



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

Northern  
California

## 2024 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

### Candidate Response: **Nelson Mei**

#### 1. WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ENSURE THAT SAN FRANCISCO FOLLOWS ITS OWN POLICY TO OFFER APPROPRIATE SHELTER TO UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS PRIOR TO CITING OR ARRESTING PEOPLE?

**Increase Shelter Capacity:** Expand and maintain sufficient shelter capacity, including emergency shelters and longer-term housing solutions, to ensure there is always availability for those in need.

**Streamline Access to Shelter:** Simplify and improve the process for unhoused individuals to access shelters, making it easier and quicker for them to receive assistance. This could involve better coordination between outreach teams and shelter providers.

**Accountability and Monitoring:** Establish clear accountability mechanisms to monitor compliance with the policy. This includes regular audits and reports on how many individuals are offered shelter before any enforcement actions are taken.

**Training for Law Enforcement and Outreach Teams:** Provide thorough training for police officers and outreach workers on the importance of the policy, ensuring they understand the legal and ethical requirements to offer shelter before issuing citations or making arrests.

**Partnership with Nonprofits and Community Organizations:** Work closely with nonprofits and community organizations that provide services to the homeless to ensure they have the resources and support needed to help place individuals in appropriate shelter.

**Public Reporting and Transparency:** Make data on shelter offers and enforcement actions publicly available to ensure transparency and allow the community to hold the city accountable.

## **2. HOW WILL YOU INCREASE EMERGENCY SHELTER AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SAN FRANCISCO?**

To increase emergency shelter and affordable housing in San Francisco, I would streamline the permitting process to expedite new developments, form public-private partnerships to incentivize construction, and repurpose underutilized city properties. I would also secure additional state and federal funding, allocate more city resources to these initiatives, and expand supportive housing that includes essential services. Reforming zoning laws to allow higher-density housing in key areas, especially near transit, will further boost the availability of affordable housing. Engaging communities in the planning process will ensure these projects are well-integrated and supported locally.

## **3. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION AS A FORM OF ACCOUNTABILITY WHEN A PERSON IS ARRESTED?**

Incarceration is often the best way to hold individuals accountable for serious crimes, but the appropriate method of accountability depends on the nature of the offense. For less severe crimes, alternatives like rehabilitation programs or community service might be more effective in promoting long-term positive outcomes while still ensuring accountability.

## **4. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM (SUCH AS CART) AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO POLICE CALLS TO RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHOUSED, STRUGGLING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE, OR IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISES THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT? PLEASE EXPLAIN.**

I support establishing a program like CART because sending a team of trained professionals such as social workers and mental health clinicians, are better equipped to handle these specific issues with appropriate care and de-escalation techniques. This approach not only ensures that individuals in crisis receive the specialized help they need but also reduces the burden on law enforcement, allowing police to focus on criminal matters.

## **5. SAN FRANCISCO MEASURE E SHIFTED CERTAIN POLICYMAKING AND OVERSIGHT POWERS RELATED TO POLICING AND SURVEILLANCE FROM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE POLICE COMMISSION TO THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT. WHAT SAFEGUARDS, OVERSIGHT OR**

## REVISIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT TO PROVIDE PROTECTIONS FOR THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN SAN FRANCISCO?

To ensure the rights of San Franciscans are protected after Measure E shifted certain powers from the Board of Supervisors and the Police Commission to the SFPD, I would support several key safeguards. First, I would strengthen the role of the Police Commission to maintain robust civilian oversight. This includes requiring the SFPD to report regularly on policy changes and their impact, particularly in areas like surveillance. Second, I would advocate for mandatory public reporting and transparency to keep the community informed and involved. Third, I would support independent audits of the SFPD's practices to ensure compliance with civil rights protections. Lastly, I would consider revising Measure E if necessary to restore some oversight powers to civilian bodies, ensuring a balanced approach to public safety and civil liberties.