



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Ahsha Safai

Candidate for: San Francisco Board of Supervisors District 11

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

Walking plays a vital part in my everyday life. As much as possible I walk from meeting to meeting and place to place. I do not like being in a car. I wear a Fitbit to ensure that I walk at least 10,000 steps every day. I believe that walking is a healthy and vital part of everyday life and as a trained City Planner, the best way to view a City and something that I am instilling in my two children.

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.

I envision a sustainable city for ALL: bikes, cars, pedestrians, and public transit connected through a network of transportation that respects the ease and safe travel of all forms. We must ensure that each mode of transportation is taken into consideration when designing our public transportation infrastructure system and ensure that all are respected and planned for properly. I believe that walking plays a crucial role in the overall transportation planning for San Francisco and is one of the things that make our city great - it is walkable and connected in such a way that makes walking easy and beautiful. I look forward to working with Walk SF to continue to improve upon the system we have for walkers.

VISION ZERO

3. If elected, what steps would you take to ensure the implementation of Vision Zero projects? In your answer, please explain whether you pledge to prioritize safety improvements that narrow crossing distances and slow traffic (bulbouts, "road diets," etc.) over other competing demands for street space, including parking or automobile lanes.

I believe that pedestrian safety is extremely important, and I am truly supportive of things that slow traffic. In fact one of my highest priorities will be to use my training as a City Planner to put together a larger planning strategy to implement new traffic calming, parking and pedestrian safety measure throughout my district and I support these concepts to be implemented all over San Francisco. As I have spent the past 10 months knocking on doors talking to thousands of neighbors I have heard over and over again that pedestrian safety and traffic calming are extremely top priorities for our neighborhoods. In District 11, residents would truly appreciate more speed bumps, crosswalk narrowing, bulb-outs and other efforts to slow traffic and to

increase pedestrian safety. Our neighborhoods need appropriate parking strategies as well so people will stop parking on the sidewalk and blocking pedestrians path of travel and generally need to narrow automobile lanes. We need to make our city streets safe for everyone.

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

I would work with the Mayor and other members of the Board of Supervisors to ensure that money is allocated for pedestrian safety and Vision Zero projects. Vision Zero benefits all residents of the City and County of San Francisco and it shouldn't be left up to one department or Supervisor to ensure that there is funding for this important safety work. This is smart Planning and should be some of the highest citywide priority work at the Board of Supervisors.

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?

Excessive speed is an extremely serious issue. Using the principals of Vision Zero a analysis should be completed in order to determine what areas of the City pose the greatest risk for serious injury and experience excessive speeding by drivers that pose the greatest risk for pedestrian safety to enable us to work on strategies to limit speed in these hot spots. I support automated speed cameras and lowering speed limits as ways to lower speed. I am the only candidate in the race to have the sole endorsement of the entire State delegation and would work with Assemblyman Ting, Chiu and either Scott Wiener or Jane Kim in their new capacity as State Senator to work on these strategies to help reform the California traffic code to address automated speed enforcement.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

6. Approximately 41% of San Francisco elementary school students live within walking distance of school. Unfortunately, only 25% take the short journey by foot. 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 and safety of children walking and biking to school?

Walking offers important health benefits and in District 11 students meet once a week at the Excelsior Playground and walk to Monroe, Cleveland Elementary, San Francisco Community, and James Denman Middle School together as part of the Walking School Bus Program. One of our neighborhood leaders and supporters of mine in District 11 Jaquie Chavez help to start the Safe Routes program at Longfellow elementary school and now it is run in 40+ schools citywide. Longfellow was chosen because it met the requirement of 50% of students living within a mile

radius. Longfellow Elementary was suffering from traffic jams from parents drop off and pick up. Safe Routes to Schools encourages families to walk, ride, and take transit to schools. We can expand the Safe Routes and Walking School Bus program to other schools citywide that have 50%+ students living within a mile radius because there are many children and parents that would like to walk to school but have not been organized to do so.

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 completely support the goal of increasing the percentage of all walking trips and walking trips for commuting within the next 5 years. I think using the Vision Zero goals of traffic calming including speed bumps, crosswalk narrowing, bulb-outs and other efforts to slow traffic and to increase pedestrian safety is the best way to increase walking trips. I also think building more transit oriented development will add to the amount of people out of their car and then using both public transportation and walking to get places. I will do everything I can to help develop walking trip routes, as well as collaborate with the Planning Department, SFDPW, and SFMTA to make these goals a reality.

8. Walk San Francisco believes that everyone deserves equal access to enjoyable places to walk, and that our street space can be better used by shifting excess street right-of-way from private automobiles to places for people to walk and gather. How do you feel about projects like these that improve our public realm, and how will you support them?

It is extremely important to have dedicated spaces for people to walk and gather and thus make our City safer and more friendly to pedestrians. I think that we need to find solutions that reflects the unique characteristics of each District and search for solutions that allow for people to gather and walk in a safer way by using excess street right of ways. Our district has many excess street right-of-ways. In Mission Terrace, we have a network of excess streets that have laid fallow for many years that are neither maintained or utilized by the surrounding residents. Recently, we've organized an annual "Spaghetti Dinner in the Back Alleys." It is spontaneous activities like these that can lead to a more permanent solution to these roads, but also to many other areas throughout San Francisco that can be utilized for neighbors and residents to walk and gather.

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?

Recently, I led the effort to raise over \$4 million dollars to secure funding to revitalize Balboa Park. This effort took over two years and included help from many neighbors and collecting thousands of signatures. We were initially left out of the Rec and Park Bond, but were determined to reclaim our neighborhood park. We initially convinced the Mayor to allocate \$1

million dollars. I was able to convince the Trust for Public Land to allocate \$3 million dollars and in the end have created a space that is used consistently from neighbors. One of the key pieces was adding a sidewalk so thousands of surrounding neighbors could walk from their homes with their children and families or by themselves safely and away from speeding cars, particularly police cars that need to access the police station nearby. Also, I am currently working with a coalition of neighbors and organizations like The Mission Terrace Land Preservation Committee, New Mission Terrace Improvement Association, and San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance to save Little City Garden on Cotter St., which is on of San Francisco's only commercial neighborhood farms. Preserving this space will allow for hundreds of neighbors to continue to walk and congregate in an urban green space for generations to come and to create food that can be used by local businesses and families. I think access to natural open areas is a vital to healthy living.

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?

Previously I worked on the Street Parks Program for the Department of Public Works –turning fallow pieces of the public right of way into community gardens. This encouraged surrounding neighbors to take ownership of their community and to walk to places in their neighborhoods daily to congregate and build community. This is a vital but often overlooked program that should be expanded and encouraged along with many of the WalkSF programs and ideas being promoted by the Planning Department and the Department of Public Health and SFMTA.