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U.S. DOT Partners with Caltrans to Move California Drivers One Step Closer To Instant Travel Information and Safety Technologies

Bay Area Selected for one of the World's Largest Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Tests

San Francisco Bay Area commuters will have access to cutting-edge real-time traffic, transit and road safety information as a result of a \$12.4 million partnership announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

"America has the ability—right now—to radically change our driving experience using innovations that exist today," said Administrator Paul Brubaker of the U.S. DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). "As one of the communities selected last August to participate in the Department's Urban Partnership program, San Francisco already has shown its commitment to using innovative approaches to reduce traffic congestion. Now, the Bay Area will become the site of one of the world's largest field-tests of Intelligent Transportation Systems technology.

The award to Caltrans is part of the Department's new SafeTrip-21 initiative, which will test various ITS technology applications designed to reduce gridlock and traffic-related fatalities and injuries on America's roadways, and improve public transportation services.

Randy Iwasaki, Chief Deputy Director of Caltrans added, "SafeTrip-21 is one of many ways that the public and private sectors can collaborate to create cost-effective transportation solutions focused on improving the traveler's commuting convenience and overall safety."

The SafeTrip-21 partnership will field test GPS-equipped cellular phones from up to 10,000 volunteer commuters and transit vehicles transmitting data from roads in a 200 mile radius to traffic management centers. The additional traffic information gathered by these "probes" will help all Bay Area commuters make intelligent travel choices and avoid congestion while driving to work or using local transit systems.

SafeTrip-21 is working to develop a consumer friendly platform that brings together existing technologies including trip planning and traveler information; safety advisories; on-board displays of commuter rail and transit bus connections; electronic toll collection, and parking reservation and payment services.

The partnership also will establish a national "test bed" to advance the development of a Vehicle Infrastructure Integration system, which uses WiFi and Dedicated Short Range Communications to alert drivers to unsafe conditions so they can avoid crashes before they happen.

Multiple consumer electronic devices will be used including personal navigation devices, mobile phones, and a diverse set of communication technologies. In addition, an in-vehicle "cradle" will provide a wireless interface to the Internet for virtually any mobile electronic device.

Other SafeTrip-21 partners include the University of California–Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways (PATH), California Center for Innovative Transportation (CCIT), Nokia, NAVTEQ, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, and Nissan.

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