

Step by step toward safe streets for all



IMPACT REPORT 2019



From the Executive Director



Members of the Westside Waves talking with Supervisor Norman Yee about slower speed limits and improved crosswalks where their teammate and friend Madlen Koteva was hit and killed.

Dear Friend of Walk San Francisco,

I know none of us will ever forget 2020. What's happening in our city and world because of the pandemic is devastating and overwhelming in countless ways.

But 2019 will also be burned in my memory. Last year was when I accompanied members of the Westside Waves girls soccer team to City Hall. They went from office to office, asking elected officials to act quickly to bring better crosswalks and slower speed limits to John Muir Drive.

John Muir Drive is where their 14 year-old friend and teammate Madlen Koteva was hit and killed in March while crossing the street with her mother and dog.

As I walked the halls with those girls, it was a flood of emotions. One was anger. Why should anyone have to go around pleading for improved crosswalks and slower speed limits?

All streets should be designed and enforced to keep our children – and people of every age and ability – safe while walking. This shouldn't be something that's even up for debate.

But it is, as we all know. And that's why Walk San Francisco exists. To tirelessly push for our streets to prioritize the safety of everyone who walks – especially children, seniors, communities of color, and people with disabilities.

So to all of our members and supporters: from the bottom of my heart, thank you. You're making this essential work happen. You're saving lives and showing what's possible. **What's included in this impact report – our first-ever – is 100% because of you and your personal commitment and investment in our work.**

And with you at our side, we'll keep building an unstoppable and diverse movement of people who want San Francisco to be the most pedestrian-friendly city in the United States.

With gratitude,

Jodie Medeiros, Executive Director
Walk San Francisco



FIVE DEFINING WINS

IN 2019

1. Car-Free Market Street

For more than ten years, we advocated for a different kind of Market Street. A Market Street that really feels like our city's Main Street. A Market Street that is a welcoming space for people rather than a throughway for vehicles. A Market Street that is one of the city's safest places for people walking, not one of its most dangerous.

In October, the SFMTA Board of Directors unanimously passed the Better Market Street plan. This included restricting private vehicles on Market Street from Steuart Street near the Ferry Building to Octavia Boulevard starting in early 2020.

With five of the city's top ten deadliest intersections on Market Street, we expect a huge and immediate boost to pedestrian safety when vehicles can no longer turn onto Market.

This hard-won victory is historic. And we see it as a turning point in San Francisco truly prioritizing people on our streets. Walk SF will work tirelessly so this is just the beginning for safe, pedestrian-first, climate-friendly streets.



2. Groundbreaking Changes for Some of the Most Dangerous Streets

2019 was a huge year getting strong plans for how to fix some of the city's most dangerous streets over the finish line including 5th Street, 6th Street, Taylor Street, Brannan Street, Mission Street, and Geneva Avenue.

Our deep engagement with residents, community-based organizations, and Walk SF members led to the adoption of groundbreaking changes to protect pedestrians. Our 'pop-up' outreach helped bring even more voices into the planning processes, like you see here in the Tenderloin.

We're proud and excited that many of the most comprehensive safety treatments will be added to the streets listed above, including: removing vehicle travel lanes, sidewalk extensions and daylighting at intersections, raised crosswalks, no-turn-on-red, and more.

These pedestrian-first safety projects will raise the bar for what's possible in transforming dangerous streets.



3. Faster Fixes to the High-Injury Network

2019 marked the halfway point for San Francisco's ten-year goal of ending severe and fatal traffic crashes. And the pace of changes being made to achieve Vision Zero has been far too slow given the challenge at hand. This is especially true given the "high-injury network" – the 13% of streets where 75% of traffic crashes occur – is more than 150 miles!

So we pushed for the City to find a way to bring affordable, fast, and proven fixes (using paint, posts, signs, and signal changes) to many more streets at an accelerated pace. Thanks to our members' advocacy, in June, SFMTA passed their new "Quick Build" policy. Taylor Street in the Tenderloin was the first street to receive this safety treatment. Our celebration with Supervisor Matt Haney is shown here.

The Quick Build policy has incredible potential for calming streets in a cost-effective way – and making real progress across the entire high-injury network.

4. State of Emergency for Traffic Safety in San Francisco



At crash sites and at City Hall, we cried out for action for safe streets.

Together with Supervisor Matt Haney and the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, we began calling for a state of emergency for traffic safety in July. This was in the aftermath of several horrific fatal traffic crashes combined with an alarming rise in overall pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

Our cries for a state of emergency for traffic safety got louder when in September, the data for 2018 crashes was released. It showed that severe traffic injuries are up, and critical injuries for people walking are on the rise.

In November, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency for traffic safety in San Francisco. The language in the resolution is strong, and makes clear that the safety of people walking and biking must be prioritized over flow of traffic.

While the resolution isn't legally binding, it gives us a new way to hold city leaders accountable to take action for safe streets. It's also elevated the issue of traffic safety. Soon after the resolution was passed, we held World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Victims. The event had unprecedented attendance and media coverage.

At last, our message is getting across to elected officials: traffic crashes are unacceptable, and we need urgent action to protect all of us.

5. Prop D, the Tax on Uber and Lyft

On a typical weekday, ride-hail vehicles make more than 170,000 vehicle trips within San Francisco. We know this is taking a toll on pedestrian safety.

So Walk SF got the word out – and got out the vote – on the YES on Prop D campaign. We are especially grateful to Jenny Yu, a member of San Francisco Bay Area Families for Safe Streets. Jenny was featured in a powerful mailer that showed Jenny at the intersection where her mother was hit by a speeding driver in a debilitating crash.

On Election Day, voters showed that San Franciscans are ready to address the impact of ride-hailing services on our safety and city. Prop D passed with a 67.65% YES vote; the resulting new tax on Uber and Lyft will go straight toward funding public transportation and Vision Zero safety projects. Now we're working to shape which pedestrian projects are prioritized.

Passing Prop D is only one step, but every solution counts as we move closer to making San Francisco a pedestrian-first city.



Walk SF got out every possible vote in the narrow victory for a tax on ride-hailing companies.

FIVE KEY STEPS TOWARD SAFER STREETS FOR ALL

1 A Car-Free Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley

Walk SF was an instrumental voice for a car-free Octavia Boulevard surrounding Patricia's Green. At the final hearing, SFMTA Board members not only approved it, but said they want this space expanded! We now have a real conversation happening about creating more permanent car-free spaces.

2 Inspiring the Next Generation

We're so proud to inspire the next generation in building healthy transportation habits as part of the San Francisco Safe Routes to Schools Partnership. This year, we broke records with participation in Walk & Roll to School Day: a total of 13,000 students powered themselves to school!

First-Of-Its-Kind Report on Universal Design for Protected Bike Lanes

Our first-of-its-kind Getting to the Curb report shows how to design and build protected bike lanes that provide safe and direct curb access for pedestrians. Walk SF is proud to oversee the Senior & Disability Working Group of the Vision Zero Coalition, which initiated the creation of this report with support from the City's Safe Streets for Seniors program and Metta Fund. Already,

3

SFMTA has committed to use the report to guide its design of protected bike lanes – and we're sharing it with planners and agencies nationwide.

4 Lifting Up the Voices of Crash Survivors

Walk San Francisco coordinates San Francisco Bay Area Families for Safe Streets, a group of survivors and families whose loved ones have been killed or injured in traffic crashes. This year, Families for Safe Streets focused on lifting up severe crashes and the stories of survivors. A new member, Nancy Harrison, shared her crash story in a thought-provoking feature in the San Francisco Chronicle. The piece also highlighted the fact that someone is severely injured in a traffic crash in our city every 15 hours.

5 Accountability on Traffic Enforcement

As pedestrian fatalities rose in 2019, we looked at every possible contributing factor. Going through the SF Police Department's traffic citation data, it didn't take long to realize that traffic enforcement was at rock bottom and not focused on the high-injury network. This reality has intensified our push for San Francisco to fully harness technology like red light cameras and pass legislation ASAP so that proven and unbiased speed safety cameras can be used on our streets.



WE WALKED FAR IN 2019!



Walk SF continues to lead walks of all kinds, from our 15th annual Peak2Peak to monthly neighborhood walks exploring on-the-ground pedestrian safety issues.

2019 included two new adventures made possible thanks to "WalkLab." WalkLab is a group of volunteers – Nancy Botkin, Marilyn Adamson, Andrew Greenberg, Cole Brennan, Eric Chase, and Karen Rhodes – who together create routes for Walk SF that never disappoint.

First, we kicked off walking the historic 49 Mile Scenic Drive in March, with our Walk Lab volunteers leading 75 participants on the entire route over the course of nine months. Our 49 Mile Scenic Walk was inspired by and possible thanks to Kristine Poggioli and Carolyn Eidson, authors of Walking San Francisco's 49 Mile Scenic Drive.

We made history in June as one of the first groups to walk the new Crosstown Trail. This incredible 17-mile route connects the southeast and northeast corners of the city, and was established in part by walking enthusiasts Karen Rhodes and Bob Siegel (both Walk SF members!).



We also did our first-ever family walk in 2019, Playground2Playground!



How We Prioritize Our Work

In 2019, we launched our first-ever three-year strategic plan. The long-term goals of Walk SF are to: 1) end pedestrian traffic deaths and severe injuries, and 2) increase the number of trips people take on foot. But how we'll get there is a hugely important part of the plan. For the first time, we defined how we will prioritize our work – and how we will work.

Determine our highest priority projects through an equity lens.

Walk SF will focus our program activities on communities and/or geographies where issues of equity are most at play. Crash data shows that San Francisco's residents living in communities of concern suffer the most from traffic violence. These are communities with the most low-income people, immigrants, communities of color, seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

Mobilize new voices to speak up for safe streets.

Walk SF's community engagement will be focused on outreach and education in communities and populations that have disproportionately been impacted by traffic violence and often not engaged in the community process. Walk SF will develop our community engagement that ensures a community's voice is authentically brought forward to guide advocacy efforts. We will use our training and education activities that focus on children, families, and seniors.

Build strong coalitions across diverse communities.

As a leader in pedestrian advocacy, we will focus on education, communications, and advocacy to increase our organization's efficacy in building and developing partnerships in the community around pedestrian safety issues.



THE URGENT NEED FOR SAFE STREETS IN THE TENDERLOIN

Traffic violence is a daily reality for the nearly 40,000 people who live in the Tenderloin. Every single street in the Tenderloin is designated as “high-injury” in terms of traffic crashes. Four pedestrians were hit and killed in the Tenderloin in 2019. Hundreds were injured, including a 12-year-old boy walking home from an after school program. Ask someone who lives or works in the Tenderloin if they’ve ever witnessed someone get hit while walking, and they usually have more than one story.

Fast-moving traffic shouldn’t be zooming through a neighborhood that’s home to the highest concentration of children and seniors in the city. This feels especially unjust considering how few of the mostly very low-income residents of the Tenderloin even own cars.



2019 was an important year for Walk SF’s community engagement and advocacy work with the Tenderloin neighborhood. We stepped into leading the Tenderloin Traffic Safety Task Force, a coalition of Tenderloin and citywide advocates and service providers (including many residents). We’ve built lasting relationships with people who live and work in the Tenderloin – and are eager for serious traffic safety improvements.

Together, we detailed what kind of changes and investments that SFMTA must prioritize to make people safe in the Tenderloin, from reengineering too-fast, one-way streets to equitable traffic enforcement like red light cameras to emotional support services for witnesses of traffic violence. We also collaborated to create a list of the streets most urgently in need of “Quick Build” safety fixes: Larkin, Leavenworth, Hyde, and Golden Gate. SFMTA will complete two of these in 2020, and we’ll keep pushing for rest.



At World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Victims, our memorial walk passed the sites of every fatality in the Tenderloin in 2019.

GRATITUDE TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

Our donors make Walk San Francisco's critical work possible, and are how we can keep pushing for streets where no one is injured or killed in traffic crashes. Thank you to the following foundations, companies, and individuals who invested in safe streets for all of us in 2019.

\$25,000+

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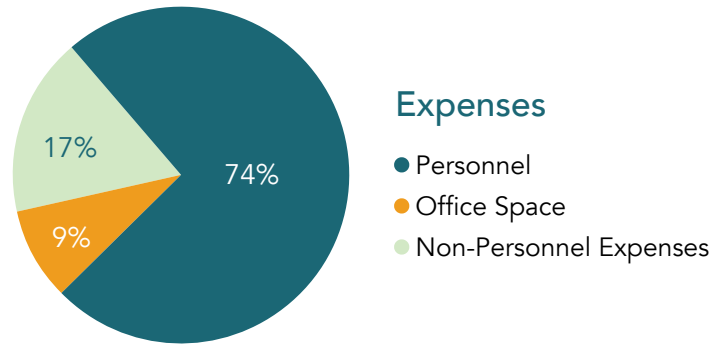
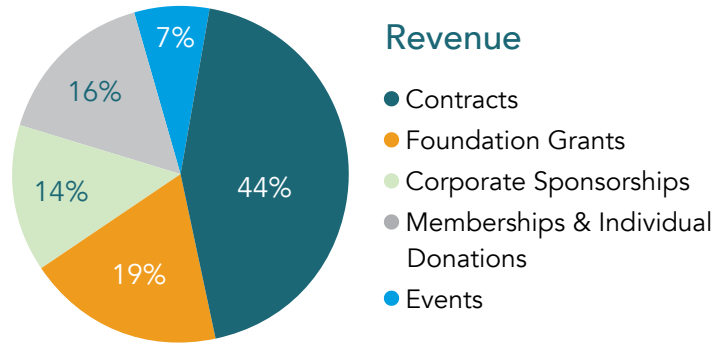
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FINANCES

Beginning Net Assets \$173,806.00
 Ending Net Assets \$337,637.25

As Walk San Francisco entered its third decade, we are proud to have reached an important organizational goal set by our Board of Directors. In 2019, we established a policy to always have at least three months of operating reserves, and are proud to have reached this! These operating reserves mean that Walk SF will be able to weather unexpected but necessary expenses or a sudden loss of income for the short term plus also have some capacity to act nimbly if a major policy opportunity arises. We must continue to build operating reserves for Walk SF's long-term health and effectiveness.

Thank you to the staff and Board members who dedicated their time and talent to Walk SF for part or all of 2019:
 Marselle Alexander-Ozinkas, Scott Blanks, Josh Bingham, Cathy DeLuca*, Natasha Opfell*, Shaana A. Rahman, Alice Rogers, Chandani Patel Thompson, Greg Zeppa*. *staff





3 Ways to Connect with Walk San Francisco

1. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with @walksf.org.



2. Sign up for our newsletter at walksf.org.

3. Read the latest on our blog.

