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Statement on San Francisco's First Pedestrian Death of the Year

It is with deep sadness that Walk San Francisco shares the death of 87-year-old Alfred Yee to one of San Francisco's most dangerous streets. Walk SF offers our deepest sympathy to Mr. Yee's family and loved ones.

This death marks the first pedestrian to be killed by traffic violence in 2015, though every day an astounding average of three people are hit by cars while walking in San Francisco. Two other people have been killed in traffic so far this year—a bicyclist and a motorcyclist—transportation modes that cannot compete when there is a collision with a two-ton automobile. The City's Vision Zero goal is to end all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2024.

Mr. Yee was hit yesterday morning while walking in a crosswalk across Geary Boulevard. The person driving failed to yield, one of the top five most dangerous traffic behaviors, alone responsible for over 40% of pedestrian injuries in San Francisco. The driver's arrest is pending; the SF Police Department committed to arresting and citing people who hit and kill other people on our roadways in 2014.

Today, the City is celebrating much needed engineering improvements to be implemented on Geary Boulevard, one of the streets that make up the 6% of city streets that account for over 60% of pedestrian deaths and serious injuries. Walk San Francisco is grateful for the recent emphasis on pedestrian- and traffic safety improvements, and is asking the City to:

1. Increase infrastructure goals from 13 to 18 in order to ensure that the City is on a trajectory for achieving Vision Zero by 2024, and
2. Fund a Safe Streets for Seniors program in the City Budget, to support senior pedestrian safety including increased senior zones and outreach to senior communities.

"The Vision Zero Coalition is asking the City to fix 18 miles of our most dangerous streets every year, and prioritize our most vulnerable San Franciscans with a Safe Streets for Seniors program," said Nicole Schneider, Executive Director of Walk San Francisco, who leads the Vision Zero Coalition with support from the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. "With known dangerous conditions on our streets, the City must protect the lives of San Franciscans by focusing on ensuring preventable traffic injuries and deaths are eliminated."

Designing a safer transportation system where human error doesn't lead to death and disability is at the core of Vision Zero. Engineers can make it easier for people driving to see people walking, and vice versa, through simple improvements such as flashing beacons at intersections, bulbouts that extend curbs at corners and increase visibility, and strategies to slow traffic.

Walk SF acknowledges the City's hard work to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2024; by increasing engineering improvements and senior-focused programs, the City will move closer to its Vision Zero goal, so no family has to suffer as Mr. Yee's family is suffering today.

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Walk San Francisco (WalkSF.org) and its members are making San Francisco a more welcoming place for everyone to walk. Walk SF speaks up for the safety and priority of pedestrians, and works to reclaim streets as shared public space.

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 pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist collisions.