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News

Mayor London Breed Announces New Vision Zero Initiatives to Improve Safety at Intersections

Building on Mayor Breed's quick-build policy and push to create 20 miles of new protected bike lanes, a package of steps to address safety at dangerous intersections will improve pedestrian safety

August 29, 2019

Mayor London N. Breed today announced a package of Vision Zero projects to increase street safety at intersections throughout San Francisco. The projects include expanded enforcement, piloting left-turn traffic calming to reduce turn speeds, analyzing and developing policy recommendations to restrict right turns at red lights, updating walk signals to extend time for pedestrians to cross the street, and adding new diagonal pedestrian crossings at busy intersections.

The package of safety improvements, which will be presented on Tuesday, September 3 at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Board of Directors meeting, is a continuation of Mayor Breed's commitment to increasing street safety for pedestrians and bicyclists by moving forward the City's Vision Zero goals. Over the past five years, 60% of fatal crashes have occurred at intersections, highlighting the need for these safety improvements.

"This year we have been reminded far too often that we have so much more work to do to reduce traffic fatalities in our City and make our streets safe," said Mayor Breed. "That's why we instituted our new 'quick-build' policy to make immediate changes to dangerous corridors, and why we're creating 20 miles of new protected bike lanes in the next two years. But until our streets are safe we need to keep doing more, and this package of safety improvements is going to make a number of important improvements at dangerous intersections to keep people safe."

Over the past five years, 27% of severe and fatal crashes involved a turning vehicle, with the majority of these involving a left turn. To help address this, the SFMTA will begin piloting left-turn traffic calming designed to reduce turning speed. These pilots will be installed and evaluated at eight intersections by early 2020. Furthermore, the SFMTA and the Department of Public Health (DPH) will be analyzing and developing policy recommendations on limiting right turns at red lights by Spring 2020. SFMTA currently restricts rights turns on red at over 200 intersection locations.

Additionally, SFMTA is continuing to make progress on a number of important changes to put pedestrians first. By the end of the year they will have completed:

- 260 signal updates to extend walking time for pedestrians,
- 165 leading pedestrian intervals, which change signals for pedestrians to walk before changing signals to green for drivers in order to increase visibility,
- Nine new diagonal pedestrian crossings, also known as pedestrian scrambles,
- Seven new signalized intersections,
- 25 new pedestrian countdown signals,
- 46 new corner red zones (daylighting), which increase visibility of pedestrians to drivers.

"To achieve Vision Zero, we need to use tools that work," said Tom Maguire, SFMTA

Interim Director of Transportation. “The SFMTA has adopted a safe systems, data-driven approach to eliminating fatalities, including engineering improvements, enforcement and education, all of which work together to create safer streets and change behavior.”

The San Francisco Police Department has also been stepping up their enforcement on the five most dangerous traffic behaviors: speeding, violating pedestrian right-of-way in a crosswalk, running red lights, running stop signs, and failing to yield while turning. In June, the Department created a new pilot program of traffic company officers to exclusively work on enforcing these violations. Early feedback indicates positive results with the team issuing over 400 citations, with 99% being “Focus on the Five” violations. As a result, they will be doubling the size of this program to eight traffic company officers. In addition, District Stations will bring a renewed focus to traffic safety violations, including regular updates to the Police Commission associated with “Focus on the Five” citations.

Finally, Mayor Breed has directed City departments to model safe habits on our street and has established guidelines that, unless responding to an emergency, City vehicles should never block the pedestrian right-of-way or bicycle lanes.

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