall 2019: \$190) to account for Muni and BART fare increases.

Anticipated Fee Schedule:

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018	Fall 2018 & Spring 2019	Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
\$180/Semester (\$45/month)	\$185/semester (\$46.25/month)	\$190/ semester (\$47.50/month)

AS Resolution

To Recognize San Francisco State University's Student Commuter Population and their Economic Burden in Regards to Transportation; and to Support Student Advocacy Efforts on Behalf of SF State Students; to Create a Referendum on a Student Transit Pass Program.

WHEREAS, San Francisco State University's total population consists of over 30,000 students; and,

WHEREAS, San Francisco State University's student population is comprised of approximately ten (10) percent of students who live in on-campus housing, leaving approximately ninety (90) percent of the student population no choice but to commute; and,

WHEREAS, San Francisco State University's student commuter population consists of approximately forty-nine (49) percent of students residing in the City and County of San Francisco, eighteen (18) percent who reside within Alameda County, seventeen (17) percent who reside within San Mateo County, and nine (9) percent who reside within Contra Costa County; and,

WHEREAS, financially prohibitive and limited units of housing both on-campus and in the Bay Area as a whole leave students with no option but to seek more affordable housing farther away from the main San Francisco State University campus which leads to a high transportation cost per student; and,

WHEREAS, students at San Francisco State University need a way to offset mounting transportation costs due to having to pay for high rents and expensive textbooks; and,

WHEREAS, on average, most students spend between five and fourteen dollars (\$5-\$14) on transportation alone per day, which to most commuters can add up to a third of the cost of current tuition levels and can be more than the cost of books for two semesters; and,

WHEREAS, San Francisco State University is one of the largest public universities in the Bay Area in terms of population; and,

WHEREAS, an increase in both student population and a thirty (30) percent increase in miles traveled has led to higher emissions, due to more students moving farther away from San Francisco and using public transportation as their primary means of getting to and from school; and,

WHEREAS, forty-nine (49) percent of the University's total greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to commuting; and,

WHEREAS, while most students use public transportation, half of the amount of commuters drive alone contributing seventy-seven (77) percent of the University's commute-related carbon emissions; and,

WHEREAS, between 2008 and 2014, greenhouse gas emissions from student commuters increased fifteen (15) percent; and,

WHEREAS, San Francisco State University has made a commitment to transportation relief, specifically in affordability and accessibility offer beginning in the form of a shuttle service to and from Daly City BART Station as well as comprehensive bicycle infrastructure on campus; and,

WHEREAS, despite the provision of these transportation options, San Francisco State University does not offer a direct form of financial assistance to its largely public transportation-reliant students; and,

WHEREAS, during San Francisco State University's 2015 Strategic Plan collaboration with Neighborland.com, student transit passes received seven (7) times more support with three hundred ninety-five (395) supporters when compared to the second most supported idea which had only fifty-six (56) supporters, and based on this feedback, the final Strategic Plan released in 2015 states that, SFSU aims to "secure area-wide mass transit passes for all students by fall 2018;" and,

WHEREAS, various student run organizations such as Students for Justice, Students for Planning and Urban Affairs, Associated Students Sustainable Initiatives, and individuals within Associated

Students have led the way in advocating for student transportation passes over the past three years; and,

WHEREAS, according to San Francisco State University-commissioned biennial transportation surveys conducted between 2008 and 2014, eighty percent (80%) of respondents support paying into a system that will allow for student transit passes; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students Board of Directors, sitting as a committee of the whole, endorses that the question of whether a discounted student transit pass be offered to SFSU students through a student referendum no later than Spring 2016; further,

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students Board of Directors recommends and will encourage San Francisco State University students to vote in the affirmative for such a referendum in order to make college more affordable for student commuters; finally,

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students Board of Directors will continue to uphold the campus values of equity, activism, and community as it supports the student-run advocacy efforts to achieve the passage of a student transit pass program for all San Francisco State University students.