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City of San Francisco 2008 Bicycle Collision Report Executive Summary

The 2008 Bicycle Collision Report provides a summary analysis of bicycle crash statistics from 2008 calendar year and compares those numbers to ten years of San Francisco bicycle collision data. It was produced by staff in the SFMTA Bicycle Program using data collected through police reports and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The report analyzes such data as how many bicycle injury collisions were reported, what the primary cause of those collisions was determined to be, and what age and gender groups were involved. Analysis of bicycle collisions provides a strong indication of roadway behaviors that negatively impact bicyclists' safety. The SFMTA will use this information to assist with the planning of bicycle facilities improvements as well as to help identify which vehicle code violations should be prioritized for increased education and enforcement in order to improve safety for all of San Francisco's street users.

A major finding of the report is that the 468 bicycle injury collisions that occurred in 2008 represent a 3.8 percent increase in bicycle crashes over the previous year, and is the highest annual total in the 10-year period analyzed by the report. This rise in bicycle crashes parallels the rise in popularity of cycling as a mode of transportation in San Francisco, and may be an unfortunate corollary to having more cyclists on the streets. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to examine the number of bicycle crashes in relation to the number of bicycle trips in order to gauge relative safety over time or compare bicycling safety between cities.

By incorporating commuter survey data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau into bicycle safety analysis, a bicycle crash rate that approximates crashes per cyclist can be calculated. This analysis reveals that compared to the 12 other California cities with more than 250,000 residents, San Francisco has the lowest number of bicycle injury collisions per estimated bicycle trip to work. In fact, while the absolute number of bicycle injury collisions rose by 3.8 percent between 2007 and 2008, bicycle crash rate analysis shows that bicycle collisions per bicycle trip to work declined by 9 percent over that period and by 20 percent between 2005 and 2008. This indicates that the rising number bicycle injury collisions may be linked to the rising number of people riding bikes, rather than a decrease in cyclist safety.

Of the 312 bicycle injury collisions in 2008 where fault was assigned, 49 percent of the time fault was assigned to a motorist, and 50 percent of the time fault was

assigned to the cyclist. In collisions where motorists were assigned fault, the top three reasons were for turning without signaling, opening a car door when it was unsafe to do so, and failing to yield to oncoming traffic when making a left turn. In collisions where bicyclists were assigned fault, the top three reasons were for unsafe speed, failure to stop at a red light, and failure to stop at a stop sign.

Other findings of the report include: 44 percent of bicycle injury collisions involve cyclists between the ages of 20 and 29; women cyclists are involved in 27 percent of bicycle injury collisions, an almost six percent increase since 1998; and the intersection of Market Street and Valencia Street was the site of 8 bicycle collisions in 2008, the highest total of any intersection in the city.

To request a complete copy of the report, please contact the SFMTA Bicycle Program at: bicycle@sfmta.com .