



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Magdalena De Guzman

Candidate for: San Francisco Board of Supervisors District 11

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

When I like to reflect I walk. When I want quiet time, I walk. I love to walk Lands End, Lake Merced, beaches, and many areas in the city, bay area, and California. I am a “walk” person. I love NATURE, and walking is one way of getting to know nature. I also walk to Bart Station to catch the train from school where I walk - from Harrison to Market Street.

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 have travelled Europe, and there’s a lot of walking in Italian towns, and that is because the people live and work in the same place. The streets are narrow, the cars really can not be maneuvered easily, so walking is an advantage over driving. I also visited Japan and experienced how owning a car is so unnecessary. The homes and trains are connected by walking or riding a bike. I walked instead, rode the train, and got off at stops to ride buses or walk some more. So, for the US to get into the walking mood, the city really need to change. The roads are so wide, the homes are so widespread. The new city must be built vertically. The people must live and work in the same area so that cars are no longer needed. The public transportation must be connected and scheduled well so that people are not waiting for the next transportation. Walking should not be a hard decision for people if the city is designed well - walking to buses, trains, homes, and jobs should be a natural phenomena.

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.

Since I became a school teacher, one of our students was hit by a car and died, and one of our grandmothers was also hit by a car and died. I almost got hit by a speeding red car and was only a centimeter away from the zooming car. So I understand how it is necessary to address this. . I definitely pledge to prioritize safety improvements for our pedestrians.

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

I definitely will ensure that there's excellent funding for pedestrian safety improvements. As supervisor, I will invite organizations like you to give testimonials and be heard at the Board of Supervisors. I will find solutions to get funding for your organization.

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 like the strategies. In addition, there should be more stop signs, and more signs that have speed limit stated to avoid more deaths. I think that there should be a lot of meetings that include the residents, and the City Departments responsible for street safety, and transportation. The meetings should have action plans so that they are not ignored, and one of these action plans is to meet with state legislators and address the dangers that pedestrians have to face in the streets of San Francisco. These meetings must result into creating a legislation that can change the current law.

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?

I work in the SOMA Community and I see how parents walk with their children and they are very protected. If you are aware of 7th Street heading toward Folsom, you would think that you are next to a freeway. It is very dangerous to have the students walk alone or ride their bikes. Again, walking and riding bikes by kids amidst tons of cars zooming by are not a good combination. The drivers have the responsibility to slow down to a speed limit that is safe for the kids to walk and ride their bikes. As Supervisor, I will work on making sure that the drivers are aware of the speed limit especially near schools by putting more speed limit signs. However, in the long run, the speed limit near schools should be changed to a speed limit that is safe for our students. There should also be more stop signs near schools. More bike lanes should be created for our students who are riding their bikes. The parents may also be afraid that their children may not be safe and may be worried about their kids being hurt (disappearance, kidnapping are seen on TV). As a supervisor, I would organize community meetings to find out what's stopping the parents to allow their children to walk to school, and how can the City help them so that they feel safe and not worried when their kids are walking or biking.

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?

As a school teacher, I think that it's a great idea. I think that we should take this idea into our schools across the city and educate our students from preK to high school that walking is a life style. It's like institutionalizing Nutrition in our school for 3 years and the outcome is healthy way of eating among the students and families. But when they took the Nutrition Program from our schools, it didn't take long for the kids to go back to eating junk food like potato chips and drinking soda in the morning that their parents bought for them. So, for walking trips to increase, educating our community is necessary. We can hire people to create curriculum materials and to teach the walking trips programs to all students inside and outside of schools. That will require funding from the City. When I become a supervisor, I will definitely take a look into this and find ways to fund such walking trips programs..

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?

I think it can be done. I just came back from North Beach, and I saw longer "parklets" which already narrowed the streets. As a supervisor, I want to initiate planting shrubs and trees in the middle of many wide and unattractive streets. We can create islands of trees and shrubs in the middle of wide streets to soften the unattractiveness of wide and asphalted streets. I can see how we need something like that on Geneva and Mission Streets.

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?

There is an initiative in our school where an organization takes a tally of how many people walk to school, how many ride their bikes, how many take MUNI, and how many use cars. I always make sure that the people taking tallies are always invited to my classroom and feel at ease. I think we are reaching an awareness of knowing that too much cars on the streets are not good for our health. It's sad that what we want, which is less cars on the streets, is totally the opposite of what is happening in San Francisco right now. Since the City turned into a Silicon Valley City, the gridlock of cars is a nightmare. There are more cars on the streets downtown. There are more driving violations like the crossing is blocked by cars knowing that in doing so will cause a gridlock. I think that more people want to walk, take public transportation, or bike in order to lessen the cars on the streets. But then again, where are all these cars coming from? What a phenomena we have in San Francisco. As supervisor, I will push for initiative that will promote walking, riding bikes and taking public transportation.

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?

As a candidate for Supervisor, I appreciate the residents who choose to walk as an alternative way to move around the city. And for those who travel with an assistive device, as your future supervisor, I want to make sure that your safety is a priority. The City should be safe for all residents when they walk, and cross the streets. There are things that we can implement in order for the residents to feel safe - slowing down the speed limits, putting more speed limit signs so that the drivers are aware of the speed limit, putting more stop signs, and adding more bumps on streets that are near schools. We should also create a life style that allows people to keep their cars at home and take clean and safe public transportation that is on time and driven by a friendly driver.