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### **CALTRANS IS 1 OF JUST 7 WINNERS OF 2021 NATIONAL ROADWAY SAFETY AWARD**

#### ***2020's Jump in CA Highway Fatalities Despite Drop in Travel Points to Value of Safety Plan Update***

WASHINGTON, DC – The California Department of Transportation, or Caltrans, was honored today with a 2021 National Roadway Safety Award for an intensive 15-month effort that comprehensively updated the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

Speaking about Caltrans and the other award winners, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said, "Congratulations to today's seven honorees for the remarkable work they've done to protect the traveling public. They are proof that we have no shortage of willpower or good ideas for improving roadway safety."

The National Roadway Safety Awards are a biennial awards program sponsored jointly by the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation. First presented in 1999, the awards recognize roadway safety achievements that move the nation toward zero deaths and serious injuries on U.S. roadways.

Preliminary 2020 data from the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans show that 3,866 people died in traffic crashes, despite a 14.9 percent decrease in vehicle miles traveled due to the pandemic. Fatalities increased 7.2 percent from 2019 to the highest number since 2008.

Aimed at reversing a decade-long trend of increasing roadway fatalities and serious injuries, Caltrans authored a bold and transformative update to the 2020-2024 California Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The plan update was developed in partnership and close collaboration with executive leadership and over 400 stakeholders from key statewide, regional, local, academic, private, federal, tribal and non-governmental organizations focused on road safety, many of which had not previously been involved in highway safety planning.

The update designates high-priority challenge areas, expands and diversifies membership of the SHSP committee, implements the program with innovative tools, and evaluates progress on a continual basis. Four newly-adopted guiding principles undergird the SHSP: Integrate equity, implement a safe system approach, double down on what works, and accelerate advanced technology.

Dubbed "The Pivot" by Caltrans, the plan is focused on deeply institutionalizing the state's traffic safety culture in pursuit of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on California roadways.

"Caltrans is irrevocably committed to achieving zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2050, and seeing deep, quantifiable, and consistent reductions in those numbers in the years going forward," said Caltrans

Director Toks Omishakin. “We welcome the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Award’s award because it attests to our commitment in working to combat the tragic, decade-long rise in fatal and injurious incidents on California’s roadways.”

Roadway Safety Foundation Executive Director Greg Cohen added: “Last year’s jump in fatalities on California roads was alarming, underscoring the need for and value of the state’s strategic highway safety plan update. By creating processes that swiftly identify problems and rapidly deploy resources to where they can achieve the greatest benefit, the plan will save countless lives.

“Future travelers in California, whose lives and limbs will be spared, will owe an unknowing debt of gratitude to the state’s traffic safety planners,” Cohen continued. “We urge DOTs across the nation to look at Caltrans, the entire California team, and other awardees’ innovations and replicate them wherever possible.”

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The seven winners of the National Roadway Safety Award projects were selected from a nationwide pool of applicants and evaluated on three criteria: Effectiveness, Innovation, and Efficient Use of Resources. The program honors outstanding projects involving infrastructure, operational or program-related innovations. The other awardees are:

- City of Bellevue, WA for its video analytics traffic safety program;
- Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization for its Complete Streets Master Plan;
- North Carolina Dept. of Transportation for its long-life pavement markings safety effort;
- Village of Whitefish Bay, WI for its community-wide roadway safety improvements;
- Texas Dept. of Transportation’s tool to assess the safety of rural highway design elements; and
- Florida Dept. of Transportation for its use of smart work zone safety technologies.

Winners were selected by an expert panel of judges from a variety of disciplines.

For complete details on each of the winners, and for more information on the national awards program, visit <http://www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadwaysafetyawards/>.

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*The Roadway Safety Foundation is a 501(c) (3) charitable and educational organization. Our mission is to reduce the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities through improvements to roadway systems and their environment.*