



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Community Urges Action after Death of Advocate Thu Phan Disability Advocates and Vision Zero Coalition Present Five-Point Plan to Improve Safety on City's Most Dangerous Streets as 2016 Traffic Death Toll Reaches Five**

SAN FRANCISCO – Calif. (Tuesday, March 1) – In response to the preventable death of Thu Phan, community members, families who have lost loved ones to traffic violence, disability rights advocates, and the Vision Zero Coalition joined District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim, District 1 Supervisor Eric Mar, District 7 Supervisor Norman Yee, and other City of San Francisco leaders and staff to gather near the site of Thu Phan's death at Market and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, where she was struck and killed by a left-turning driver while crossing in her wheelchair on February 5, 2016. They place purple ribbon and flowers on a wheelchair demonstrating that while Thu Phan has passed, her spirit lives as groups advocate for safety in her honor.

Thu Phan's family, friends, and associates joined with pedestrian and disability rights advocates to urge the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the San Francisco Police Department, and the District Attorney's Office to adopt a five-point plan of engineering and enforcement actions to save lives and meet the City's Vision Zero goal to end all traffic deaths by 2024.

"In the first two months of 2016, five people have already died in traffic crashes – and over half of those were killed on or near our most dangerous streets," said Walk SF executive director, Nicole Ferrara.

"While the recent changes to Market Street are important first steps in making San Francisco's streets safer, they do not go far enough, especially to protect people who are most at risk, including seniors and people with disabilities. Thu Phan's tragic death could have been prevented, if stronger safety measures were in place."

"Living in San Francisco, you hear stories all the time about people being hit by cars – but you never imagine it could happen to you, or your loved ones," said Holly Michna, Thu Phan's sister. "My family and I are completely devastated and have been dealing with the loss, processing how this can happen to someone we love so dearly. In our grief, we realize changes need to be made in San Francisco; people shouldn't die crossing the street in our city. No family should suffer the same tragedy we've had to face."

"Each time I honor the memory of a member of the community who has lost their life to traffic violence, I agonize over the grief and pain of the associates, friends and loved ones left behind," said District 6 Supervisor, Jane Kim. "Thu's death is a terrible reminder of why the City must do everything it can to meet its Vision Zero goal to put an end to preventable tragedies on our streets. As District 6 has the highest number of pedestrian fatalities in the City, the issue of traffic violence has always been a top priority for me, and I know there are further steps we can take to make our streets safer."

Advocates urge adoption of a five-point plan, calling for “leading pedestrian intervals” to give people walking a safe head start to cross the street before vehicles get the green light; amended turn restrictions along Market from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Street to include commercial vehicles, which are currently allowed to make the turn; prioritized enforcement of “failure to yield to pedestrian” violations to meet citywide “Focus on the Five” goals; complete and thorough investigation of lethal traffic crimes to ensure prosecution to the fullest extent of the law; and mandatory, annual traffic-safety training for all city employees who operate city vehicles.

“People with disabilities and seniors are more likely to be hit and killed by cars. When the City makes streets and sidewalks accessible and safe for pedestrians who are most at risk, every member of the community benefits,” said Jessica Lehman, Senior and Disability Action executive director. “In the wake of Thu’s death, city leaders have a responsibility to act quickly to make changes to ensure that this never happens again.”

“San Francisco has come a long way to ensure equal access for pedestrians living with disabilities – yet this fatal crash illustrates the need to implement changes to existing traffic laws,” said Jessie Lorenz, Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco executive director. “Members of the disability community come from all walks of life. Whether we live in San Francisco, or commute and work here – we all deserve to be safe. Thu’s life mattered, and she should have been protected in that crosswalk.”

With only eight years remaining to bring the number of traffic deaths to zero, the City must prioritize safety first and adopt the best possible solutions available to protect everyone who lives in, works in and visits San Francisco.

The Better Market Street project, which will completely remake a street where more than a quarter of a million people walk daily, is still years away. Yet, every day that the City waits to adopt the strongest safety measures possible, lives hang in the balance. “Deaths like Thu Phan’s are stark reminders that these crashes are not accidents; they are needless and preventable,” said Ferrara.

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**Vision Zero – Zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2024.** 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.

**Senior and Disability Action:** SDA works for rights and justice for seniors and people with all disabilities. We strive to make San Francisco a safe, healthy, walkable city, where all seniors and people with disabilities can travel easily and play an active role in our community.

**Walk San Francisco:** Walk SF and its members are making San Francisco a safe, more walkable city and reclaiming streets as shared public space for everyone to enjoy. [www.walksf.org](http://www.walksf.org)

**Mayor's Office on Disability:** The SF Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD) is the City's overall ADA Coordinator, tasked with ensuring that all City programs, services and facilities are accessible to people with a broad range of disabilities. MOD is a member of the City's Vision Zero Task Force.

**Independent Resource Living Center San Francisco:** ILRCSF is a non-profit organization working to empower individuals with disabilities so that they can have as full, productive and independent lives as possible. Pedestrian safety is essential to maximizing the involvement of people with disabilities in the community.

#VisionZero

#CrashNotAccident