



## 2015 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Julie Christensen  
Candidate for: District 3 Supervisor

### PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

1. Please describe what role walking plays in your life.

I am a walker living in one of the most walkable districts in the US; a district with the lowest per capita car ownership in the City; a district where 10 million visitors a year come to walk our streets and see the sights. I walk because, in our crowded neighborhoods, it is often the fastest and most reliable way to get around. My husband and I walk for fun, whether a stroll at the beach or a ramble across town. I walk my dog. I walk to shopping and brunch and to run errands. As you say, every trip begins and ends on foot.

### BIG PICTURE

- Describe your vision of a healthy, safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system for the city and the role that walking plays in that vision.

I believe the completion of the Central Subway to North Beach and Chinatown is an essential component in future transit plans for the NE neighborhoods. The study I pushed for before my appointment estimated that an extended subway would carry 40,000 more people a day with the addition of just 2 stops.

Walkability, and reasonable interface, should be a key element of any street and transit planning. There are 19 discrete MTA and Planning projects currently slated for D3. My staff and I are working to, literally, connect the dots. We connected proposed projects for Stockton Street in Union Square and Stockton Street in Chinatown by adding a study of the Stockton Tunnel, to investigate ways to make it more pedestrian friendly and to better connect the two neighborhoods for those on foot.

### VISION ZERO

- If elected, what steps would you take to ensure the implementation of Vision Zero projects? In your answer, please explain how you would address trade-offs that may result from building a safe transportation system (e.g., the removal of parking in order to improve visibility of pedestrians at

intersections, or the removal of vehicle lanes to slow traffic and shorten pedestrian crossing distances, etc.).

I believe the best approach to any project is to bring all interested parties to the table and to foster productive conversation.

The Polk Street pedestrian safety and bicycle plan had its final approval hearings shortly after I took office. Bicycle advocates were pushing for bigger changes to the plan and concerned neighbors and merchants were threatening to sue and delay it. I met individually with the Bicycle Coalition and concerned neighbors and merchants and then conducted a joint walkthrough of the neighborhood. By getting both parties together to hear each other out and by seeing the actual intersections in question together, we were able to soothe concerns and agree to a compromise that does not preclude future adjustments but will allow the pedestrian safety portions of the project to move ahead.

Plans to improve pedestrian safety on Columbus Avenue ran into controversy related to recently inflamed concerns from the Fire Department. Neighborhood outreach, including a community meeting, and dialog with the affected City Departments helped quell the rhetoric and allowed that project to move ahead.

I have directed the TA, Planning and the MTA to prioritize Kearny Street pedestrian safety improvements recommended through Walk SF's work with the Chinatown community. I have also allocated my TA NTIP funds to address the broader problems at Kearny, especially the Clay and Washington intersections, and the streets and sidewalks adjacent to Portsmouth Square and extending towards Stockton Street and the new Central Subway station there, with an emphasis on pedestrian safety and preparation for the vastly increased foot traffic expected between the station and the Financial District.

I was happy to champion funding for the engineering work on Phase 2 of the Jefferson Street improvements, with emphasis on walkability, pedestrian safety and bicycle lanes.

- What would you do to ensure there is enough funding for pedestrian safety improvements and Vision Zero projects?

I have and will continue to advocate for the necessary funding to see our important pedestrian safety projects approved and completed in a timely manner. I've advocated for nearly half a million dollars for District 3 pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements in the last month and supported citywide funding in both add-backs and in the Mayor's budget for Vision Zero and other pedestrian projects.

#### POLICY/LEGISLATION

- The most dangerous transportation behavior in the city is speed, as it exponentially increases a victim's risk of injury or death. Two key strategies that have effectively reduced speeds in other

states and countries are automated speed cameras and decreased speed limits. Unfortunately, the State of California doesn't permit automated speed enforcement and only allows speeds lower than 25 mph in school zones. Do you support these strategies? If so, how will you work with your community and State legislators to change these (and similar) laws so the City can use these strategies to save lives?

In the tight confines and crowded conditions of District 3, injuries and fatalities tend to be related to maneuvering, especially turns. But there are parts of the district and, certainly, other districts where speed is a critical issue. I am also a big fan of traffic calming measures, especially those that can both reduce speed and enhance neighborhoods and the pedestrian experience. As to amendments to State restrictions, I am interested in any steps we can take to reduce injuries and deaths.

#### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- Given the student assignment policy, 41% of San Francisco elementary school students live within walking distance of school. Unfortunately, only 25% take the short journey. Studies have shown that children who walk to school enjoy key health benefits and academic advantages, as well as getting more quality bonding time with parents. What would you do to increase the number of children walking and biking to school, and what would you do to increase safety around local schools?

A lot of children in D3 do walk to school. Encouraging them to walk to school - and making it safe for them to do so - is a priority for my staff and me. I have advocated strongly for D3 pedestrian safety improvements, specifically safety additions near schools, day care centers and senior centers, as well as other key corridors and intersections. We recently added two more intersections to the list of child- and senior-related safety improvements in the district.

I will continue to support programs like Safe Routes to School- Walk and Roll to School. I have and will continue to advocate funding for organizations that partner with Walk SF to execute these important programs. I want to use our whole arsenal of options – bulb-outs, daylighting, enhanced crosswalks, scrambles, etc. – to find appropriate solutions that make walking safer and more pleasant.

#### WALKABILITY/WALKING MODE INCREASE

- The City has established a goal to steadily increase the percentage of all walking trips and walking trips for commuting in the next 5 years. Do you support this goal? If yes, what would you do to help the City realize it?

Yes, I support this goal. I am doing my part as Supervisor to increase pedestrian safety on sidewalks and crosswalks on the projects previously mentioned. I think it is also important to lead by example by walking between my daily activities in the district.

- Walk San Francisco believes that everyone deserves equal access to enjoyable places to walk. Walk SF is working with community groups and the City to install '[Intersection Murals](#)' that will advance this goal, as well as other Pavement to Parks projects that reclaim wide/dangerous intersections for public use (e.g., Persia Triangle). How important are these projects to you, and how will you support them?

Like the painted beetles in Portland? Let's expand the arsenal of options!

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

- Have you championed or strongly supported any other initiatives that are in line with Walk San Francisco's mission of making walking in San Francisco safe, so that our community is healthier and livable?

Polk Street; Columbus Avenue (5 intersections, 2 projects); Stockton Street (Union Square & Chinatown) and the Stockton Tunnel, Mason @ Broadway, Jefferson Street; Broadway; Kearny Street and Washington and Clay Streets.

- Is there anything else you'd like to share with the people of San Francisco, all of whom walk or travel with an assistive device at some point?

Prior to my appointment as District 3 Supervisor, I helped organize the efforts to make Coit Tower and the surrounding Pioneer Park ADA accessible without disturbing the historic murals. We were successful in making sure wheelchairs could access the tower as well as improving pedestrian safety and access for all.