



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Mike Young

Candidate for: Board of Supervisors, District 7

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

As a young person who grew up on Nob Hill and attended middle school and high school across town, my life revolved around walking and MUNI. The northeastern part of the city is well suited to walking and I miss those days of strolling down the hill to get fresh groceries in Chinatown.

Now that I'm older, I've migrated to living on the Westside and depend more on my car for transportation. Walking has now become a form of meditation when I can fit it into my schedule; I still enjoy long walks along Land's End and take every opportunity I can to re-explore the streets and alleys of Chinatown and North Beach and reminisce about my youth.

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.

Walking must be an integral part of any city's transportation system. There is a reason why locations like Union Square, Haight Street, and shopping malls like Santana Row are popular with people; they provide opportunities for everyone to engage in activities on a human scale, at a human pace.

But our industrialized society depends on mass transportation and the speedy delivery of goods and services by motorized transport, so much so that we've begun to push back on the very means that have allowed us to enjoy a standard of living unprecedented in human history. We are now coming to terms with the trade-offs necessary to sustain this way of life and my hope is that we can work together to find the right balance between motorized transport, mass transportation, bicycle transport, and the need to create and preserve environments that promote more human-scale travel.

More to the point, I take a balanced approach to the competing interests between vehicular, mass, bicycle, and pedestrian transport. We need them all and no mode of transport should take precedence over another unless the effected communities overwhelmingly decide it should be so.

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’ve lived and served on U.S. army bases where traffic accidents are the leading cause of avoidable deaths and understand the need to create and enforce traffic policies meant to save lives. In so far as a local elected official can influence transportation policy, I am in favor of reducing speed limits and enhancing safety measures at pedestrian crosswalks.

I believe we can strike a balance between increasing pedestrian safety and taking away parking spaces and/or vehicle lanes. After all, drivers become walkers as soon as they step out of their cars. Each community should have a say over how this balance is struck in their own neighborhoods.

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

Again, given the balance we must strike in each community, we should highlight and protect successful safety projects by involving the community and ensuring these programs remain whole during the Mayor’s budget formulation process.

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?

No one opposes the concept of increased traffic safety to save lives. The difficulty is creating programs that everyone can agree on that should be generalized across a community or region. If we want to achieve the goal of influencing State law, we must first create successful programs that adequately balance the equities of all stakeholders in the process. Only then can we have compelling stories with which we can persuade other communities in California to adopt similar policies.

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?

We need to get school aged children away from their phones and YouTube and more active in sports or performance arts. As a Level 1 certified CrossFit instructor, I am of the strong opinion that the best of way of encouraging anyone to walk more is to increase their base level of fitness. This is not something any single policy can achieve but must be an integrated effort between schools, after school programs, and family education.

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?

Yes, I support this goal. We should be evaluating each new development project for its impact on the differing modes of transportation. No mode should be sacrificed for another unless there is a compelling public benefit for doing so.

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 there is a basic human need for housing and communities that are at “human scale”, e.g. walking streets, dense commercial corridors, and structures that go no higher than three or four stories. Unfortunately, most of San Francisco is already built-out and there are no more opportunities to create new “human scaled” locations. That being said, we are in the middle of a building boom downtown and I look forward to how the new public spaces will be received by neighbors there

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?

No, I have not.

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?

No, thank you