

Walk San Francisco
2015 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

Aside from walking 45 minutes each way to my current workplace, doing the perimeter walk around San Francisco, and routinely hiking the trails in Mount Sutro, Golden Gate Park, or Lands End, walking is an integral part of my daily experience of our city. From running into friends on the street to gossiping with the owner of the corner market to exploring new streets and neighborhoods, walking to me is as much about getting places as it is about experiencing everything San Francisco has to offer.

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 part of my Grand SF platform, I am helping to envision a more holistic transportation model for San Francisco. This includes a new "Connective network" vision for Muni Metro, light rail, streetcars, and buses, which relies more strongly on transportation hubs. Not only do these transportation hubs better serve to connect our city and integrate into a regional transportation network, but they also create opportunity for vibrant walkable neighborhood centers. For example, a concept for Duboce Triangle involves redevelopment of the current Safeway and parking lot site, at the intersection of 9 transit lines, by creating a vibrant network of pedestrian-only and shared space streets surrounding a vibrant public marketplace.

In addition to an expanded public transit vision, it's vital to expand our integration of multimodal transportation, from bike share to electric scooters to one-way urban-optimized

cars to traditional car sharing. Unlike ridesharing services, these options reduce overall congestion, reduce pollution, and lower the average size and speed of vehicles on the road. By providing San Franciscans a number of transportation options to choose from, integrated into a broader network of mobility, we can provide a much greater flexibility of transportation than private vehicle ownership. For example, in the morning, you can walk to school with your child, hop on public transit to work, walk to the hardware store in the evening, and ride a scooter home with the cargo.

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.).

Vision Zero and eliminating deaths on our streets is one of the most vitally important quality of life issues in San Francisco today. I strongly support this vision, but don't feel that we're doing enough today to truly meet our commitment by 2024.

As we look at ways to adopt Vision Zero policies and move projects forward, it's important for us to understand that driving should not be pitched as the enemy of walking. The opportunity to drastically reduce parking constraints, to decrease congestion, and to improve mobility in San Francisco hinges on improving our public infrastructure. When we excel at this, the demand for driving (and parking) goes down. I've had many conversations with neighborhood residents concerned about losing parking spaces. After describing the need to decrease total demand for parking, thereby freeing up parking spaces for those who have real needs, we found quite a bit of common ground.

Telling the bigger story, while taking specific steps to move us in the right direction, will keep the momentum moving forward, and decrease the polarizing arguments that quickly show up in planning discussions. We should not be leading with negative consequences of actions, but pushing positive visions and talking concretely about where we want to be in 10 years.

Global cities have led through action and by example to help move critics in the direction of safer, more enjoyable neighborhoods and streets. In San Francisco, let's leverage successful people-focused programs like Sunday Streets, Pavement to Parks, and Parklets to grow an appreciation and awareness of the role of public space, and to help build support for quality of life and safety improvements on our streets.

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

As part of a cohesive transportation policy for the city, walking is critical to every mode of transportation. Ensuring that safety improvements exist on our streets has a directly positive benefit for every other transportation mode and should be accounted for when budgeting for these projects. For example, Muni Forward aims to help improve performance of Muni, often through the use of stop consolidation. Stop consolidation inherently increases walking to and from transit stops; a portion of budget for Muni Forward should ensure the safety of those walking to catch the bus.

Improvements to the walkability and safety also have secondary benefits for the city, ranging from lowering health care and emergency response costs from direct and indirect causes, increased economic vitality in commercial districts, and a reduction in overall crime from increased street presence. Each of these should be taken into consideration when looking at costs of *not* improving pedestrian safety, and leveraged to push for a budget with adequate funds to improve our street life.

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?

I absolutely support these strategies, with a particular focus on lowering speed limits (as well as better design that forces slower speeds.)

It's incredibly important to work closely with Sacramento to amend the California Vehicle Code to allow our city to have greater control over our streets. The Vehicle Code was written largely in an era where congestion was not where it is today, and speeding up traffic took precedence over humans. While it wasn't a great idea at the time, the situation today looks even worse, and

the opportunities for San Francisco to embrace ideas of shared space, narrower road widths, and slower speeds seem only common sense. I plan to aggressively pursue our Sacramento connections to craft legislation that puts these sorts of decisions back in the hands of San Francisco.

Locally, I do think we can get creative with California vehicle code regulations. For example, alleys are permitted to have speed limits below 25 mph, and are determined by a street width of 25 feet or narrower. That's actually more than enough for a two-lane road when we pull parking off the street into designated off-street space. This is a great opportunity to reclaim public space for people on foot, keep our non-arterial road widths more sensible, and reduce overall speed of traffic flow.

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?

Walking (or biking) to school shouldn't be privilege, it should absolutely be a right. From discussions I've had, the biggest barriers to walking to school for children are (1) safety and (2) parent commute modes. While the share of students that walk (and take transit) to school increases as students get older and make decisions for themselves, families of elementary school-aged children frequently don't take advantage of walking as an option, despite the clear benefits.

From a safety perspective, non-arterial roads need to feel safe at all hours of the day for families and children. Helping to engage and spend more time on our streets throughout the day on weekends or evenings helps to promote walking and street usage in other contexts. We need to ensure speeds go way down on all residential streets and expand school district speed limit zones. (Unfortunately, this remains under the jurisdiction of the California Vehicle Code currently.)

Arterial roads, in particular in proximity to schools, need to have immediate safety precautions taken including protective poles/bollards, narrower street crossings, and all-way pedestrian signals at lights. In addition, expanding crossing guards and temporary safety signage during morning and afternoon school times will help improve safety as well as promote the cultural norm of walking to and from school.

From a commute mode perspective, we need to ensure that we have adequate transportation options near schools, both for families that need to travel to and from the schools but also to link parents to their commutes. A common complaint I've heard from parents is that they would walk with their children to school, but they then are forced to walk back home to get the car or to a different location altogether to pick up a transit line, so they instead choose to simply drive to save time.

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 strongly support this. There are a number of things we can do to help increase walking in San Francisco.

First, we obviously need to focus on street safety and pedestrian protections. Improving visibility, slowing traffic, adding traffic barriers, and narrowing crossings are all critical to helping San Franciscans of any age feel safe walking down the street. We should also be aggressively piloting some of the best pedestrian safety ideas from around the world, including poles/bollards at every intersection, near-side-only traffic signals, mid-intersection protective posts, different pavement treatments, etc.

Second, we need a better holistic residential and commercial mix across the city, which involves an updated look at zoning. Like many American cities, we have focused on downtown business development with large swaths of residential areas, requiring long commutes that force different modes of transportation. We need to increase mixed-use zoning across the city, improving the distribution of jobs and homes, allowing people to live closer to where they work (and vice-versa).

Third, we need to look at common-sense expansion of street vibrancy. By expanding street-level services, from small businesses to recreation, to green space, we have an opportunity to bring daily services closer to where we live. A common complaint I hear from families is a lack of public space for children to play that's nearby. Small business owners are concerned about the cost of retail space and limited availability and access. Our natural spaces are fabulous, but often require long distances to get to. Parklets are a great example of this sort of expansion,

but I would love to see this concept grow, both for more types of spaces as well as a path for permanence.

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 some of the best examples of tactical urbanism in San Francisco today, and are critical to continuing to reclaim our streets for the public. As part of my Grand SF platform, I have introduced a plan called "Our City Fund," dedicating up to 1% of the city budget directly toward neighborhoods and individual ideas for how to improve San Francisco. The concept is designed to support and fund projects exactly like these, allowing residents to work together to envision and create better space in their neighborhoods.

It's also important to embrace, on a more broad level, concepts of shared space and pedestrian-only districts. We have an opportunity re-evaluate the role of residential streets as shared spaces, safe for everyone from children playing to people leisurely strolling. Pedestrian-only commercial districts work well with exactly the sort of density and mix of retail we find in San Francisco. We can support these visions with specific action: Neighborhood Sundays, closing certain neighborhood streets every Sunday to anyone but local traffic. Night Plazas, closing certain streets in nightlife-heavy zones like Polk Street to cars after 8pm. Walking Weekends, turning certain commercial corridors like Haight Street or Columbus Ave. into pedestrian plazas during the day on weekends. Starting with simple, temporary concepts allows us to grow these concepts into a grander vision for permanent public space in San Francisco.

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?

I've spent the last three years on the board of the San Francisco Transit Riders, advocating for better public transportation throughout the city. I also serve on the Better Market Street CAC to help make Market Street the true grand boulevard it deserves. Livable, healthy, and vibrant cities have been a passion of mine for many years.

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?

Walking is so fundamental to our daily experience that we often overlook it. We've even invented a term for the particular case where a person is walking on a city street: a pedestrian. It's important that, as we look at all of our options for transportation, as we think about how people move through the city, and as we look at the opportunities for neighborhood vibrancy, we recognize that what we're fundamentally talking about is people. And when people are out in the streets, our neighborhoods become more vibrant, our crime goes down, and our community grows stronger.

While moving people efficiently and rapidly through the city is incredibly important, we need to step back and recognize how fundamental walking and spending time in public space is for a city, how strong San Francisco is today because of it, and how much stronger we become as we embrace more.

Not only do I think we have the opportunity to eliminate pedestrian deaths and collisions, we have a real opportunity to define the future of urban streets and walkability. We have no lack of ideas in San Francisco, let's come together to envision what a vibrant city in the 21st century looks like.