

**Santa Cruz County
Traffic Operations System (TOS) Oversight Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting

**August 4, 2004 at 10:30 AM
SCCRTC Conference Room
1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

Attendees:	Jason Butler	CHP – Santa Cruz
	Linda Olmstead	CHP – Monterey Dispatch
	James Richardson	Caltrans 4
	Ana Uribe	Caltrans 4
	David Nelson	Caltrans 4
	Siobhan Saunders	Caltrans 5
	Jacques Van Zeventer	Caltrans 5
	Russell Ellingworth	Caltrans 5
	Jack Sohriakoff	Santa Cruz County Public Works
	Linda Wilshusen	SCCRTC
	Luis Mendez	SCCRTC

- 1. Introductions:** Introductions were made
- 2. Additions and Deletions:** Safe on 17 Program was added as Item 6.1.
- 3. Information Items:** Luis Mendez provided a brief report on the Sacramento area 511 project. The system is being tested during the month of August and will be officially inaugurated on September 1, 2004. The system may be accessed from regions outside of the Sacramento area by dialing 1-877-511-8747. The system currently includes the six Sacramento metropolitan area counties and is designed to include all of the counties in the northern part of California all the way to the Oregon border. Unlike the San Francisco Bay Area 511 system, the Sacramento area 511 system does not use voice recognize but a touch tone menu system. Employing voice recognition would have cost \$10 million to implement. The existing system cost \$150,000 to implement. Luis Mendez also reported that the Draft California ITS Architecture and System Plan is currently available for review and distributed copies of an e-newsletter providing some information about the plan and the website address where the plan may be downloaded.
- 4. Review Operations and Status of the TOS:**
 - a. System Activations:** Jim Richardson reviewed the activations report and incident information and reported that the extinguishable message sign on Highway 17 southbound in Scotts Valley is out of service. Operation of the sign was controlled by a pager and the pager contractor was changed. There is no estimated time of repair. The changeable message sign at the summit on Highway 17 was recently fixed. The system at the TMC said that the sign was on but it was not. Jim Richardson also reported that

Caltrans has instituted a goal to clear incidents within 90 minutes from the time Caltrans learns of the incident.

- b. Major Incident Review:** The agenda incorrectly shows that the first incident occurred on 6/8/04. The correct date is 6/10/04. The 6/10/04 incident involved a utility and reminded the group of a past incident that involved a different utility and took a long time to clear. As a result of that past incident Russell Ellingworth of Caltrans District 5 prepared a sheet of essential contact phone numbers for clearing incidents and copies of the list of contact numbers were distributed. The 6/14/04 incident on SR 9 at Sanborn Road was on the Santa Clara portion of Highway 9 and the sigalerts issued for the incident showed that it was in Santa Cruz County. There is a Sanborn Drive in Santa Cruz County along Highway 9 and this fact could create confusion. Jim Richardson reported that the regular TMC operator training does not include going out to see the roads in the area covered by the TMC but tours are organized for operators to become familiar with the roads covered by the TMC. Not all operators have toured the Santa Cruz County area.
- c. SR 17S Repaving Near Glenwood Drive:** Siobhan Saunders reported that the project includes replacement of the dike due to the increased height of the pavement as a result of past overlays. The project should be completed by the end of August. The work is being done at night and the CMS are being used to alert motorists while the work is being done. An operator at the TMC reported that the Caltrans work crews are forgetting to call and ask for the CMS to be turned off. While it is typically better to stop a repaving job on a tangent and not in a curve, the paving stops in a curve because the rest of the curve was repaved in the recent past. Due to change orders the past project could not include the portion of the highway currently being repaved so the repaving of the highway is now being completed.
- d. Dynamic Curve Warning Sign:** Jacques Van Zeventer reported that the sign is fully operational and has been fine tuned to better capture motorist speeds. A speed study was done before the sign was installed. Speed information since the sign was installed suggest that average speeds are lower by about 2 or 3 miles per hour. It is difficult to identify whether the reduced speeds are a result of the changeable message signs or the CHP's increased enforcement. Caltrans District 5 wants to do another speed study for speeds since the sign was installed. Unfortunately, the staff to do the study is not available but it could be a good project for an intern. If anyone knows of a potential intern who may be interested in such a project please contact Jacques Van Zeventer. At least six months of good speed data will be needed for the speed study.
- e. Monitoring Stations on Highway 17:** The monitoring stations are now operational and sending information to the TMC in Oakland. The information being collected by the monitoring stations is being archived and Caltrans District 5 may request it. Caltrans District 4 is working to have the information included in UC Berkeley's Performance Measurement System (PeMS). It is a bit of a challenge to add information from the Caltrans District 5 but PeMS software engineers have indicated that it can be done but will take a bit of time. Currently the information from the monitoring stations cannot be

seen by the operators at the TMC because the stations are outside of the Caltrans District 4 area but upcoming upgrades should allow the operators to see and use the information. Caltrans District 4 has already been sharing information collected by the monitoring stations with Caltrans District 5 and SCCRTC staff. Once the information is included in PeMS agencies will be able to access it through the PeMS website.

5. Future Improvements

- a. **Highway 17 TOS Enhancements Updated PSR:** Jacques Van Zeventer reported that the project study report has been completed and fully signed and provided a copy to SCCRTC staff. The PSR will be submitted to potential funding sources as funds become available and try to secure funding for the project. The Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project includes some TOS components included in this PSR. Funding for the merge lanes project was moved to fiscal year 05/06 and construction is expected to begin in August of 2005. During the construction the existing TOS components will be used to alert motorists.
- b. **Highway 1 Widening for HOV Lane:** The Highway 1 Widening HOV Lane project includes a number of ITS components such as ramp metering, monitoring stations, changeable message signs, CCTVs and highway advisory radio. These are components that were included in a PSR, which was reviewed by this Committee, for ITS improvements for Highway 1. The PSR for the Highway 1 Widening HOV Lane Project is being updated and the relevant sections will be shared with this Committee.
- c. **Comprehensive Corridor PID:** Steve DiGrazia of Caltrans District 5 is working on this project and will be invited to the next meeting to make a report.

6. **Santa Cruz County Sales Tax Measure for Transportation Improvements:** Linda Wilshusen reported that the SCCRTC approved an expenditure plan and ballot language for a ½ cent sales tax ballot measure to raise funds for the Highway 1 Widening HOV Lane project and other transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. Copies of a fact sheet showing how funds will be distributed were distributed. The ballot measure includes funds for safety projects on Highway 17 which are intended for continuation of the extra CHP enforcement and other small safety projects.

- 6.1 **Safe on 17:** Luis Mendez reported that an annual report for the Safe on 17 project was recently completed and distributed copies of the report. The statistics show that in 2003 collisions increased but the number of collisions is still lower than the base year. Jason Butler of the CHP reported that for the first six months of 2004 the number of collisions is significantly lower than in 2003. The CHP is conducting special enforcement days at least once per month. The CHP also instituted a new mid-day shift which is putting more officers on the Highway.

7. **Freeway Service Patrol:** Luis Mendez reported that a new contract for FSP services on Highway 17 began on July 4, 2004. The tow operator providing the service is now Ladds Towing of Felton, who also provides the FSP service for Highway 1. In the past it was

reported that the Commission would likely consider reducing FSP service due to funding shortfalls for the program as a result of the state budget crisis. Although the State FSP funds for this fiscal year will not be available until the next fiscal year, the Commission can obtain reimbursement for expenditures in this fiscal year once the funds are available. Therefore, it will not be necessary to reduce FSP service.

8. **Communication with Local Law Enforcement Agencies:** Sergeant Mary Emery was unable to attend this meeting.

Additional Items:

Siobhan Saunders reported that the project on Highway 9 in Ben Lomond was expected to be completed on time regardless of the strike by Granite Rock employees. The project was ahead of schedule when the strike began so as long as the strike is settled soon the project will be completed on time. Accommodations were made to ensure that the business would not be adversely affected during the construction period.

Siobhan Saunders reported that she received complaints that CHP officers are showing up for patrol at projects covered by Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program (COZEEP) and no contact person is available at the project location. Jacques Van Zeveren responded that he was aware of one instance when a contractor was late to a job location. The TMC information currently does not include a cell phone number for the contact person. The form will be revised to include a line for more contact information.

Russell Ellingworth reported that there was a collision on Highway 17 southbound at Laurel Road. The incident occurred at about 11:30 pm on August 3, 2004 and involved an intoxicated driver of a pick up truck and a big rig. The big rig overturned. The injuries were minor and the traffic was not affected very much. The barrier was damaged and it will be difficult to replace it. The incident was cleared at about 5:15 am this morning. Russell Ellingworth drove to the CMS at the summit to ensure that it was on because cars were arriving at the collision scene too fast. The sign was off but the equipment at the TMC indicated to the operator that the sign was on. Russell Ellingworth remained at the sign until it was turned on. The sign near the Cats Restaurant in Los Gatos was also turned on. James Richardson will follow up to see what caused the malfunction.

Linda Olmstead reported that the new building for the Monterey CHP Communications Center will be completed at the end of August and the CHP is planning to move in the first week of November. The CHP will continue the same outdated equipment. The communications center currently has 12 dispatchers but is supposed to have a staff of 20.

Jim Richardson brought a video tape of ITS equipment and TMC's in Europe and played it for the group.

9. **Set Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items:** The meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm and the next meeting was set for Wednesday, November 3, 2004. It will be a joint meeting with the

Safe on 17 Task Force and will be held in the Santa Cruz area. There was some discussion regarding the possibility of just meeting jointly with the Safe on 17 Task Force every six months but the group agreed that it is beneficial for this group to continue to meet on its own in between the Safe of 17 Task Force meeting.

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