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**California's Streets Dangerous "By Design":  
Seniors, Minorities Bear Greatest Burden**

SAN FRANCISCO – A new report released today revealed that pedestrians represent a disproportionate number of traffic fatalities in the Bay Area, and among those who walk, seniors and minorities face the greatest danger.

"Dangerous By Design," authored by the national coalition Transportation For America, found that **most people killed while walking are on wide, high-speed, high-volume streets**. Nationally, over half of the 47,067 pedestrians killed from 2000 to 2009 were on these "arterial" streets, and more than 60% were killed on roads with speed limits of 40mph or more.

In California, 6,957 people were killed while walking between 2000 and 2009. Of these fatalities, two-thirds occurred on roads that are eligible to receive federal funding.

Federal funds made possible San Francisco's recent redesign of Valencia and Divisadero Streets. Both now have pedestrian countdown signals and more visible crosswalks; Divisadero has a new median and Valencia has wider sidewalks and lights that are timed for smooth traffic flow at 13 mph. Local merchants and residents have welcomed the changes.

The "Dangerous By Design" report used census data based on broad metropolitan areas: the area of San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont scored relatively low in danger compared to some regions, #41 nationally and #11 in California.

But the county of **San Francisco has one of the highest pedestrian fatality rates in the nation**—#4 of all counties nationally, #3 of large counties, and #1 in California. **More than half of San Francisco's traffic fatalities are pedestrians**. With 220 pedestrian fatalities between 2000 and 2009, San Francisco's pedestrian fatality rate of 51.9% is far higher than Alameda County's of 23% or the national 12%.

San Francisco sees over 800 pedestrian injury collisions every year, and this takes a costly toll. The SFMTA recently reported that **pedestrian injuries in San Francisco cost \$280 million every year**. Direct medical costs alone, based on SF General Hospital records, are \$75 million per year, mostly paid with public funds.

"Pedestrian safety is a fundamental need in our city," said San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee.

Lee last week announced a bond for the November ballot that totals \$248 million, including \$50 million for streetscape improvements to help increase pedestrian safety. Lee added, "Through the work of our Pedestrian Safety Task Force and various City departments and partners, we are working to prevent these collisions through better street design, speed limit enforcement,

better signage and signals, and other measures, including increased enforcement around hot spots to make San Francisco's streets safer and more enjoyable for everyone."

Among ethnic groups, there are significant discrepancies in pedestrian safety, the report found. African-Americans in California have an 80% higher pedestrian fatality rate compared to whites, and for Latinos, the difference is nearly double (100% more). Here in San Francisco, the Department of Public Health has found that **African-Americans face more than double the risk of pedestrian injury** faced by whites.

For seniors, "Dangerous by Design" found that nationally, people age 65 and over are twice as likely to be killed while walking as people under 65. In California, said the report, the risks are higher, and the SF Department of Public Health has found that **in San Francisco seniors are four times as likely to be killed by a car** as people under 65.

"You should be able to walk safely in your neighborhood, whether you live in Pacific Heights or in a residential hotel on 6th Street," said San Francisco Supervisor Jane Kim. Kim's District Six is home to many arterial streets as well as a significant elderly and community of color population, and sees far more pedestrian injuries and deaths than any other district. "It's an issue of equity. We have to invest in closing the gaps in pedestrian safety."

In San Francisco, according to the Department of Public Health, pedestrian deaths occur most often on arterial streets and near freeway ramps. Pedestrian collisions are more frequent on arterial streets, and because of high traffic speeds, collisions are more severe.

The Department of Public Health in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control reported that a studies show that a person hit by a car is **six times more likely to be killed by a car going 30 mph than one going 20 mph**. Their study found that San Francisco pedestrian deaths could be cut in half by reducing traffic speeds by 5 mph.

"Speed kills," said Elizabeth Stampe, executive director of Walk San Francisco, the city's pedestrian advocacy group. "Wide, fast streets are deadly. We need to redesign our streets to make them safer and more walkable, and we need dedicated funding to get the designs built. We have no time to lose."

The full report is available at

<http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign2011/states/?state=ca>

And can be downloaded as a PDF at

<http://t4america.org/docs/dbd2011/ca-dangerous-by-design.pdf>

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#### **About Transportation For America ([t4america.org](http://t4america.org))**

TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4) is the largest, most diverse coalition working on transportation reform today. We believe it is time for a bold new vision — transportation that guarantees our freedom to move however we choose and leads to a stronger economy, greater energy security, cleaner environment and healthier America. We're calling for more responsible investment of our federal tax dollars to create a safer, cleaner, smarter transportation system that works for everyone.

#### **About Walk San Francisco ([walksf.org](http://walksf.org)):**

Walk San Francisco and its members are making San Francisco a more welcoming place for everyone to walk. We speak up for the safety and priority of pedestrians, and through education and policy advocacy, we work with residents, city agencies, and elected officials to reclaim city streets as shared public space.