

1 [Student Pedestrian Safety During School Reopening - Slow Streets]

2 **Resolution urging the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to collaborate**
3 **with the San Francisco Unified School District to maintain and expand San Francisco’s**
4 **Slow Streets program near schools, provide additional safe options for students to**
5 **commute to and from school when in-person learning resumes, and collect additional**
6 **data on student commutes.**
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8 WHEREAS, In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the City and County of San
9 Francisco (the “City”) created the Slow Streets program through the San Francisco Municipal
10 Transportation Agency (“SFMTA”); and

11 WHEREAS, According to the SFMTA, the purpose of the Slow Streets program “is to
12 manage traffic speeds and create a safe network for essential walk and bike travel while
13 transit service levels are reduced,” by limiting designated streets to through traffic; and

14 WHEREAS, On April 6, 2021, the SFUSD Board of Education voted unanimously to
15 give all SFUSD students the option to return to in-person learning starting in the fall of 2021;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, As of April 12, 2021, some students at the San Francisco Unified School
18 District (“SFUSD”) have returned to in-person learning after over a year of distance learning,
19 due to the pandemic; and

20 WHEREAS, According to 2013 data from the UC Berkeley Center for Cities and
21 Schools, 25% of SFUSD students rely on public transportation to get to and from school, and
22 21% walk or ride a bike; and

23 WHEREAS, Student transit commuters tend to be from lower-income backgrounds,
24 and students of color; and
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1 WHEREAS, However, the SFMTA has neither clarified nor committed to a plan for
2 returning transit to 100% of pre-pandemic service levels, in part due to fiscal and logistical
3 challenges, and has failed to assure students that the SFMTA will be able to provide this
4 desperately needed service; and

5 WHEREAS, In the absence of fully restored transit service, which would render social
6 distancing difficult or impossible for students commuting to and from school on public transit,
7 the SFMTA has indicated that students may rely on the City’s network of 30 Slow Streets to
8 safely walk or bike to school if possible; and

9 WHEREAS, Slow streets have helped provide outdoor space for community members,
10 including and especially youth, to recreate and enjoy themselves during the pandemic while
11 not fully eliminating local vehicle access; and

12 WHEREAS, Placing Slow Streets near schools, as was intentionally done in the
13 Sunset, could help alleviate traffic dangers for students who walk, bike, or take public transit
14 to and from school caused by drop-off and pick-up lanes when schools return to in-person
15 learning; and

16 WHEREAS, Cities like Davis, CA have also prioritized dedicated bike lanes near and
17 leading to schools, in order to facilitate safe, low-cost, and sustainable commutes for students;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, on April 8, 2021, principals at several Sunset district
20 SFUSD schools requested that Sunset district Slow Streets be removed in anticipation of
21 students’ return to in-person learning, which resulted in a temporary reopening of several
22 Slow Streets to through traffic prior to them being restored after process issues were raised;
23 and

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1 WHEREAS, School administrators have claimed that they need “as much road real
2 estate as possible during intake and dismissal times,” completely disregarding the safety of
3 those students who do not commute to school via car; and

4 WHEREAS, Maintaining a robust network of Slow Streets across the City and near
5 schools is key to ensuring all students have options for safely commuting to school when in-
6 person learning resumes; and

7 WHEREAS, Furthermore, it appears that youth and students were not consulted before
8 the temporary closure of Slow Streets in the Sunset; and

9 WHEREAS, While presenting Slow Streets as a primary option for the majority of
10 SFUSD students that do not commute to school by car to do so safely is itself problematic,
11 especially for students who live far away from their school, removing this option would simply
12 be a further burden on students’ and their families as they navigate the difficult and frequently
13 fraught process of returning to in-person learning; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission supports the Slow Streets program, and
15 encourages the SFMTA to expand the Slow Streets network and install better infrastructure to
16 support their continued existence past the pandemic as community spaces and avenues for
17 safe pedestrian traffic; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the SFMTA, SFUSD, and
19 individual school site administrators to consult with students and youth about the future of
20 Slow Streets, especially those near schools, and to collaborate with each other to collect more
21 consistent data on student commutes; and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the SFMTA to develop a
23 plan to return transit to 100% of pre-pandemic service levels to alleviate crowding during
24 school commute hours and enable students who rely on transit for their commutes to safely
25 get to school when they return to in-person learning.

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Nora Hylton

Nora Hylton, Chair
Adopted on May 17, 2021
2020-2021 San Francisco Youth Commission