

AGENDA: October 6, 2005

TO: Regional Transportation Commission/Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

FROM: Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner

RE: Safe on 17 Safety Corridor Project – 2004 Annual Report and Program Extension Consideration

---

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission/Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE):

1. Accept the attached 2004 annual report for the Safe on 17 Safety Corridor Project;
  2. Approve continued funding at \$50,000 per year for the Safe on 17 extra CHP enforcement for 3 years;
  3. Direct staff to work with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to continue the funding partnership for the program and extend the funding partnership agreement for three years (January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008); and
  4. Approve the attached resolution authorizing the Executive Director to extend the funding agreement with MTC and the extra enforcement contract with the CHP to ensure continuation of the Safe on 17 extra CHP enforcement for an additional 3 years.
- 

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1998, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) initiated the Safe on 17 Program with the aid of a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The OTS grant was available from March 1999 to March 2002. During that period, injury collisions were reduced by 37% on Highway 17 through a combination of enforcement, roadway improvements and a public information campaign.

In 2002, SCCRTC SAFE entered into a 3-year cooperative funding agreement with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (MTC SAFE) and into a contract agreement with the CHP to continue providing extra CHP enforcement services on Highway 17. The goal of the funding agreement is to continue the Safe on 17 Program and to maintain the reduced accident rate achieved on Highway 17 during the OTS grant period. MTC SAFE provides \$50,000 per year for extra CHP enforcement by the San Jose CHP office and SCCRTC SAFE provides \$50,000 per year for extra CHP enforcement by the Santa Cruz Area CHP office. In addition to the extra enforcement, the CHP continues to convene the Safe on 17 Task

Force, and produce collision and citation statistics. The agreements with MTC SAFE and the CHP will expire on December 31, 2005.

## **DISCUSSION**

### 2004 Safe on 17 Annual Report

The attached 2004 Safe on 17 Annual Report (Attachment 1) lists the work done by the CHP and Caltrans to continue to improve safety on Highway 17 as part of the Safe on 17 Program. The annual report was prepared by Regional Transportation Commission staff with input from MTC SAFE, Caltrans and CHP staff. Below is a brief description of the 2004 Safe on 17 activities. More detailed information regarding these activities is available in the attached *2004 Annual Report*.

The 2004 Safe on 17 Program included:

- Extra Enforcement
- Collision and Citation Data
- Safe on 17 Task Force Meetings
- Public Information
- Highway Safety Improvements

**Extra Enforcement:** In 2004, the CHP provided 1,310 hours of extra enforcement through the Safe on 17 funding arrangement. 701 hours were provided by the Santa Cruz area CHP and 609 hours were provided by the San Jose area CHP. In addition to the regular extra CHP enforcement, the CHP offices organized maximum enforcement days which included additional enforcement, air support and a media campaign. During maximum enforcement days, 80% of CHP officers are assigned to patrol. Due to the high cost of maximum enforcement days, Safe on 17 funds are combined with other safety grant funds to provide the required personnel. Regular extra enforcement and maximum enforcement days on Highway 17 are intended to increase CHP visibility and citations in order to have a deterrent effect on unsafe driving behavior.

**Collision and Citation Data:** As required by the CHP and SCCRTC agreement, CHP provides collision and citation statistics for Highway 17. The collision and citation data allows staff to track activities on Highway 17 and determine the Safe on 17 Program's overall effectiveness. Overall, 2004 Highway 17 collision statistics keep pace with previous Safe on 17 Program years (including the Office of Traffic Safety grant years) and reflect a decrease in total collisions and total injury and fatal collisions when compared with pre-program years. The average total annual injury and fatal collisions prior to the Safe on 17 Program's initiation (1996-1999) was 250 per year. In 2004 total injury and fatal collisions were 153. The *2004 Annual Report: Attachment 2* shows annual total collision and total injury and fatal collision trends since 1998. The *2004 Annual Report: Attachment 6* includes 2004 monthly collision data for Highway 17. As expected, total collisions in 2004 increased during the winter months and decreased during the summer months due to weather.

**Safe on 17 Task Force Meetings:** Safe on 17 Task Force meetings are held biannually to coordinate safety efforts and discuss safety issues on the Highway 17 corridor. Task Force members include CHP, Caltrans Districts 4 and 5, MTC SAFE, SCCRTC SAFE, local legislators,

local media and local police. Safe on 17 Task Force meetings minutes are included in your packet as appropriate.

**Public Information:** Public information educates residents and motorists about safety on Highway 17 and provides information regarding the benefits of extra enforcement and includes press releases, media coverage, fact sheets and safety driving messages.

**Highway 17 Safety Improvements:** Safety improvements can be infrastructure or Traffic Operation System improvements. Highway improvements are developed, coordinated and implemented by Caltrans, with input from the Safe on 17 Task Force. In 2004, Caltrans District 5 completed the installation of the dynamic curve warning sign on southbound Highway 17 at Woodwardia Highway and Caltrans District 4 completed sight distance improvements near the summit. Additional Highway 17 Improvement Projects progressed in 2004. Details about these projects are available on page 4 of the *2004 Safe on 17 Annual Report*.

The annual report with a complete set of attachments is also available at the Commission offices and will be posted on the highway page of the Commission's website ([www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org)). **Staff recommends that the RTC accept the 2004 Safe on 17 Annual Report.**

#### Continued Funding for the Safe on 17 Program

SAFE funds, from a \$1 fee on all vehicles registered in Santa Cruz County, are used to pay for the extra CHP enforcement on Highway 17. During the last two years, SCCRTC SAFE funds have also been used to support the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program due to a delay in the allocation of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds programmed for the Highway 1 FSP service. Fortunately, the 2005 STIP allocation for Highway 1 FSP service was approved by the California Transportation Commission in July 2005. Therefore, there are sufficient SAFE reserve funds to fund the Safe on 17 Program at \$50,000 per year for another 3 years.

**Based on the continued success of the Safe on 17 Program as illustrated in the annual report and available SCCRTC SAFE funds, staff recommends that the RTC:**

- **Approve continued funding at \$50,000 per year for the Safe on 17 extra CHP enforcement for 3 years;**
- **Direct staff to work with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to continue the funding partnership for the program and extend the funding partnership agreement for three years (January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008); and**
- **Approve the attached resolution authorizing the Executive Director to extend the funding agreement with MTC and the extra enforcement contract with the CHP to ensure continuation of the Safe on 17 extra CHP enforcement for an additional 3 years.**

## **SUMMARY**

The Safe on 17 project has been successful in reducing collisions and improving safety on Highway 17. The attached annual report shows the work done to continue to improve safety on Highway 17. SCCRTC SAFE has sufficient funds to continue funding the Santa Cruz County portion of this program. Staff recommends continued funding for the Safe on 17 Program for another 3 years.

Attachment 1: Safe on 17 Highway 17 Safety Corridor Project *2004 Annual Report*

Attachment 2: Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Amend and/or Execute the Necessary Agreements to Continue the Safe on 17 Program for 3 years

\\Rtcserv1\shared\RTC\TC2005\TC1005\SafeOn17\Safeon17AnRe.doc