

Justin Levy

On my morning walk to school, I witnessed a near-tragic collision between a student and a speeding vehicle in our school's drop-off area. This was not the first time that such an event had occurred. The student seemed unfazed by the incident as this had become a regular occurrence, but the moment stood out to me.

Determined to address this hazardous condition, I contacted key figures in the community, outlining the problem and suggesting my solutions. To my surprise, the chief of police responded immediately, inviting me to present my concerns at a Public Safety Commission meeting. Following my presentation to the committee, I was selected to join the San Marino Traffic Safety Task Force, consisting of civil engineers and residents dedicated to improving safety in San Marino.

As the youngest member and only student representative, I initially felt inexperienced and intimidated. What could I possibly bring to a team with years of professional experience? However, I offered my unique perspectives as a student, new driver, and lifelong resident, which brought fresh insights to the team. My suggestions to establish a crossing guard and limit the flow of traffic at the school zone during drop off and pick up times were formally submitted for consideration.

Over the next nine months, we analyzed a comprehensive 350-page report on safety recommendations for 50 intersections throughout the city. Through rigorous analysis and evaluation, we selected vital areas to be prioritized for improvement, considering factors like cost-effectiveness and pedestrian safety. Based on our proposals, the council and city authorities have since taken significant steps to eliminate potential hazards at these intersections, including the school zone.

My contribution to the Traffic Safety Task Force instituted change that benefited the safety of my community. I gained valuable problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Most importantly, this experience has empowered and motivated me to continue seeking out opportunities and pathways where I can make a positive impact on the welfare of others. I plan on bringing this experience to my new college community.