



**FOR RELEASE  
MONDAY, NOV. 9, 2009  
8 A.M., PST**

**CONTACT:**  
Manish Champsee  
415-637-7256  
manish@walksf.org

### **San Francisco No Walk in the Park For Pedestrians Report Shows**

*Walk San Francisco urges Speaker Pelosi and Congresswoman Speier to Support Increased Focus on Pedestrian Safety in Upcoming Federal Legislation*

**San Francisco, CA** — San Francisco is among the most dangerous communities in the nation for pedestrians, a new report shows.

The report, *Dangerous by Design: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths (and Making Great Neighborhoods)*, compiles a variety of statistics on America's major metropolitan areas and states. An update of the 2004 *Mean Streets* report, *Dangerous by Design* was released by Transportation for America (T4America.org) and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership.

The report lumped San Francisco with most of the East Bay in its analysis of major metropolitan areas. Walk San Francisco used the same data sources to extract some San Francisco-specific numbers. The report found that nationally there are 1.53 pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people. In San Francisco, that rate is 2.60 pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people, 70% higher than the national average. Nationally, 11.8% of all traffic deaths are pedestrians while in San Francisco, that number is 47.7%. At the same time, the report found that nationally only 1.5% of federal transportation dollars are spent on pedestrian projects, and in San Francisco it's even lower at 0.5%.

"Walkscore.com and Prevention Magazine have both ranked San Francisco as the most walkable city in America," said Manish Champsee, President of Walk San Francisco. "However, with almost half of all traffic fatalities being pedestrians, we need to do a better job of protecting people when they are walking. It's time for our funding commitment to match the severity of the problem."

The report also got the attention of local leaders who are calling for more dedicated sources of funding for pedestrian safety improvements.

"In a city that should be prioritizing pedestrian safety, we need to re-double our efforts to find local funds to augment federal, state and regional monies," said District One Supervisor Eric Mar referring to the Safe Streets and Road Repair Bond that was originally supposed to appear on last weeks ballot, but was shelved at the last minute.

The report authors note that most pedestrian deaths are preventable, because they occur on streets that are designed to encourage speeding traffic and lack safe sidewalks,

crosswalks, pedestrian signals and other protections. Fixing these problems is a matter of will on the part of state departments of transportation and local communities, and of shifting spending priorities, the report concludes.

In 2007, Alice Wallace was killed crossing 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She was stranded in the middle of the street as the light turned from green to red because there were no countdown timers or even a Walk/Don't Walk signal that would have let her know that it wasn't safe to cross at that time. In the wake of that tragedy, the installation contract for the countdown signals was expedited, the speed limit lowered, and a double-fine zone was instituted. All of these things have led to a steep decline in pedestrian fatalities along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

"Fortunately, we have made a number of positive changes along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including the first two phases of new countdown timers at intersections along the corridor and the double-fine zone, which have already made 19th Avenue much safer for pedestrians," said State Senator Leland Yee. "However, we must continue to be vigilant in making additional improvements on this dangerous corridor to prevent further collisions, injuries, and loss of life."

While walking conditions remain perilous across the country, many communities are working to make their streets safe and welcoming for people on foot or bicycle, the report shows. Communities across the country are beginning to reverse the dangerous legacy of 50 years of anti-pedestrian policies by retrofitting or building new roads as "complete streets" that are safer for walking and bicycling as well as motorists.

"Here in San Francisco, we could be saving lives and encouraging more residents to engage in healthy levels of activity by investing in crosswalks, traffic calming and other safety measures," said Champsee. "However, we need to invest more resources in pedestrian safety measures and rid ourselves of policies that hamper our ability to push these projects forward."

"As Congress prepares to rewrite the nation's transportation law, this report is yet another wake-up call showing why it is so urgent to update our policies and spending priorities," said James Corless, director of Transportation for America.

Walk San Francisco encourages our federal delegation, Speaker Pelosi, Congress-woman Jackie Speier and Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to support federal efforts to better fund pedestrian safety.

Under the current federal transportation bill, less than 1.5 percent of available funds nationally are directed toward pedestrian safety, although pedestrians account for nearly 12 percent of all traffic deaths and 9 percent of total trips. Between 2007 and 2008, more than 700 children under the age of 15 were killed walking.

Seven organizations served on the steering committee for this report, working closely with T4 America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. These organizations include the American Public Health Association, AARP, Smart Growth America, America Bikes, America Walks, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the National Complete Streets Coalition.

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**ABOUT WALK SAN FRANCISCO**

Walk San Francisco advocates for walkability and pedestrian safety for people of all ages and abilities. We are a coalition of organizations and individuals that seeks to improve San Francisco's walking environment through activism and policy advocacy that educates residents, city agencies, and elected officials regarding the need for more pedestrian-friendly streets. <http://www.walksf.org>

**ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4AMERICA)**

Transportation for America is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century national transportation program. The coalition's goal is to build a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work and play by aligning national, state and local transportation policies with an array of issues like economic opportunity, climate change, energy security, health, housing and community development. [www.t4america.org](http://www.t4america.org)