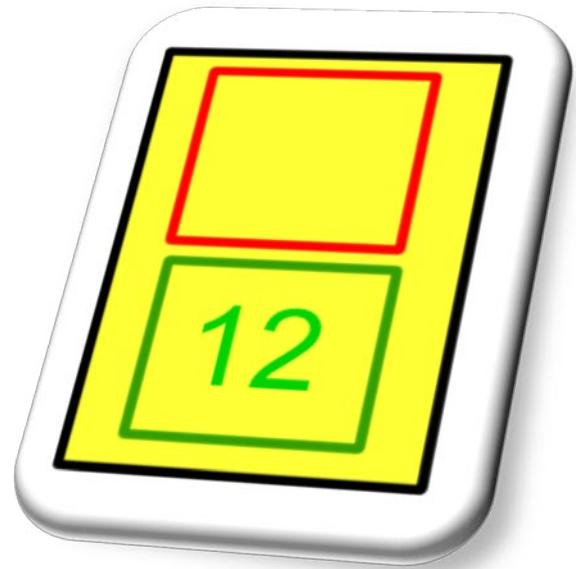# A New Traffic Light (The Countdown Light)

I say it's high time we give the good old traffic light a facelift.  Don't ya think? I've decided to coin the term "The Countdown Light" for this idea.

## "Now don't go trying to change things that actually affect me! Change scares me."

OK, now hang on just a minute.  Before you confirm yourself as a naysayer just give me a chance and hear me out!  All I'm saying is that the old traffic light has a couple of flaws of which I would like to address.  I also happen to have a magnificent idea for a traffic light that I think you would also enjoy!

## But what's wrong with the old traffic light? Also, I'm afraid of change, remember?

Well my fine fury friend, I'm glad you asked that question.  Allow me to tell you my problem with the current traffic light:

The current traffic light is seriously outdated.  So it needs to be replaced with a new one err, well it's sort of new, the original idea for my "new" traffic light came from an idea that was actually invented in 1936 by a fellow named Charles Marshall.  His system was called a Marshalite.  It was similar but not quite as cool.  You may look it up after reading this if you like.  Anyways, so with the advent of recent LED technology we can now make some changes that will greatly enhance your stop and go ability with these lights.

Previously the traffic lights were powered via a single bulb behind a green, yellow or red gel.  The newest lights we have now are generally made up of an array of LED lights.  The old style traffic light has one very annoying problem.  The driver doesn't know how long that light has been green or red for.  This can lead to a few issues.  The first issue is that gas is wasted on unnecessary deceleration.  The second issue is that people who are trying to "make" lights can cause accidents.  A third issue is that with countdown traffic lights, people would be less likely to become agitated at longer lights and there would be a decrease in road rage.  And I'm sure there are many other advantages that I am currently not thinking of.

## Sounds like a winning idea to me!  Stop sounding like an infomercial and tell me how it works already!

Well it's very simple, you see.  The light works like this: first we remove the yellow circle in the middle of our current lights, and then change those good old fashioned circles to squares.  Once we have squares, we fill them with hundreds or thousands of tiny LED's which will allow for us to display a number in the square.  Picture something similar to a "Lite Bright".  One square will be comprised of all red LED's while the other square will contain green LED's.  When the light is in operation one direction will see the red box outlining the countdown in red numbers of how much time is left for "stop". And the cross street would see a green box outlining the countdown in green numbers of how much time is left for "go".  It's really fairly simple, as I said.

## But wait there's more!  Well… Possibly.

Allowing for upgraded alternative traffic lights can breed more useful ideas.  One example is the use of perhaps simply a flat panel LCD.  This would allow for different kinds of lights: the LCD could display a hexagon shape for stop and circle for go for color blind people.  There's quite a bit of possibility with this one.  If LCD monitors are used in place of actual lights then it would be possible to do something like display emergency messages and things of that nature.  I think that might be going a tad far.  But the idea is there.

One other thing I've thought of is putting marking lines on the street to tell you at what times at the speed limit you would still be able to make the light.  So for example a 5 or 2 second line would mean if you aren't even close to that line when the counter hits 5 or 2 seconds you shouldn't even try to "gun it".  You wouldn't have a prayer in the world of making it.  However if you are past the 10 second line and there is still 12 seconds on the light, then at the current speed limit you're absolute ly fine to keep going and not worry about having to stop.

So that' the idea and you better like it!  I know I wish it was true.  I absolutely hate sitting at a red light and not knowing how much longer I will be sitting there for.  It would be amazing to know how much time is left on green or red lights!

No one will ever again say the phrase "When is this freaking light going to turn green!?!?!?!"