



BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Melissa San Miguel

Candidate for: District 9 Supervisor

PERSONAL WALKING EXPERIENCE

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

I was born and raised in the Mission and have enjoyed exploring neighborhoods in San Francisco on foot. It's how I learned about new businesses, said hello to neighbors and gotten in some exercise. Walking is an enjoyable and big part of my life as I take public transit around the city and journey on foot.

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 grew up in a beautiful city and neighborhood where everything you needed – the bank, food, pastries, and grocery stores - was within walking distance. I fundamentally believe that pedestrians should have access to clean and safe sidewalks and should feel safe crossing the street. This is an issue of equity and of protecting our most vulnerable. My parents are seniors, and my father in particular, has difficulty walking. I believe our streets should be safe for those who have disabilities, are seniors, and kids so that they, too, can enjoy the neighborhoods without fear for their lives. Simply because you decide to walk to get to school or to run errands doesn't mean you should have an increased risk of injury or death.

I support the goals of Vision Zero. Walking is a sustainable transportation method and is worth investing in to support our broader goals of reducing our impact on the environment. Moreover, we should increase pedestrian traffic as it is healthier for individuals and many places in San Francisco are within walking distance. I support making walking a safe part of our transportation system.

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 would prioritize people's lives over parking spaces and automobile lanes. I will support enforcement of our laws to focus on the unsafe driving practices that are the main causes of death and injury. I will support citywide and community efforts to educate others on safer

driving practices so we can have a culture shift within our city's drivers, and I will support increases in funding to improve our streets so that they are safer to cross and walk on. Holding city agencies accountable for their role in reducing fatalities is important, as well as having the data and evaluation components available to measure our efforts

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

Securing the resources for these improvements is essential to realizing Vision Zero. I will work with my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's Office to provide the resources our communities need to walk our neighborhoods safely. I will also support data and research efforts that demonstrate where we need to make immediate investments and what long-term strategies will help us get to our goal of reducing pedestrian fatalities. I would also explore what public-private partnerships may be leveraged and what federal and state grants are available for these types of improvements

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?

Both my parents are seniors and live in the Mission. They walk around the neighborhood to take care of errands, support local businesses and visit their friends. I worry about both of their lives because they are not as able to walk as quickly as before, and there are drivers and bicyclists who do not always slow down for pedestrians. My Mom has even told me of many times when a bicyclist or car almost ran her over.

I support efforts to reduce speeds so that our streets are safer, including reducing speeds in school zones and automated speed enforcement. In my work as an education advocate, I have successfully passed state legislation and expanded state budgets in support of vulnerable, underserved students. I know how to build coalitions and get things done. I would leverage these policy-making skills and relationships to work with community and state leaders to advance legislation that values the lives of our pedestrians. We must cut down the number of pedestrian injuries and deaths so that seniors, people who have disabilities and others do not bear an unfair, inequitable burden of living and walking in San Francisco.

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?

Ensuring the safety of children is essential to increasing the number of youth walking to school. This means reducing street violence and increasing pedestrian safety. To accomplish this, we need to invest in community programs and youth programs to reduce violence on our streets. We also need to encourage the use of a walking school bus, which provides an adult volunteer to pick up and walk children to school/home. I would also encourage the use of a biking train. To make these routes to school safer, I think we should invest in narrowing lanes, adding speed bumps and raised pedestrian crosswalk around schools.

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 enjoy walking the city and want to find ways to make it safer for people to walk for their commute or to get errands done. I support the City's goal to increase these types of walking trips in the next five years. I would work to pass the type of street improvements that make walking safer; advocate for the funds needed to realize these improvements and support enforcement of laws that were developed to make our streets safer, especially in areas where there are high rates of pedestrian injuries.

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?

At this point, I am not familiar with the details of these types of projects and I look forward to discussing this with the members of Walk SF, learning more and developing a position.

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?

In my career, I have been an education advocate for low-income students, English Learners and students in foster care. While I haven't had an opportunity to work on issues related to walking/walkability, I am committed to ensuring every member of our community has a walkable, safe and livable neighborhood.

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?

I am here to be an advocate for pedestrians who have every right to enjoy our sidewalks and streets in safety. Simply because one may have a disability and need an assistive device, or

because one is older and needs more time to cross the street, doesn't mean you should be at an increased risk of injury. My Dad has had to walk with an assistive device and I know how having even sidewalks, and sufficient physical space and time to move are vital to not only increasing one's mobility, but one's independence and safety.