

**County of Santa Clara**

Roads and Airports Department  
Road and Signal Operations Division

101 Skyport Drive  
San Jose, CA 95110  
1-408-494-2760



---

June 3, 2020

The CTCDC Secretary  
California Traffic Control Devices Committee – MS36  
P. O. Box 942874  
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR SIGN APPROVAL**

**Item 20-14:** Request for approval of usage of new word message sign recommended by the FHWA

**RECOMMENDATION:** CTCDC to approve the request for usage of new R10-3 word message sign

**AGENCY MAKING REQUEST/SPONSOR:** County of Santa Clara / Robert W. Bronkall – Deputy Director, Humboldt County

**BACKGROUND**

Due to COVID-19 outbreak, the public is concerned about touching pushbuttons, which are frequently touched by others. A growing number of public requests to recall the pedestrian phase followed the shelter-in-place order. While the pedestrian phase recall works for some locations (like downtown traffic signals), it is not a suitable solution for most arterials and high speed expressway intersections. Recalling the pedestrian phase at these intersections can have unintended consequences. In order to address this issue, the County of Santa Clara reached out to pedestrian pushbutton vendors to come up with a way to activate the pedestrian phase without requiring the public to touch and press the pushbutton. One of the vendors has developed the new pushbutton that can recognize the hand wave in front of the button to activate the pedestrian phase. This new pushbutton meets all the minimum MUTCD requirements, while still retaining original pushbutton functionality. It provides a touch-free technology solution as an option. The sign that is required by the MUTCD for the pushbutton does not convey that a touch-free option is available to the public. Therefore, the FHWA suggested to use a new word message sign instead of the R10-3 sign for touch-free pushbuttons. The new sign is shown in the picture below.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the 2014 CA MUTCD, Revision 5, Section 2B.52.01, ***“Traffic Signal signs applicable to pedestrian actuation or bicyclist actuation shall be mounted immediately above or incorporated into the pushbutton detector units”***.

None of the sign options provided under this section convey a message to the pedestrian that the new device (a touch-free pushbutton) can also be activated with a hand “wave”. Therefore, the County of Santa Clara reached out to the FHWA to address this issue and as a result, a new word message sign option for the touch-free pushbutton was recommended.

The County is requesting the CTCDC to approve the use of this new sign in California. There are a number of agencies that are waiting to implement the touch-free pushbutton, and having a uniform standard sign will inform and educate the public of this new alternate way to activate the pushbutton. The County requests this sign be approved for statewide use.

## NEW WORD MESSAGE SIGN RECOMMENDED BY FHWA FOR TOUCH-FREE PUSHBUTTON



Sincerely,



Ananth Prasad, PE  
Principal Civil Engineer, Santa Clara County Roads & Airports Department  
(408) 690-9795

Cc: Harry Freitas, Director, Santa Clara County Roads & Airports Department  
Ron Jackson, Deputy Director, Santa Clara County Roads & Airports Department