



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LEE ANNOUNCES LOWERING SCHOOL ZONE SPEED LIMITS
FOR SAFER STREETS & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

*City's School Zone Speed Limits Changed to 15 Miles Per Hour Starting Today with Peabody Elementary in the
Richmond Neighborhood*

San Francisco, CA— Today Mayor Edwin M. Lee joined San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and pedestrian safety advocates including Walk San Francisco to showcase new lower speed limits to 15 miles per hour on one-lane streets near all San Francisco schools.

“The children of San Francisco are our most precious resource, and we need to make sure that they feel safe traveling to and from school,” said Mayor Lee. “To help ensure this, I have asked City departments to prioritize actions, such as the new 15 miles per hour school speed limit zones, that will have a direct and immediate effect on making our streets safer and more livable for all pedestrians.”

“Transportation research has demonstrated that we can have a positive impact on pedestrian accident rates with careful design, operation and enforcement of the transportation system,” said SFMTA Board of Directors Chairman Tom Nolan. “These efforts, along with education, can help make our streets safer for all, especially for our young students.”

“Walking in San Francisco should be inviting and safe for all residents,” said SFMTA Director of Transportation Edward D. Reiskin. “The SFMTA is committed to working with our City partners to ensure that kids can get to their schools safely. The SFMTA Livable Streets team will continue to seek out comprehensive and innovative street improvements for everyone.”

SFPD will provide enforcement as well as education support. The traffic enforcement will roll out in coordination with the sign installation schedule and will begin with issuing warnings followed by citations. Also, SFPD and DPH have prepared a letter for schools to send to parents alerting them to the new speed limits.

“Slow down and don't let yourself be distracted,” said SFPD Chief Greg Suhr. “It is back to school time for the children in our community, and drivers of all ages must be on the alert for our smaller pedestrians walking to and from school. Slowing down and staying focused on your driving allows you to have more reaction time and keeps students safe.”

“Our children's safety both in school and coming to and from school is paramount,” said SFUSD Superintendent of Schools Carlos Garcia. “On behalf of our children, parents and teachers, I want to thank the City for instituting a 15 mph speed limit around our schools.”

“These safe speed zones have been a major goal for Walk SF and its members,” said Walk San Francisco Executive Director Elizabeth Stampe. “They will help create a more safe and sustainable city, helping kids get to school safely and calming traffic in neighborhoods throughout the City. This is a big step forward for everyone who walks in San Francisco.”

The Mayor’s Pedestrian Safety Directive, issued last December under former Mayor Gavin Newsom, includes a specific near-term action item to implement 15 miles per hour speed limits at all schools in San Francisco. The change in speed limit is allowed under the California Vehicle Code (CVC), allowing local authorities to implement 15 mph speed limit zones within 500 feet of schools when children are present.

The 15 mph school zone program includes 213 San Francisco schools from K-12 public and private schools and approximately 1,000 signs. The total cost of the program, \$361,700, will be covered by local Proposition K sales tax funds and SFMTA operating funds. Approximately 100 schools will receive the 15 mph speed limits signage during this school year with installation for the second hundred continuing through the Summer for a planned completion by December 2012.

Mayor Lee convened a meeting for pedestrian safety last month with City staff and asked them to prioritize actions that will have a direct and immediate reduction in auto-pedestrian accidents, especially in areas around schools, to meet the establish targets for the reduction of pedestrian injuries. The goal is a 25 percent reduction in serious and fatal pedestrian injuries by 2016, and a 50 percent reduction by 2021.

One of the most important steps to reduce fatal and serious injuries is designing streets so that motor vehicles travel at speeds that are safe for everyone, including pedestrians. When vehicles are traveling at 30 mph, studies show that pedestrians are six times more likely to die than in collisions with vehicles traveling at 20 mph or less. The prima facie speed limit on San Francisco streets is 25 mph, unless signs are posted to dictate otherwise.

The Mayor’s Office and City agencies have undertaken many efforts to reduce driving speed to posted speed limits. These efforts include the installation of speed humps, traffic circles, median islands, curb bulbs, edge lines, road diets, and traffic signal modifications.

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