



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Tim Donnelly

Candidate for: Board of Supervisors, District 3

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

I walk far more than any other mode of transportation.

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.

San Francisco needs to be an “all of the above” city, with regards to modes of transportation. Alternatives to the private automobile need to be encouraged. Walking should be the first choice, if the destination is too far and time is a factor, then public transportation would be the next logical choice. For extensive shopping, taxis or ride sharing are viable options. Those residents who have families, and/or need a vehicle for work, should not be vilified, but accommodated.

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.

“Vision Zero” is a nice slogan, but it takes more than that to keep our pedestrians safe. To be clear, pedestrians have the right of way, and must be able to cross our streets without risking their lives. Unfortunately the MTA has failed to fulfill that obligation. Their plan to install “bulb outs” will likely do more harm than good. When I first heard Ed Reiskin propose them, I was concerned. A search online revealed serious warnings from the engineers who design them, declaring them unsuitable for narrow streets. My fears were confirmed quickly when I saw a new “bulb out” at Franklin and Bay Streets, that had a steel post embedded, which was flattened by an errant vehicle. Simply put, a long truck, that needs to make a tight turn, will invariably run over the bulb out with the rear wheels. If a pedestrian is standing in the normal position, and is unwary or limited in mobility, they are in peril. Also, standing close to the flow of traffic, puts pedestrians in jeopardy in the event of a errant vehicle. Standing behind a parked vehicle is much safer. While the thought of a shorter distance to travel, crossing the street, seems desirable, it comes at a high cost.

What we need to do is slow down the traffic, and address the sources of frustration. The increasing traffic and lack of parking is causing reckless driving. That is no excuse, and driver must “chill out” and accept that city driving is tedious and slow. A public information campaign to encourage driver to “take it slow” would be welcome

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

Pedestrian safety has to be a priority and cannot be shortchanged. I can think of no program that should take priority.

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?

Although I am not a fan of “big brother”, the proposal to utilize cameras to catch speeders, should be implemented. The current proposal ensures that they will not be primarily revenue generators. I further believe that the speed limit should be 25 miles per hour throughout the City. Combined with enforcement of traffic impeters, such as double parkers will allow traffic to flow and deter “jackrabbits”.

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 walked over a mile each way to grammar school, but parents need to make those choices. Perhaps they could form groups to walk their children to school, rather than driving them. Seems like a health alternative, as well as community building..

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?

Unfortunately our sidewalks have become less inviting for pedestrians. Our primary focus as a great City must be to maintain our “walkability”. Our walkways need to be safe, clean and pleasant. With a budget of more than 9 billion a year, I find it unacceptable that they are not.

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?

As “City Streets” has demonstrated, converting streets to a promenade creates a wonderful experience. We should try to expand that idea. Every neighborhood should have at least one car free street. The idea would likely catch on.

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?

Last year I spent an afternoon with the “Chief Engineer for Livable Streets” walking our neighborhood and trying to convince him that the “bulb outs” were dangerous, and suggested that they convert the corner parking to motorcycles only, to create more visibility of pedestrians for vehicles turning right.

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?

Our disabled residents need to be accommodated with regards to transiting our streets and sidewalks. Unfortunately the MTA has not done so. They recently removed half of the bus stops on Van Ness Avenue, forcing the disabled to travel several blocks further to catch the bus. This shows that they do not take the needs of the disabled into consideration when they plan their changes.