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Sunset residents take on street safety at town hall hosted by Supervisor Gordon Mar

San Francisco - On Saturday, Supervisor Gordon Mar hosted a town hall in both English and Cantonese focused on addressing traffic violence and street safety in the Sunset. In the past five years, ten people have been killed by traffic violence in District 4, which includes the Sunset and Parkside neighborhoods, and which Mar represents on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

“We all know the stories, the statistics, and the heartbreak. And, like so many others, I know what it feels like to lose a loved one to traffic violence,” said Mar. “This is personal, and not just for me. It’s personal for every parent who worries about their child walking to school, for every bicyclist who counts themselves lucky after another close call on their commute to work, for the mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and teammates and classmates and friends whose lives have been touched by the tragedy of traffic violence.”

In the first six months of 2019, 19 people were killed by traffic violence in San Francisco, outpacing homicides and representing a dramatic increase from recent years.

“We have a crisis on our streets that demands action. And let’s be clear: we have the power to end this. Every single one of these deaths is preventable” said Mar. “We can make our streets safer through better design, better policies, better projects, better enforcement, and better behavior.”

The town hall included remarks from 14-year-old A.P. Giannini Westside Waves soccer player Leela Sriram and former Police Commissioner Suzy Loftus, who have been advocating for pedestrian safety improvements since losing Westside Waves teammate 14-year-old Madlen Koteva to San Francisco's deadly streets while she was walking across a crosswalk on John Muir Drive.

Jamie Parks, Livable Streets Director of SFMTA, gave a presentation on street the City's Vision Zero initiative to end traffic fatalities, and safety projects in progress in the Sunset, including on two of the City's high-injury corridors, the small number of streets that account for the vast majority of deaths and serious injuries. Projects in progress will bring safety improvements to the Lower Great Highway, 19th Avenue, 20th Avenue, and Taraval Street over the next three years.

The town hall also featured a panel moderated by new Sunset advocacy group D4ward, with representatives from Walk San Francisco, the San Francisco Bike Coalition, SFMTA, and San Francisco Transit Riders answering questions on how to improve, expand, and expedite street safety improvements in the Sunset and across the City.
It concluded with discussion groups focused on pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, and transit safety, and remarks from Supervisor Mar pointing out a member of the audience, 10-year old Sunset resident Ian, who sent Mar a letter on Wednesday asking for a 4-way stop at an intersection his grandmother frequents, and frequently feels unsafe crossing.

“This is what this is all about,” said Supervisor Mar. “No-one should be afraid to cross the street, and we’re here to listen to your ideas, because it’s going to take all of us to make Vision Zero a reality and make our streets safer — for everyone.”

After Mar forwarded it to the SFMTA, Ian’s stop sign proposal is now being formally reviewed. That suggestion will soon be joined by ideas town hall attendees submitted on blown-up maps of the Sunset, and in a transportation survey Mar launched at the town hall to gain more input and ideas for improving safety in the Sunset.

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