



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Dean Preston

Candidate for: Board of Supervisors, District 5

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

I'm a proud member of Walk SF. I love to walk throughout the City. It's a great way to experience San Francisco and stay in shape. With or without a destination, I regularly walk with my kids in our neighborhood and beyond. For me, walkability is one of the key defining features of a great city. On the long list of things I love about San Francisco, our City's neighborhoods are at the top of my list. And I believe there's no better way to experience each neighborhood's unique character and flavor than traveling by foot. It's why I walk every chance I get—on our streets, in our parks, and on hiking trails. I'm also a frequent hiker in nearby areas like Pt. Reyes and Mt. Tam, and I enjoy backpacking trips on the rare occasions that I can get away.

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.

For over 20 years, I have commuted daily by public transportation in San Francisco. Despite calling ourselves a "transit first" city, the reality is far from it. That's why I will prioritize making San Francisco a city with a world-class transportation system, and I will champion a MUNI Riders Bill of Rights: An increased fleet to prevent overcrowding; new rail and rapid bus lines; guaranteed 30 minute trip to any destination in San Francisco; and a forward-thinking plan to break ground on an East-West subway in the next 10 years. It's what San Francisco needs to truly be a transit-first city.

In addition, as we look toward our transit future, I will make sure that pedestrian safety and walkability are top priorities in our planning process. The fact that everyday in San Francisco three pedestrians are hit by cars shows we need not just forward-thinking plans, but immediate action as well to protect the people taking our streets today.

I believe efforts like Vision Zero are important toward achieving these goals. With its data-centric approach to identifying and addressing problematic areas, as well as an emphasis on building partnerships that work in tandem toward a safer future, I see it as an effective model to make a safer city for all.

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.

District 5 has the distinction of being home to some of the most dangerous intersections in San Francisco, with automobiles barreling into neighborhoods at break neck speeds. As Supervisor, I will fight to make sure the important pedestrian safety projects of Vision Zero have the funding they need to be fully implemented. I will also proactively work with City agencies and departments to make sure projects are finished as efficiently as possible.

When it comes to choosing between pedestrian safety and parking space, I believe the health and well-being of San Franciscans must be the priority. With cars often traveling dangerously fast through our neighborhoods, measures to slow traffic and narrow crossing distances are important to implement as soon as possible.

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

First, there should be no question as to whether necessary improvements to pedestrian safety have sufficient funding. That should be a top priority for lawmakers. If additional resources are needed, we must explore new progressive avenues to generate revenue for the City. As a rule, we must first make sure everyone is playing by the same set of rules, and companies with close ties to lawmakers are not allowed to pay their fair share only when they see fit. Beyond that, I believe we can ask more from developers when it comes to transit impact fees, as well as make those who use San Francisco’s housing stock as an investment opportunity pay more to offset their impact (pied-a-terre tax). I am committed to exploring new strategies like these in order to generate resources for much needed projects like pedestrian safety improvements, while also pursuing any and all available federal or state resources.

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?

As much as possible, I believe in local rule. If a City or neighborhood believes certain measures are necessary to ensure safety, only in rare cases should those decisions be limited. When it comes to automated speed cameras, I do see the tremendous potential for saving lives, but would need to see details on the plan for implementation before committing to support. As for lower

speed limits, if the community is behind the idea in their neighborhoods, then I will go to bat with my colleagues on the Board and in the State Legislature to make it happen. Having spent years in Sacramento as Executive Director of Tenants Together, the statewide renters' advocacy group I founded in 2008, I have built relationships with numerous lawmakers, and would leverage these connections to push for sensible changes to state 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?

At my daughter's public elementary school, Carbon Free Friday, Bike/Roll to School Week, etc. are some of the most thrilling days for the kids. For my daughter, it should be just like any other day, because we always take MUNI to school, but it isn't. All the kids go bonkers for the simplest prizes (a pencil! a reflector!) for going to school by foot, bike or bus. It's a reminder that the basic celebration of carbon free modes of transportation, including walking, can go a long way with kids and families, and encourage families to travel without cars.

We must address pedestrian safety to succeed in encouraging families to walk to school. As a parent, I'm deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of my children and I believe that one of the biggest threats to their safety is automobiles. Near my home, there are intersections that simply aren't safe, with stop signs ignored, speed limits ignored, and pedestrians crossing at our peril. This is a problem citywide. With more than 800 pedestrians injured each year by cars, parents may be hesitant to choose walking or biking over other forms of travel.

The educational resources provided by WalkSF to elementary schools—including Grattan, where my daughter attends—are very helpful in terms of understanding and navigating the existing landscape. Improving conditions, such as adding bulbouts or increasing center medians, will no doubt facilitate increased walking rates by putting parents at ease when it comes to the safety and well-being of their children.

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 absolutely support efforts to increase walking trips in San Francisco—in addition to improving public health and helping our environment, it's the best way to experience our city and stay healthy. Improving pedestrian safety is the best way to realize this goal, and as Supervisor I am committed to making sure Vision Zero projects have adequate funding to be fully implemented. In addition, promoting events like Walk to Work Day, as well as the personal health benefits of daily exercise, will help get more people pounding pavement, rather than burning gas.

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 generally favor proposals like shifting street space into public places where people can walk, gather, and where communities grow. That said, it must be appropriate to the existing neighborhood, and must have buy-in from neighbors who are directly affected. With community support, I believe proposals like these are innovation steps toward becoming a more walkable, livable city.

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?

Over a decade ago, Domino's Pizza sought to move onto Divisadero. I organized over 1700 neighbors against the proposal. In addition to our opposition to a huge chain moving onto Divisadero and the impact on local businesses, one of the big concerns was Domino's delivery drivers (in and out of a parking lot) and the anticipated interactions with pedestrians. Walk SF joined our coalition and we successfully stopped Domino's from moving in.

As mentioned above, I love San Francisco's neighborhoods. I also firmly believe that neighbors should have a say in the policies that affect the communities where they live. That's the root of a neighborhood coalition I co-founded called Affordable Divis.

This past July, the current District 5 Supervisor passed a rezoning law to allow developers of residential projects on the Divisadero Corridor to build more units. It did not, however, require any higher percentage of those units to be affordable. As I asked around, I heard from neighbor after neighbor that they had not heard anything about the changes. In response, working with community leaders, I helped create Affordable Divis. Through a series of neighborhood meetings, we came to a consensus on a Community Plan, which set out neighborhood demands on a series of issues around development on the Divis Corridor. (You can read the full plan, here: <http://goo.gl/PlwF6X>)

Among the wide-ranging issues we addressed was pedestrian safety. After some discussion and debate, the coalition came to a consensus that "pedestrian use must be maximized in all new development" and at the same time limiting curb cuts for pedestrian safety.

This is how my office at City Hall will function—bring in community members, discuss and debate important issues, and build consensus around common-sense policies, just as we did with pedestrian safety in our Affordable Divis Community Plan.

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?

We need to make sure all San Franciscans -- seniors, kids, persons with disabilities, everyone -- feels safe walking in San Francisco. Infrastructure improvements can encourage walking in San Francisco, as can public education and outreach. Thank you for your work to make SF more pedestrian friendly and encourage walking throughout the city. I appreciate your time and attention to this race.