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****PRESS RELEASE****

SFMTA Launches New Campaign to Combat Distracted Driving

Public Invited to Use New Crowdsourcing Website to Pinpoint Distracted Driving Hot Spots

San Francisco —The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which oversees all ground transportation in the city, today launched a new education and enforcement campaign to address distracted driving in San Francisco. The initiative is in support of San Francisco's Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic deaths in the city.

To collect more data about distracted driving and its impact on San Francisco's communities, the SFMTA is leading a first of its kind campaign to study, enforce and reduce distracted driving behavior in San Francisco. Starting today, San Franciscans can use a new crowdsourcing website to identify locations where they have witnessed distracted driving and would like to see increased enforcement. The crowdsourcing website is now online at www.sfmta.com/distracteddriving.

According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, talking or texting on a cell phone is the leading cause of driver distraction, and 80 percent of traffic crashes involve some type of driver distraction. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has also found that drivers who text while driving are 23 times more likely to be in a traffic crash, and that the rate of fatal collisions caused by distracted driving is increasing faster than fatalities caused by alcohol and drug use, speeding, and failure to use a seatbelt while driving.

"While San Francisco has limited data on where distracted driving is happening, everyone sees this dangerous behavior on a daily basis," said Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. "By crowdsourcing the public's insights to focus the city's Vision Zero education and enforcement efforts, San Francisco is coming together in an innovative way to address this known problem."

The crowdsourced data will inform the location of six high visibility San Francisco Police Department enforcement events targeting distracted driving in early 2018. The SFMTA and San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) will monitor distracted driving activity at the chosen locations before, during and after the campaign.

One of the primary issues with collecting data about distracted driving is that it is chronically underreported. This is for a variety of reasons, including a lack of nationwide

standardization in police reports, difficulties in being able to determine whether distraction figured into a collision, and an unwillingness of drivers to report distractions.

“High visibility enforcement campaigns have been shown to reduce distracted driving in cities where they have been conducted, so this new campaign provides us with an opportunity to test them in San Francisco,” said San Francisco Police Chief, William Scott. “Additionally, the campaign will enable us to collect data about distracted driving at the local level, where none currently exists. This will help us better understand the true scope of this known and dangerous activity in San Francisco.”

“To achieve Vision Zero, we need to use tools that work. That's why we're pleased that the SFMTA is launching a high-visibility enforcement campaign against distracted driving,” said Cathy DeLuca, policy and program director at Walk San Francisco. “This enforcement approach is proven to change behavior through deterrence, not punishment. By using new approaches to decrease distracted driving, the City will expand the tools it has to save lives.”

The distracted driving campaign is funded by an \$111,393 grant from the National Safety Council. In addition to the crowdsourcing tool, the high visibility enforcement events and the program evaluation efforts, the grant will also enable the SFMTA and partner agencies to conduct statistically significant research into San Franciscans' attitudes toward distracted driving and understanding of California laws that relate to cell phone usage while driving; develop a marketing campaign focused on distracted driving prevention; and partner with third-party app developers to introduce and/or enhance existing safety features that curb cell phone usage while driving.

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