

Questions for Candidates

Jessica Morsell-Haye – Fort Bragg City Council

1. ***Bicycling/walking and safe bike/pedestrian infrastructure enhances quality of life and addresses issues such as affordability, equity, access, health, and the safety of our streets. In your view, what can the City/County do to actively encourage more people to bike and walk?***

I see walking and biking as increasingly important to the health of Fort Bragg's downtown business district. As we zone the mill site for development we can include ample parking centralized to downtown to encourage parking, biking and walking throughout. The coastal trail is a huge step in the right direction and once it connects to downtown, the incentive to walk and ride will increase significantly.

For pedestrian safety, I think we should seriously consider implementing pedestrian scrambles at Main/Redwood and Main/Laurel.

We also have a lot of bicyclists using highway 1 both for tourism and daily commutes. In its current state, the road is difficult to share and quite dangerous. I hope we can partner with Caltrans to ensure that bike lanes will be incorporated into the long term plan for our throughway.

2. ***Studies from Portland and other US cities show people on bicycles spend more per month in local business districts than those arriving by other modes. Bicycling and walking also promote a "shop local" mindset (it's difficult to get to a faraway store to shop if you are walking or biking). What steps would you take to ensure that local businesses in your shopping district are able to benefit from better access by bicyclists?***

Connecting the coastal trail to the downtown business district at the base of Redwood Avenue, and adding a public parking lot, will dramatically help increase foot and bicycle traffic downtown. By linking the downtown business district with the coastal trail, we enable people to segue from walking by the ocean to walking into town for snacks and supplies without getting back in their cars. It also gives bicyclists coming from the north on the Hall Road a route into town, bypassing highway 1.

For ease of use once in town, we also need more bike racks throughout our downtown business district. It would be great to see the city partner with businesses for placement and design.

3. ***Childhood obesity and chronic weight related health issues are a major problem. As an elected official how would you use your position to foster an active living agenda that will make measurable improvements in these chronic but often preventable diseases?***

With the addition of coastal access from the downtown business district, we will inevitably be shifting local culture and lifestyle further toward active, outdoor engagement. Public access to our natural beauty helps children from all socio economic backgrounds engage in a more active lifestyle. As an elected official I will safeguard public access to Fort Bragg's natural resources, advocate for the continued growth of educational centers like the Noyo Marine Center, and partner to facilitate the rehabilitation of our sports fields.

4. ***Forty percent of vehicle trips are less than two miles and many of us trip-hop with our cars rather than walking when we have a number of closely located errands to do. Will you commit to using your leadership position in the community to "walk the walk" by personally walking and biking whenever possible during your tenure in office?***

Absolutely. I already walk and bike with my children as much as possible. I would embrace the challenge to drive less. I agree that it's an important example to set.

5. ***We are at the point now where increasing on-street infrastructure like bike lanes will require some difficult decisions, which will not please everyone. A classic example is the struggle between installing bike lanes, sometimes at the expense of on-street parking. Give us some insight into your decision-making process and how you plan to balance the opinions of residents who may be at odds.***

By focusing on smart design, adding strategic and *selective* bike lanes through Fort Bragg in combination with new public parking lots, we should be able to improve safety and access in Fort Bragg. Even if residents are initially at odds, if the changes are effective and well planned, they should hopefully recognize their value over time.

6. ***Do you have a biking or walking related story you'd like to tell?***

As a child I road my bike all over the towns of Comptche and Mendocino. In second grade we lived on Kelly Street in Mendo and I went to the Green School which was by Mendozas at the time. I would ride my bike to and from school every day, a rare luxury at age 7. One day I was distracted as I road by the Art Center, and looking behind me, smacked right into the back of a parked van. I've always had an image in my head of sliding down the back of it like a cartoon bug. Well, I picked my bike right up and carried on home. Luckily, kids are pretty elastic because I certainly wasn't wearing a helmet! I love seeing children out on their bikes, the more we can make our town bike friendly, the safer we'll feel sending them out to explore the world.