



2015 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Amy Farah Weiss
Candidate for: Mayor

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

I'm a "poly-transportationalist" (or, to use the favored city planner and advocacy term, a "multi-modal" resident) who gets around the city through a combination of biking, walking, taking MUNI, using my Zipcar membership, and occasionally getting a ride from a friend. In addition to walking several times a week or more to the corner store, a neighborhood event, or my local commercial corridors of Divisadero or Haight Street, one of my favorite San Francisco activities is to take an urban hike up to the top of a vista point, such as Tank Hill, Bernal Hill, and the Lyon Street steps.

BIG PICTURE

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

As advocates for community safety we often have to organize against projects and policies that threaten our well-being and culture (such as the neighborhood activists who thankfully stopped the Panhandle Freeway from being built many decades ago). But in a democracy, it is our task to move beyond NIMBYism and identify and implement our righteous and strategic yes. That's why I say "Yes-In-My-Back-Yard" to identifying, implementing, and refining solutions for a healthy, safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system. We can achieve this by following the guiding tenants of Vision Zero and Transit-First policies, increasing public transportation opportunities and affordability for local and regional trips, ensuring that privatized transit is regulated in a way that strengthens our affordable public transit system, promoting a "share the road", "do no harm", and "spirit of the law" ethos through outreach, policies, and infrastructure, and figuring out how to encourage thousands of people

coming to SF (as well as current residents) to opt out of private car ownership in favor of walking, biking, and affordable, efficient shared transit options.

As we work towards promoting city-wide walking with safety features such as bulb-outs and daylighting at intersections, we must also hold ourselves personally accountable by being aware and engaged with those who we share the road with – whether we are walking, riding, or driving through the city. We should focus our law enforcement efforts on targeting risky, unpredictable behavior that violates the spirit of the law by obstructing someone’s right of way, causing physical harm/undo stress, or obstructing flow.

San Francisco has become the epicenter for transit network companies like Uber and Lyft who resist data sharing and regulations meant to protect driver, rider, and pedestrian safety. TNCs have flooded our streets with tens of thousands more cars with drivers from out of town in a way that is creating tension on our streets through increased congestion and behavior that puts pedestrians and other modes of transit at increased risk.

VISION ZERO

3. 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.).

As you are well aware, infrastructure projects that promote walking and cycling safety often pit neighbors against each due to the loss of parking spaces or a perceived “war against cars”. In a recent SFMTA hearing for safety improvement to Polk Street, I spoke in contrast to Mayor Lee by promoting the removal of parking spots for a continuous separated bike path. During that hearing I heard many Polk and city-wide neighbors discuss their need for car transportation and parking due to issues such as limited mobility or the need to transport children. If our goal is truly to become a transit first city with increased neighborhood and cross-town biking and walking, we have to be creative in developing affordable public transit, shared transit, and delivery options that meet the needs of current residents, not to mention the thousands upon thousands of additional people who will continue moving to our city. And we need to do meet this transit needs in a way that is regulated for balance of the overall system, supporting workers, and creating an equitable profit.

In order to make decisions about specific steps for implementing Vision Zero I would first meet with and listen to the collaborative of city-wide transit advocacy groups who work to shape and implement its policy, including Walk SF. Although I can’t be an expert in everything, I am an

interdisciplinary thinker who has professional experience as a researcher, educator, and strategist. I trust in my ability to collaborate with advocates and experts to make informed decisions that are grounded in social equity, well-being, and feasibility

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

San Francisco has a nearly \$9 Billion budget. Although I don't personally have experience in managing a budget of that magnitude, I would turn to the expertise of trusted policy-makers such as current Supervisors John Avalos, Eric Mar, and Jane Kim to ensure that funding is prioritized to enact our Vision Zero projects and efforts to support our transit first policies. I am interested in working with companies who depend upon San Francisco transit infrastructure (such as transit network companies, online delivery companies, and companies down the peninsula who collectively transport upwards of 10,000 employees a day using tech shuttles), to find ways for them to contribute more significantly and consistently to projects that enhance street safety and flow management.

My abilities to prioritize funding and accomplish a lot on very little can be demonstrated by the fact that I have lived in San Francisco on an average of \$15,000 a year since 2008 and I re-activated and managed a community garden for two years using only in-kind donations and the \$10K that I personally fundraised for the project. I would like to set a precedent as mayor for learning how to only take our fair share and invest the rest back into my community's well-being by donating back \$100K of my \$270K salary each year to projects that I want to help maintain and grow.

POLICY/LEGISLATION

5. 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 regard to automated speed cameras, I would want to see more research about cost, evidence-based impacts, and opposition, but with my current level of knowledge I could see

supporting the idea of enforcing speed limits through technology as long as: 1) It was accompanied by a creative outreach campaign and signage that lets people know that speed limits are strictly enforced in our city (with signage placed in the general location of that camera); and 2) There was a program that allowed low-to-moderate income drivers to pay off their speeding tickets in equitable and community-serving ways. In order to move this forward, I would talk with our State Senator and Assembly Members to learn more about the statewide climate in regard to this proposed legislative change. In a similar fashion, I could see supporting reduced speed for certain streets based upon their usage. We would need to evaluate the program and develop targeted pilot-projects before any widespread implementation.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

6. 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?

I'm sure we could think of some creative ways to fund, implement, and evaluate a program that set out to increase the number of kids getting out of cars and being active on our sidewalks and streets. First we would need to identify the current barriers keeping parents and students from walking or biking to school. I would imagine that parent schedules and safety (as you alluded to) would be two of the major barriers. Key stakeholder and partner organizations would need to be identified, as well as funding, for the development of a pilot project. Research would need to be done into existing models that have proven effective in reducing these barriers and encouraging our desired behavior before we develop, implement, and evaluate a pilot project at various schools

Taking a moment to brainstorm, perhaps we could pilot a project that screened, trained, and paid low-income CCSF/SF State students, SF Walk Members, and SF Bike Coalition members to provide scheduled morning pickups for walk and bike trips to school. Perhaps a collaborative effort between advocacy organizations like SF Walk and the Bike Coalition, SFUSD, and various Departments (such as the Department of Public Health and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families) could occur to identify funding sources (such as grants aimed at diabetes prevention and overall child health) and ideas for a pilot project.

WALKABILITY/WALKING MODE INCREASE

7. 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?

I whole-heartedly support this goal. To increase walking trips the City should support Vision Zero projects, strengthen transit-first policies, prevent traffic congestion through collaborative regulation of transit network companies, support pilot projects like your walk/bike to school idea, and increase the number of tickets given to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians who put others at risk and impede right of way through risky behavior on our streets and sidewalks. We should also work to add timing signals on every possible pedestrian traffic light so that pedestrians, especially those with mobility limitations, can better evaluate their timing.

If we want to increase walking trips it is also important that we work to protect our small neighborhood businesses. If our neighborhood commercial corridors lose their essential diversity of services and retail, then people must travel longer distances to go to their dry cleaner, hardware store, or book store. Creating a walkable city therefore requires inclusive, culturally-enriching, and sustainable neighbor-focused planning to avoid a glut of high-end boutiques or restaurants.

8. 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?

These are great projects that I wholeheartedly support. I lived in Portland Oregon for two years and remember my delight upon seeing the first intersection mural pop up in my Southeast neighborhood. I was recently part of an effort with Arts for a Better Bay Area to advocate for my funding to support arts in the neighborhood and this seems like a great project to fund local artists in a way that serves the greater community.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

9. 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?

In addition to providing public comment at SFMTA hearings for Vision Zero-supporting projects on Polk Street and the Wiggle, I produced an interactive public service announcement for multi-modal road safety at Sunday Streets a few years ago through Neighbors Developing Divisadero. Neighbors Developing Divisadero is the non-profit, community-based organization I founded in support of inclusive, culturally-enriching, and sustainable development in 2011 and we are now fiscally-sponsored project of Intersection for the Arts. I directed and participated in a video PSA in which cyclists shared their tips for sharing the wiggle with fellow cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. The 5 minute video can be viewed at NDDivisTV channel on YouTube under the title: Share the Wiggle: Tips from Sunday Streets' Bike Riders. I am the person in the video who asks cyclists not to speed around corners in a way that could frighten or harm pedestrians.

10. 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?

Let's use this election as an opportunity to hold leadership accountable to funding and implementing our Vision Zero and Transit-First policies. In addition to our personal needs, we should advocate for policies that support the mobility of all our neighbors and the overall balance and sustainability of our transit infrastructure and systems.

Be a YIMBY: Say Yes-In-My-Back-Yard to inclusive and sustainable development, an economy that truly shares, and local government that supports all San Francisco neighbors and neighborhoods. Visit my website at yimbyformayor.com to learn more about my campaign. You can link arms with the social equity advocates and culture makers who have joined forces to challenge the status quo of current leadership: Vote for me and select a combination of Francisco Herrera, Stuart Schuffman, or Reed Martin for your number two and three positions. With ranked-choice voting it's as easy as 1, 2, 3 to disrupt pay-to-play politics and challenge Ed Lee. Think twice, vote Weiss!

I'll close with a couple of quotes from the godmother of walkable cities, Jane Jacobs, from her seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*:

"A city street equipped to handle strangers, and to make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers, as the streets of successful city neighborhoods always do, must . . . have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers. Nobody enjoys sitting on a stoop or looking out a window at an empty street. Almost nobody does such a thing. Large numbers of people entertain themselves, off and on, by watching street activity."

"Lowly, unpurposeful and random as they appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life must grow. "