



OTS TRACKS: JANUARY 2026

It's the start of a new year! In this issue of OTS Tracks, we'll highlight how OTS has been supporting Californians in their New Year travels, share resources to help your communities stay safe throughout the year, and showcase more exciting updates.

OTS Director: Happy New Year!

A blue-themed graphic featuring a portrait of Stephanie Dougherty, OTS Director, in a circular frame. The background is a light blue with small white sparkles. The text 'Stephanie Dougherty' is in large, bold, white font, and 'OTS Director' is in a smaller, white font below it.

Stephanie Dougherty
OTS Director

Dear OTS Partners,

As we wrap up the first month of 2026, I hope that you had a chance to celebrate the start of the new year safely, spend quality time with friends and family, and maybe set a few goals you would like to focus on this year. As I reflect on the past year, I am thankful for the opportunity we have as an OTS team to work with our partners – all of you – who are committed to the urgent mission of saving lives and making our roads safe for all.

A few of the outcomes from our recently completed 2025 grant cycle included:

- 4,575 child safety seats checked and properly fitted.
- 23,184 bicycle helmets provided to people in need.
- 7,850 DUI arrests.
- 2,955 officers completed Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement and Drug Recognition Expert training.

Your unwavering commitment to traffic safety is starting to pay off. According to early National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [estimates](#), traffic fatalities in

California showed projected to decline by 2.1% in the first nine months of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024.

In October 2025, the California State Transportation Agency and California Health and Human Services Agency released the [Joint Secretary's Policy on Road Safety](#). The Policy affirms the Safe System Approach as the state's guiding framework, integrates the public health principles of injury prevention practice and sets an interim goal to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 30% by 2035. The OTS is leading the way to support the policy by continuing to fund innovative, prevention-first programs that incorporate principles and elements of the Safe System Approach. From community-driven projects to doubling down on proven safety measures, we look forward to working on proactive actions with our partners that support safer travel.

We are also forging a path ahead into the implementation of our [2025-2027 Strategic Plan](#). The plan lays out our priorities for new and emerging traffic safety solutions, strong collaboration, engaging communities to capture all perspectives and voices, and leading by example as a trusted expert in traffic safety. The OTS is also working to establish a strong pro-social safety culture through the [Go Safely Movement](#) and [Traffic Safety Champion](#) program. This positive engagement is rooted in promoting a sense of shared responsibility for safe roads that guides our everyday actions at every level – from organizations to communities and families. Since 2023, more than 500 people have responded to the call to be involved in community-led change.

The OTS continues to put safety first, with more than \$140 million committed to investments for our 2026 grants. We are working together, up and down the state, to make our roads safer so that every person—whether walking, biking or driving—can travel safely in their community. We look forward to seeing the impact these critical programs will have this year.

Thank you for being champions for safety. I look forward to building on our shared momentum in 2026.

Go Safely,
Stephanie Dougherty
OTS Director

New Year, New Laws

The New Year brings with it new laws. Here is newly enacted legislation to look out for in 2026:

Electric Bicycles: Required Equipment ([AB 544, Davies](#))

Mandates that electric bicycles must have a red reflector or a solid or flashing red light with a built-in reflector on the rear during *all hours of operation*, not just during darkness as the law previously required. The bill also allows the CHP-developed online electric bicycle safety and training program to fulfill the safety course requirement for minors who receive a helmet violation involving electric bicycles.

Pedestrian Safety: School Zones: Speed Limits ([AB 382, Berman](#))

Allows local authorities to lower the school zone speed limit from 25 to 20 miles per hour by ordinance or resolution through January 1, 2031. After this date, the speed limit will automatically decrease from 25 to 20 miles per hour in school zones when proper signage is posted.

State Highway Work Zone Speed Safety Program ([AB 289, Haney](#))

Authorizes the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), until January 1, 2032, to establish a pilot program for work zone speed safety systems. The program will use a fixed or mobile radar or laser systems to detect speeding violations and capture a clear photograph of a vehicle's license plate. Citations will be issued to the vehicle's registered owner with specified requirements and procedures for program implementation, citation issuance, review, and appeal.

Vehicles: Highway Safety ([AB 390, Wilson](#))

Expands the requirement that a driver approaching a stationary vehicle slow down and move over to include any stationary vehicles, including marked highway maintenance vehicles and those displaying flashing hazard lights or another warning device.

Speed Limits ([AB 1014, Rogers](#))

Authorizes the Department of Transportation to reduce a speed limit by five miles per hour on a highway, and mandates warning citations during the initial 30 days after a speed limit is lowered.

Ignition Interlock Devices ([AB 366, Petrie-Norris](#))

Extends the Statewide Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Pilot Program for specified driving-under-the-influence (DUI) offenders to January 1, 2033.

Vehicular Manslaughter While Intoxicated ([AB 1087, Patterson](#))

Increases the term of probation from two years to between three and five years for a person convicted of vehicular manslaughter or gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated.

Automated Traffic Enforcement System Programs ([SB 720, Ashby](#))

Allows local governments to use an alternative automated camera program to enforce red light violations. Specifies that violations recorded by an automated traffic enforcement system are subject only to civil penalties.

California Launches FAST Pilot to Crack Down on Extreme Speeding

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), in partnership with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and California Highway Patrol (CHP), has introduced the FAST (Forwarded Actions for Speeding Tickets) pilot program to address dangerous speeding on state highways. OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty applauded the initiative, saying that California is invested in deterring risky driving behaviors and saving lives. Under this initiative, any driver cited by CHP for traveling over 100 mph will have their citation automatically forwarded to the DMV for review—independent of court proceedings. The DMV's Driver Safety Branch will evaluate each case and may impose swift penalties, including license suspension or revocation, to deter reckless

driving. Each month, CHP issues about 1,600 citations for speeds exceeding 100 mph, a major contributor to traffic fatalities statewide.

[Learn more about the FAST Pilot Program](#)

Deadline Approaching: Apply for OTS 2027 Grants by January 31, 2026

A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a red t-shirt with text on it, adjusting a car seat. The car seat is black and appears to be a modern, convertible model. It is positioned on a black stand. In the background, there is a red car and a yellow traffic cone. The background is slightly blurred.

OTS CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

**NOW
ACCEPTING
2027 GRANT
APPLICATIONS**

Do you have ideas to improve traffic safety in your community? The deadline to submit applications for 2027 Federal Fiscal Year funding is fast approaching.

Public Entities are eligible to submit applications for funding. 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations need a public entity as a grant host. The application should relate to one of the priority program areas listed below and be supported by local crash data that demonstrates a need for funding.

- Alcohol Impaired Driving
- Distracted Driving
- Drug-Impaired Driving
- Emergency Medical Services
- Motorcycle Safety
- Occupant Protection
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety
- Police Traffic Services
- Communications and Public Affairs
- Roadway Safety and Traffic Records

Applications must be submitted electronically by January 31, 2026.

[Learn more about applying for an OTS grant](#)

OTS Grants Manager Receives California Transportation Secretary's Award



Congratulations to Alexis DeLeon, who has been recognized with the 2025 CalSTA Secretary's Award, an honor that celebrates state employees who exemplify the Core Four priorities: Equity, Climate Action, Safety, and Economic Prosperity. This award is significant because it highlights individuals who go above and beyond to serve all Californians and advance transformative initiatives.

Alexis joined the OTS in 2019 as a Program Coordinator and was promoted to Grant Manager in 2023. Her commitment to developing data-driven, outcomes-focused traffic safety grants, along with her organizational skills and hands-on approach, ensures that grant funds are maximized and that programs deliver measurable results. She has led grant management activities for innovative projects, including UC Irvine's traffic safety collaborations, UCLA's pre-hospital blood project, telematics and predictive data initiatives, and Caltrans' Gen AI solution to protect vulnerable road users. Alexis's leadership and vision make her an integral part of OTS's mission to save lives.

Safety Snapshot of the Month



In December 2025, OTS law enforcement partners held DUI checkpoints statewide to stop suspected impaired drivers who put others at risk. During the 30-hour New Year's Holiday Enforcement Period alone, [the CHP](#) made 379 DUI arrests, issued 2,972 speeding citations, 92 of which went to drivers traveling more than 100 mph. DUI checkpoints, coupled with high-visibility enforcement and public education campaigns, are NHTSA-supported safety measures that deter driving after drinking and remove suspected impaired drivers from our roads.

The OTS Staff: People on the Move

Haroon Abasy – Join us in welcoming Haroon Abasy as a Grant Coordinator in the Program Planning and Grant Operations Division. Haroon comes to us with experience in program management, data analysis, and community-focused work. He enjoys project management and supporting the successful completion of programs and grants.



David Cabrera – Join us in welcoming David Cabrera as a Grant Coordinator in the Program Planning and Grant Operations Division. David joins us from California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), where he worked as a grant specialist in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. He has gained vast knowledge and experience working in grants with different agencies, including the California Department of Rehabilitation as a Cooperative Programs Specialist.



Elizabeth “Liz” Humphers – Join us in welcoming Elizabeth Humphers as a Grant Coordinator in the Program Planning and Grant Operations Division. Liz joins us from the California Highway Patrol, where she worked in a variety of roles. During her tenure at CHP, she worked as the Traffic Enforcement Program Coordinator, where she supported statewide traffic enforcement efforts. Most recently, Liz coordinated the *Every 15 Minutes* program, focusing on traffic safety education and outreach to help prevent impaired driving.



THE ROAD REPORT

Publications, resources, training opportunities, and other relevant updates from our state and national traffic safety partners.

First Responder Autonomous Vehicle Training

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and Waymo have partnered to develop a virtual self-paced training to help first responders learn about interactions with Waymo's driverless autonomous vehicles. This is a free, online training for first responders – including law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services and tow-truck operators. [Learn more](#)

UC Berkeley SafeTREC Fact Sheet on Public Perception of Autonomous Vehicle Safety in San Francisco

The survey was conducted by Ewald & Wasserman from May to June 2025 to better understand the perception of autonomous vehicles in San Francisco across various user groups including drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. [Learn more](#)

Now Available: 2023 OTS Crash Rankings

The 2023 Crash Rankings provide cities with updated traffic safety comparisons against similar-sized communities to help identify trends, problem areas, and opportunities for improvement. [Learn more](#)

American Driving Survey: 2024

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety released a research brief that provides statistics on Americans' driving behavior in 2024. [Learn more](#)

GHSA "The Intersection" Podcast: New Episode

In the latest episode of "The Intersection," Senior Transportation Correspondent Kris Van Cleave joins GHSA CEO Jonathan Adkins. [Check out the episode.](#)



The OTS participates in community outreach and engagement events to connect with residents, local partners, and stakeholders to share information, gather feedback, and

encourage Californians to Go Safely. These events provide valuable opportunities to build relationships, support local initiatives, and ensure our traffic safety efforts are informed by the voices and needs of the communities we serve.

Sacramento Posada Navideña – The OTS hosted an information table at the La Familia Counseling Center (LFCC) Posada Navideña event in Sacramento, California on December 18, 2025. Approximately 1,000 people attended the community celebration and resource fair, where the OTS distributed traffic safety resources and engaged with participants. This cultural event provided an opportunity to connect with Spanish-speaking communities and raise awareness of critical traffic safety issues, including impaired driving, distracted driving, and pedestrian safety.



📌 February 8 – [Super Bowl Sunday \(Go Safely Game Plan\)](#)

Keep an eye on your inboxes for campaign templates and social media assets. Additional outreach materials are always available at [GoSafelyCA.org/MediaToolkits](#).

[View the OTS Communications Calendar](#)

Additional Resources

[Release Templates](#)

[Law Enforcement Liaison \(LEL\) Program](#)

[OTS Funding At a Glance](#)

[OTS Logos](#)

[Grant Program Resources](#)

[Traffic Safety Data](#)

The OTS administers traffic safety grants that deliver traffic safety programs to prevent people from being killed and seriously injured in California. The OTS is a department under the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

Contact the OTS Communications & Public Affairs Team
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