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COUNTDOWN TO SAFETY

The Office of Traffic Safety Awards City of Oakland \$131,000 Grant For a Unique Pedestrian Safety Project

Oakland, CA –

The State of California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) awarded a grant of \$131,500 to the City of Oakland's Public Works Agency to accelerate installation of pedestrian countdown signal devices at 23 locations and provide educational outreach in multilingual brochures.

The project takes a unique approach to pedestrian safety by combining a new technological advancement with public education and outreach. The public outreach entails developing and distributing multilingual brochures in Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese that educate our residents on the proper use of the countdown signals and provide pedestrian safety tips for youth and older residents who may not fully understand how to interpret the new countdown devices.

In Oakland, as in other densely populated cities, there is a high incidence of pedestrian injuries at intersection crossings. Pedestrians are often caught in the crosswalk when the WALK traffic signal changes. The new devices display a "count down" of the number of seconds remaining (e.g. 12, 11, 10, 3, 2, 1) to cross the street before the light changes to a solid RED HAND.

According to Raul Godinez II, Director of the Public Works Agency, "installing the new devices at priority locations will translate into lives saved. Oakland has installed 26 similar devices at other locations. "I think we will continue to see some very positive benefits for Oakland's residents. Our City was one of the first to develop a Pedestrian Master Plan. With the plan as our guide, our Public Works Agency continues to lead the way with effective strategies that improve pedestrian safety," said Godinez.

"We'd like to see more projects like these in other cities," says Sunne Wright McPeak, California State Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which oversee the Office of Traffic Safety. "What is most unique about Oakland's project is that it addresses the need for safety education that helps its diverse population keep pace with technological safety advances," said McPeak.

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