

25 Years of Safe Streets Wins

2023 IMPACT REPORT



From the Executive Director

Dear Friend,

What if there was no Walk SF?

What if there had been no organization working on behalf of everyone who walks in our city for the past 25 years?

As you read this impact report, you'll see how crucial and lifesaving Walk SF's work has been.



You are why Walk SF exists. You are why so many wins over the years were possible.

You're part of our story.

Our story started small in 1998, with a handful of volunteers who were fed up and heartbroken by how many pedestrians were dying in traffic crashes.

It would be years before the first staff was hired. But even so, Walk SF didn't waste time in pushing for common sense changes that were desperately needed.

One of our first campaigns demanded that the City start painting zebra-striped crosswalks (also known as 'high-visibility' or 'continental' crosswalks) at dangerous intersections. Zebra-striped crosswalks increase the likelihood of a driver yielding to a pedestrian by 30 - 40%. But the City's policy was to paint zebra-striped crosswalks only in school zones.

That had to change... and we changed it. And then Walk SF kept going. Today, Walk SF continues to advocate for the common sense policies and pedestrian safety basics that still aren't yet everywhere they need to be. The small stuff matters. We've never lost sight of that.

As the work and wins have continued, it's all thanks to people like you. You understood how much safe streets matter, for so many reasons. You supported Walk SF.

From the beginning, our mission has focused on a simple belief: that we should all be able to cross the street without fearing for our lives – especially kids, seniors, and people with disabilities.

But there's more. This is about making San Francisco the most pedestrian-friendly city in the nation, a place where we can connect with the city and each other through walking for transportation, health, and joy. And with pedestrian deaths at a forty-year national high, we need to lead.

This work is also about equity. For decades, many streets were designed to prioritize fast moving traffic over the people who actually lived there. People of color and low-income people have suffered disproportionately from streets made hostile to anyone outside of a vehicle. Safe streets are absolutely a social justice issue.

So what's next?

Over the past five years, the opportunities – and challenges – have accelerated for our work.

Many of the challenges you probably feel when you simply walk out your front door. The pandemic unleashed more dangerous speeding and aggressive driving behavior. Vehicles are bigger, heavier, and more powerful by the day, while drivers are more distracted.

The national trends for pedestrian deaths reflect this and are sobering. Meanwhile at the local level, traffic safety still isn't the priority it should be for our city, despite this issue affecting everyone. Too often, politics still prevent meaningful progress.

But it's also a time of possibility. The pandemic opened the window for historic wins for pedestrians, like JFK Promenade, Slow Streets, and the Great Highway. Supporters like you made it possible for us to jump on these opportunities.

The California Legislature is increasingly fertile ground for Walk SF. Our work to pass AB 645 in 2023 to allow speed cameras to be piloted in San Francisco (which took six years!) taught us a lot. Like with speed cameras, state laws can support leaps of progress for safe streets locally and beyond.

Here in San Francisco, the safe streets movement is growing quickly, with more passionate people and partners to move forward an increasingly bold agenda together. San Francisco voters are also showing they support safe streets and we must harness this. The Vision Zero Coalition led by Walk SF has 30+ neighborhood and community-based organizations from around the city – we need to double that.

There are many voices still to bring in and lift up in this movement so it fully reflects the diversity of who is most impacted by traffic violence. That must be the priority of Walk SF's community organizing – and also with our Families for Safe Streets group, which supports people who have been directly affected by a traffic crash.

Twenty-five years ago, Walk SF's founders couldn't have imagined some of the wins that we have been able to achieve already, and how the organization has become a national leader. But I think we're just getting started – for everyone who walks in San Francisco, and everywhere.

So let's show what's possible for people-first streets.

I can't wait to see the story we will write for everyone who walks today and in the decades to come. There's a lot to build on: historic wins, bold policy advocacy, and most of all, our growing community of supporters—including YOU.



Jodie Medeiros, Executive Director Walk San Francisco



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Walk SF wouldn't be celebrating its 25th anniversary if generous people like you hadn't invested in us over the years, allowing us to grow from a volunteer-led organization to having a small professional staff dedicated to working on behalf of everyone who walks.

But we wouldn't have this milestone without the visionary people who stepped up in 1998 to found Walk SF. We interviewed Betsy Thagard and Michael Smith, who were leading forces in the early days of Walk SF.

Betsy Zoomed in from Washington, DC, where she now lives. Michael is still in San Francisco and is very much involved in Walk SF's mission.

You can read highlights of the inspiring interview with Betsy and Michael at walksf.org/25yearslater.

S.F. Demonstrators Demand Improved Pedestrian Safety By John Wildermuth CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

st Friday's death of a 10-month-

annoise to make it safer to walk in San Francisco. About 20 people showed up in front of Gity Hall last night, holding up signs naming little Yusaf Khouja and other pedestrians killed by cars last year. They called on the city to spend what it takes to improve traf-fic safety.

"We want to see someone like "We want to see someone like the city's bicycle program manager, a person whose job is to make the strects safer for pedestrians," said Betsy Thagard of Walk San Francis-co, an advocacy group.

Yusaf's mother was pushing him in his stroller across Gough Street-near Lafayette Park when a car mak-

In the 1997-98 fiscal year, 43 p destrians were killed in San Franci co, the most in a more than a di cade. Mayor Willie Brown hi called for increased enforcement of traffic laws and more safety educ-tion for drivers.

It's money that's needed, said Leah Shalhum of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. The city's Depart-ment of Parking and Traffic has only one person working half-time on pedestrian safety issues.

pedestrian sately issues.

The concerns are not lost on the city, said Stuart Sunshine, head of Parking and Traffic. Brown has given the department \$550,000 for pedestrian sately and neighborhood traffic programs, and some of that money will go toward himing a full-time traffic engineer dealing with pedestrian issues.

This June 23, 1999 San Francisco Chronicle article covers one of Walk SF's first actions on the steps of City Hall, demanding change after a 10-month-old baby being pushed in a stroller by his mother was hit and killed in the crosswalk.

"I think a lot of people joined us because there was a lot of outrage. Pedestrians were getting killed, and nobody was doing anything about it."

- Betsy Thagard, Walk SF founder



"Everybody's a pedestrian, yet there was no representation for pedestrians. It was obvious we needed to get people together to be a collective voice for pedestrians."

- Michael Smith. Walk SF founder



1998 A small handful of people join together to found Walk San Francisco. These dedicated volunteers are outraged over the number of pedestrian deaths happening and how little the City was doing to make things safer.

2001 Walk SF successfully pushes for a doubling of the sidewalk parking violation fine from \$25 to \$50 (and in 2004, wins an increase to \$100). At the time, sidewalk parking was rampant citywide because the cost of a ticket was so low. This campaign was Walk SF asserting that we matter as pedestrians – and we will defend our right to walk safely.

2002 Walk SF gets the City to agree to start painting zebra-striped crosswalks at dangerous intersections – not just in school zones. Zebra-striped crosswalks increase the likelihood of a driver yielding to a pedestrian by 30 - 40%.

2002 Sidewalks are our refuge as pedestrians. This is why we advocated for and passed the nation's first policy banning Segways from sidewalks (these were the e-scooters of their time).

2004 Walk SF hosts its first Peak2Peak. This epic urban hike raises crucial funds for Walk SF's work and becomes a beloved annual event.

2006 Walk SF takes on its first of many campaigns to win more funding for pedestrian safety projects. We outline a \$35 million spending plan, gaining the support of Supervisors for investing in curb ramps and countdown signals citywide.

2010 Walk SF advocacy spurs the first-ever Mayor's Executive Directive on Pedestrian Safety.

2011 Walk SF's advocacy leads the City to start creating **15 MPH zones** around all K-12 public and private schools citywide.

2013 Walk SF wins the **City's first-ever Pedestrian Action Plan**, bringing new visibility and accountability for safe streets – and teeing up what happened in 2014 (see below).

2014 Walk SF leads the successful campaign for San Francisco to be the third city in the U.S. to adopt Vision Zero, a preventative, systemic approach to end severe and fatal traffic crashes.

2015 Walk SF starts a local Families for Safe Streets chapter to support and bring voice to crash survivors and people with loved ones who were hurt or killed in crashes. Together, Walk SF and Families for Safe Streets host the first World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims event in San Francisco.

2016 Walk SF starts the **Senior & Disability Working Group**, bringing together a range of groups to identify and push for safe streets policies.

2018 With our partners at Senior & Disability Action and the Transit Justice Group, Walk SF successfully pushes for **longer crossing time at every traffic light** with signal countdowns throughout the city.

2018 Walk SF helps launch the Tenderloin Traffic Safety Force, a coalition of Tenderloin and citywide advocates and service providers (including many residents) dedicated to bringing real change to streets that have prioritized traffic over people for decades.

2019 Walk SF is a leading champion for voters passing Measure D, which establishes a tax on ride-hailing companies to fund public transportation and safe streets projects.

2019 Walk SF publishes district-by-district **traffic safety report cards** for the first time. These show which streets are the most dangerous, and the status of safety improvements for each street.

2020 Walk SF launches its #SlowOurStreets campaign to take on dangerous speeds because there is nothing more important when it comes to preventing tragedies on our streets.

2020 A decades-long dream comes true when private vehicles are restricted on Market Street from Steuart Street near the Ferry Building to Octavia Boulevard.

2020 Walk SF starts the call to make JFK Drive creates temporary car-free 24-7 as a safe space for social distancing during the pandemic. Mayor Breed then uses emergency powers to do so temporarily, plus car-free space in McLaren Park.

2021 Walk SF helps successfully pass Assembly Bill 43, which allows San Francisco to set lower speed limits on certain types of streets.

2021 Walk SF, with the 30+ groups in the Vision Zero Coalition, present a unified platform for the City's next traffic safety strategy; the City commits to many of our asks.

2021 The Tenderloin neighborhood becomes a model for traffic safety with big wins the community has fought for brought to life. Every street gets 20 MPH speed limits, no-turn-on-red, and pedestrian safety zones. Many of the deadliest streets are redesigned to calm traffic.

2022 Walk SF plays a leading role in two campaigns to make permanent 1.5-miles of car-free space in Golden Gate Park, now called **JFK Promenade.**

2022 The City's Slow Streets program is made permanent. Walk SF helped bring together the People's Slow Streets Coalition, which successfully won specific design standards for Slow Streets to keep traffic speeds at 15 MPH and traffic volumes to 1,000 or fewer vehicles.

2023 Governor Newsom signs AB 645, making it legal for San Francisco and five other California cities to pilot speed cameras. Walk SF worked on speed camera legislation for six years with our Families for Safe Streets group.

THANKING OUR MEMBERS FOR 25 YEARS

The founders of Walk SF became our first members, and each person who joined along the way is how we're still here today.

There is no Walk SF without our members.

Meet Fran Taylor, a Walk SF member for 20+ years



Fran has been a member of Walk SF since 2003. She has volunteered many hours with us over the years, plus shown up at countless public hearings, actions, and rallies.

Fran was also a leader in a years-long but ultimately successful campaign to win dramatic improvements to Cesar Chavez Street. Cesar Chavez Street was previously six-lanes wide and extremely dangerous for everyone who walked on it.

Fran embodies Walk SF's mission, and she inspires our staff every time we're with her.

Read Fran's full story at walksf.org/fran.

"I've supported Walk SF all these years because this is something that affects me every day." - Fran Taylor

Meet Audrey Liu, who supports Walk SF every month!

Audrey Liu might live in the Richmond, but can be found all around the city lending a hand and speaking in support of all kinds of sustainable transportation issues.

Audrey is also a Walk SF sustainer. That means Audrey is signed up to automatically make a gift to Walk SF every month. This predictable, flexible support is big for us as a small nonprofit. Plus, it saves resources because we don't have to ask Audrey to renew, making each donation go that much farther.

Join Audrey as a monthly, quarterly, or annual sustainer at walksf.org/donate.



"To me, Walk SF's mission isn't just about making our streets safer, but also creating a more vibrant and connected community where anyone regardless of age or ability can enjoy our streets." - Audrey Liu

YOU MADE SO MUCH POSSIBLE IN 2023

After Six Years, We Passed Speed Camera Legislation

Your support is why this proven solution is now coming to San Francisco



Families for Safe Streets members like Jenny Yu and Liz Quiroz were always at the heart of this campaign.

Dangerous speeds kill and injure again and again on San Francisco's streets. Speed is the #1 cause of severe and fatal crashes in our city – and in California. That's why every possible solution is needed to slow our streets.

Since 2018, Walk SF's top legislative priority has been

to pass a law to allow speed cameras to be used in California. Other cities in the United States have already embraced speed safety cameras, which dramatically shift behavior and can reduce the number of severe and fatal crashes by as much as 58%.

Our efforts in passing three previous state speed camera bills were unsuccessful. **But because** of you, Walk SF was able to press on – and do everything possible to get Assembly Bill 645 across the finish line in 2023.

This meant going to the State Capitol multiple times, bringing the stories of people who have been affected by traffic crashes to Assemblymembers and the media, organizing surges of calls and emails at key moments, and more.

It paid off! On October 13, 2023, Governor Newsom signed AB 645. AB 645 allows six California cities, including San Francisco, to pilot a limited number of speed safety cameras on the streets with the highest crash rates and in school zones. San Francisco is now allowed to install 33 speed cameras.

This win wouldn't have happened without Families for Safe Streets members, who shared their stories of loss with lawmakers and the media countless times to show why this lifesaving technology is needed *now*.

Moving forward, Walk SF is working to be sure the City gets speed cameras on the ground as soon and as strategically as possible – and with a suite of additional speed-slowing solutions as part of our ongoing #SlowOurStreets campaign.





At our celebration of AB 645 becoming law. Former Assembly member David Chiu (center) started the campaign with us in 2018.

Fighting for Changes at Deadly Intersections

You're how we can push every day for everyone who walks

On August 15, a four-year-old child being pushed in a stroller by her family, was hit and killed in the crosswalk at 4th and King Streets.

Walk SF felt strongly that this tragedy must not just be a flurry of stories in the news. It must be a wakeup call for City leaders. It must be a turning point for truly creating safe streets (especially intersections) for everyone, across San Francisco.

Walk SF brought together the broader community to grieve for this child and demand change: at 4th and King, at intersections like 4th and King near freeway on/off ramps, and at the 900 designated high-injury intersections awaiting basic safety improvements.

For weeks, Walk SF staff, volunteers, and Families for Safe Streets members were out at 4th and King flyering and talking with people about what had happened. We organized a constant stream of emails to City leaders plus public comments at every possible hearing to show that inaction was not acceptable.



Hundreds of people walked the 4th and King intersection to show our shared outrage and heartbreak.

Some improvements have since been made at 4th and King. The SFMTA has removed double turn lanes citywide, and is making progress toward fixing the 900 intersections.

But it's not enough – not even close. Everyone should be able to cross the street safely, and much work remains for this to be a reality. This continues to be the heart of Walk SF's mission.

Supporting and Bringing Voice to Crash Victims

Together, we are ending the silence on traffic violence



Holding space for grief, hearing the stories, seeing the urgency for change: this is what World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is for.

Because of you, Walk SF is able to lead San Francisco Bay Area Families for Safe Streets. This group brings together crash survivors and people with loved ones who were hurt or killed in crashes.

Your support means that throughout the year, we hold regular meetings, provide emotional support and post-crash resources, and help Families for Safe Streets members use their voices for change.

Our Families for Safe Streets chapter is part of an increasingly powerful national network with growing influence on federal traffic safety policy. The importance of supporting this group and its role within the safe streets movement cannot be overstated.

In November each year, we hold World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims together with Families for Safe Streets. 2023 was the largest ever, providing space for grief while shining a necessary light on what's happening too often on our streets. For too long, traffic violence has been a silent epidemic, often ignored or tacitly accepted.

More That Your Support Made Possible in 2023

Combining policy advocacy, organizing, and on-the-ground action

Walk SF needs to work on many fronts – and in many ways – to win the changes needed for our streets to be safe.

Sometimes it's passing a groundbreaking state bill that brings a brand new solution like speed cameras to our streets. Many times it means showing up at City Hall. Too often, sadly, it's hanging a sign to remember a pedestrian whose life was cut short.

Your support means Walk SF can show up for safe streets every day, in many ways. Because of you, in 2023 Walk SF was able to:

- Launch updated versions of our district-by-district traffic safety report cards.
- Be the leading voice for Vision Zero to get the funding and focus needed to succeed.
- Push for the strongest possible designs to protect pedestrians on dozens of projects the City is planning.
- Support more kids getting to school on foot and other people-powered ways through our role in the Safe Routes to Schools Partnership.
- Advocate for the car-free space on Shelley Drive in McLaren Park to be made permanent and continue to support the car-free Great Highway pilot and long-term future.
- Continue our work as part of the Tenderloin Traffic Safety Force and grow our presence in the other neighborhoods.





Remembering Those Pedestrians Lost in 2023 💛



January 1 - Bess Chui

January 10 - Wan Mei Tan

January 23 - Primagda Yuniarti

April 11 - John Deamicis

May 23 - Michael Hansson

May 23 - Victor Nguyen

May 24 - Nancy McNally

July 8 - Frans Alst

July 9 - Thomas McKean

August 6 - Devin Rachac

August 14 - Sammy Davis

August 15 - Sion Kim

September 11 - Stella Wong

September 20 - Jian Huang

October 19 - Thomas Duba

October 28 - Richard May

December 11 - Timothy Waters

December 26 - Unidentified



Our staff members Malena and Josie made a beautiful altar at Día de los Muertos.

We asked our staff to share one of their memories from 2023. Here's what they said.



"Being part of creating Walk SF's first-ever altar at Día de los Muertos to remember pedestrians who had lost their lives in 2023. I was overwhelmed by the emotions and gratitude shared with us."

- Malena Mackey Cabada, Campaign Associate



"When the first folks got to the finish line of the first-ever SF Stair Challenge with huge smiles on their faces."

Guy Joaquin,
 Development & Events
 Manager



"We were in the office, gathered around my laptop watching the final vote for AB 645 [the speed camera bill] at the California Assembly. When the votes came in 62 to 9 YES, Jodie started crying!"

Josie Dominguez-Chand,
 Community Engagement
 Manager



"Getting to celebrate JFK Promenade's 3rd birthday. This was the first time we'd gotten to celebrate since the fate of this car-free space was finally 100% secured. JFK Promenade forever!"

- Marta Lindsey, Communications Director



"Leading up to the holidays, we still had a big fundraising gap to fill. As the executive director, you can imagine I was a wreck. I sent one last email, not expecting much. But then the gifts started coming in. I was overwhelmed by gratitude for our amazing community of supporters. They filled the gap so Walk SF could start 2024 strong."

- Jodie Medeiros, Executive Director

Walk On!

Most of the time Walk SF is busy advocating for safe streets... with a few exceptions. One is our annual, epic walking events.

In 2023, we held the 19th annual Peak2Peak, selling out this beloved event in record time. Save the date for the 20th annual Peak2Peak on Saturday, September 7, 2024.

We also launched a new walk celebrating and connecting some of San Francisco's 900+ public stairways. The four-mile, 2,000-step **SF Stair Challenge** was an instant hit, drawing participants from beyond even the Bay Area who wanted to enjoy one of the best things about our city. ABC 7 did a special segment on the SF Stair Challenge, and walk-star Nancy Botkin was featured in a big story in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Peak2Peak and the SF Stair Challenge brought together the walking community in an incredibly fun way while raising crucial funds for Walk SF. We're grateful to everyone who bought a ticket or volunteered.

These events are possible because of WalkLab. WalkLab is the team of wonderful volunteers who donate their creativity, time, and encyclopedic knowledge of San Francisco to craft our 100% unique walks. Thank you to all the 2023 WalkLab contributors: Marilyn Adamson, Nancy Botkin, Cole Rose, Eric Chase, Andrew Greenberg, Alexandra Kenin, and Karen Rhodes.

San Francisco Chronicle



Taking the new SF Stair Challenge with the woman who

Our events were powered by in-kind donations of food, snacks, drinks, and supplies from Andronico's Community Markets, Arizmendi Bakery, Chloe's Closet, Gus's Community Market, HOP WTR, JAMBAR, Liquid Death, OCHO Candy, Other Avenues Grocery Cooperative, Paige Mill Winery, Safeway, Sunset Penguins, Suppenküche Biergarten, and Trader Joe's.

We are also deeply grateful to our sponsors for their generous support of Walk SF's events in 2023.









Altair Law, Arup, Civic Edge Consulting, Coopers LLP, Fehr & Peers, INTERSTICE Architects, Law Office of Chuck Geerhart, Law Offices of Jeremy Pasternak, and Meisel Law Group



GRATITUDE TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

Thank you to the following individuals, foundations, and companies for seeing the need for – and investing in – safe streets in San Francisco.

\$25,000+

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Our Volunteers Are Walk-Stars!

Volunteers make big things possible as a small nonprofit. In 2023, volunteers did everything from stuffing envelopes to helping at the SF Stair Challenge to speaking at the State Capitol.

Marilyn Adamson Gina Alvino Brian Andersen Andrea Anderson Adelina Aramburo Zoee Astrachan Cyndi Bakir Nancy Beam Paul Bickmore Matt Biggar Stephen Bingham Lezley F Blair Nancy Botkin Carol Brownson Diane Bunch BB Chamberlain Manish Champsee Jane Chan Eric Chase Liz Chavez Rachel Clyde Kevin Darling Traci Dauphin Andrea Davis Parker Day Ali de Jona Mo Devlin

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Claudia Siegman Finn Smith Libby Smith Caiti Stobie Sandy Sumano Michelle Svelti Fran Taylor David Tran Barnett Trzcinski Courtney Veraldi Simon Walker Susan Weisberg Dana Weissman Paul Wermer Dennis Wong Norman Yee

Kevin Zamzow-Pollock

Jenny Yu

OUR FINANCES

Thanks to our supporters, in Walk SF's 25th year we were in a strong financial position to begin growing our team, plus start addressing some internal technology needs and get external support to ensure organizational excellence.

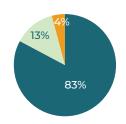
Walk SF operates on a July - June fiscal year and our audited FY 2023-2024 financial statements are currently being finalized. For a copy as soon as these are available contact info@walksf.org.





- Memberships & Individual Contributions
- Grants
- Corp Sponsorships & Events

Total Revenue: \$1,084,667



Expenses

- Personnel
- Office Expenditures
- Programs

Total Expenses: \$967,223

CURRENT STAFF

Josie Dominguez-Chand, Community Engagement Manager Guy Joaquin, Development & Events Manager Marta Lindsey, Communications Director Malena Mackey Cabada, Campaign Associate Jodie Medeiros, Executive Director Fiona Yim, Communications & Marketing Manager

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Rhodes, President
Amy Wilson Morris, Treasurer
Holly Allen, Secretary
Chris Bergeron
Jina Bartholomew
Patty Esposito
Ebon Glenn
Neville Hemming
Ashley Rhodes
Charles Rubinoff
Rebecca Rudolph
Sergio Ruiz
Avery Spiel



Thank you to the staff and Board members who dedicated their time and talent to Walk SF in 2023 – and throughout our 25 years. You're part of our story, always!

Three Ways to Share the Walk SF 💛



Buy a gift membership for a neighbor at walksf.org/membership



Follow us and share Walk SF on social media







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Recruit friends for Peak2Peak or the SF Stair Challenge

Wish Walk SF a Happy 25th Birthday with a Donation Today!





