



Q: 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?

A: Thank you for asking this! According to the Sierra Club transportation is the largest source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at 29%. In California, transportation accounts for an even bigger share: 39% of harmful emissions. Closer to home, in neighboring Sonoma County, transportation accounts for 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. We don't yet have data for Mendocino County, but it's easy to see we are not doing enough to make bicycling and walking safer. We need to allocate a significant percentage of our transportation budget to getting people out of private vehicles. Centerpiece of this effort will be bicycle and walking paths - the totally non-polluting way to get around.

Q: 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 walk also promote a “shop local” mindset (it’s difficult to get to a far away 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?

A: Changes are already underway. Caltrans is widening sidewalks and adding much needed bike lanes as part of the Hwy 101 relinquishment project. This will benefit our businesses tremendously.

Q: 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?

A: Yes, as I've often said, the students I work with nearly all exhibit signs of nature deficit disorder. We need to get kids out in nature, wilderness hikes, safe bicycle paths to school, bike trails to the coast and more. I support McGuire's Rail to Trails efforts wholeheartedly as well as using modified bicycles designed to run on existing railroad tracks.

Q: 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?

A: Yes, I am a big fan of bicycling and walking. My mother, myself and my two children bicycle every day, and we have weekly bicycling rides as a family. I need to acquire a bicycle rack for the back of my car!

Q: 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.

A: Wasn't that one of the selling points for the Willits Bypass, to get the heavy traffic off our streets and make downtown more pedestrian and bicycle friendly? I think the culture is changing. I hope we will move in the direction of Marin County - in Fairfax there are more bicycle repair shops than gas stations. In Berkeley, where I lived while finishing college, there are streets dedicated to bicycle throughways that make it fun and easy to get around.

Q: Do you have a biking or walking related story you'd like to tell?

A: Yes. Last fall I asked my students if they would like to hike from Willits to Redwood Valley to have lunch at the Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery. They were excited so we arranged a field trip. Students were up before dawn and we hiked 6.5 miles along Tomki Rd., over the mountain and down the other side to the Monastery to share the 11am meal with the monks. It was a trip they will never forget and many promised to make it again with their families.