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Escalating Traffic Deaths Heighten Calls for Vision Zero and Safer Streets from Victims' Families & the Community

San Francisco, California - November 7, 2014 - In light of an alarming increase of traffic violence, members of San Francisco's Vision Zero Coalition gathered at the site of Priscila Moreto's recent death to demand City leaders step up action to meet their Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic deaths by 2024.

Walk San Francisco, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, SOMCAN, Chinatown Community Development Center, and Senior and Disability Action, joined with community and family members to mourn the loss of 28 victims of traffic violence at City Hall, where the steps were lined with 28 pairs of empty white shoes to honor each parent, child, and neighbor who has been killed on the streets of San Francisco this year.

"The City cannot afford to keep up a 'business as usual' attitude as the number of tragedies grows on our streets; far too many people have been needlessly killed in preventable crashes, especially among seniors, low-income communities and communities of color," says Nicole Schneider of Walk San Francisco. "Despite City leaders' commitment to Vision Zero, we are not seeing the action and urgency to match that commitment. Critical on-street safety projects along the City's high-injury corridors remain stalled; enforcement goals to target the most dangerous traffic behaviors are unmet; and education of professional drivers lack necessary mandates."

The City has officially committed to Vision Zero -- the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Board of Directors, SF Police Department, and many other City agencies have formally endorsed this goal.

And this week, San Francisco voters endorsed street safety priorities in their resounding support of Propositions A and B, which focus on Vision Zero street improvements, and sound defeat of Proposition L, which became a referendum on safety over speed on our streets.

"San Francisco voters have spoken clearly to re-affirm their commitment to a Transit-First city that prioritizes safety," said Leah Shahum, of the SF Bicycle Coalition. "As of today, there is a clear public mandate and the funding needed to invest in safe streets. Now we need to see the stepped-up political will from the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the SFMTA leadership to follow through on demands for safe streets. This means acting on the many street safety plans that have sat languishing for years on shelves due to a lack of political will."

Twenty-eight people have died on San Francisco streets this year, including six in the last two weeks. Nearly all of these deaths have occurred on the 6% of streets where 60% of severe and fatal pedestrian crashes occur.

While the City has made plans to improve some of these streets, projects have languished without sufficient urgency, or taken far too long to construct, endangering too many people, particularly seniors, who made up over half of the pedestrians who died this year and other vulnerable road users, from San Francisco's most underserved neighborhoods -- including SOMA, the Tenderloin, and Chinatown.

"Earlier this week, the City turned on a traffic signal at 6th and Minna to provide a safer crossing along San Francisco's most dangerous corridor," said Angelica Cabande, Organizational Director of South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), who has been fighting for pedestrian improvements for years. "The community fought for this signal for over 10 years, during which time lives have been lost. It shouldn't take that long."

The Vision Zero Coalition called on City leaders to take the following immediate actions:

- Implement safety improvements along the most dangerous streets citywide, including reducing fast-moving traffic on the known dangerous streets, eliminating high injury corridors through the City's WalkFirst strategy, and building physically protected bikeways;
- Establish a Crisis Intervention Team to investigate and respond within six months to severe and fatal crashes in San Francisco with on-street safety improvements;
- Increase enforcement and education measures for professional drivers operating in San Francisco's complex urban environment.

The Vision Zero Coalition commended the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors for their leadership in prioritizing the funding needs of San Francisco streets and transit system, but called on City leaders, including the SFMTA and the SF Police Department, to now step up and deliver on their commitments to the voters of San Francisco.

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Vision Zero Coalition: SOMCAN, Senior and Disability Action, Walk San Francisco, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, Alamo Square Neighborhood Association, CA Walks, CC Puede, Central City SRO Collaborative, Chinatown Community Development Center, Chinatown TRIP, College Hill Neighborhood Association, Community Housing Partnership, Council of Community Housing Organizations, Excelsior Action Group, Folks for Polk, Friends of Monterey Blvd., Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association, Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco, Lighthouse for the Blind, Livable City, Mission Community Market, Mission Economic Development Association, North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association, OWL SF, Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee, PODER, sf.citi, SF Housing Action Coalition, SF Bay Walks, San Francisco Unified School District, SPUR, Sunday Streets, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development, TODCO, United Playaz, Yerba Buena Alliance

Vision Zero – Zero traffic fatalities in 10 years. No loss of life on city roadways is acceptable, when serious and fatal traffic collisions can be prevented. By engineering inherently safer streets, enforcing traffic laws more effectively, and targeting traffic-safety education, cities that adopt Vision Zero policies can eliminate ALL serious and fatal traffic-related injuries, including motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian collisions.