



JOINT MEETING OF
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
TRAFFIC OPERATION SYSTEMS (TOS) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
AND
SAFE ON 17 TASK FORCE

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, September 20, 2006
10:00-12:00

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave Santa Cruz, CA

**TOS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE & SAFE ON 17 TASK FORCE MEETING
PARTICIPANTS**

Wendy Anderson, Crescent Drive Community Resident
Tom Barnett, Caltrans District 5 Maintenance Superintendent
Genevieve Bookwalter, Santa Cruz Sentinel
Walt Barrows, Santa Cruz Freeway Service Patrol Contractor
Jason Butler, Santa Cruz CHP
Colin Jones, Caltrans District 5 Public Affairs
Russell Ellingworth, Caltrans District 5 Maintenance
Deb Larson, Caltrans District 5 Traffic Safety
Christina Manriquez, Santa Cruz CHP Captain
Mike McMurry, Scotts Valley Fire
Linda Olmstead, CHP Dispatch Monterey
Jesse Pidcock, Scotts Valley Policy Department
Steve Perea, San Jose CHP
Gary Richards, San Jose Mercury
James Richardson, Caltrans District 3 TMC
Siobhan Saunders, Caltrans District 5 Construction
Pranav Shah, Caltrans TMC
Danielle Stanislaus, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Mark Stone, SCCRTC Commissioner
Jacques Van Zeventer, Caltrans District 5 Traffic Manager

STAFF PRESENT

Grace Blakeslee
George Dondero
Luis Mendez
Karena Pushnik



Captain Manriquez called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

1. **Introductions** - Introductions were made
2. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** - None
3. **Approved Minutes of the March 15, 2006 Joint TOS Oversight Committee & Safe on 17 Task Force Meeting**

Deb Larson requested a correction to the minutes for item 10- Update on Highway 17 Caltrans Projects. The last sentence of the minutes as recorded for Item 10 were revised as follows: Deb Larson responded that this project (Glenwood Curve Safety Drainage Improvement Project) fits into one of the highest priority project categories. ~~category of project funding that almost guaranteed funding for this project.~~ The minutes were approved as amended.

4. **Accepted Information Items**

Grace Blakeslee reviewed information items 4a- Article on Incident Command Systems by Federal Highway Administration, 4b- Rural Counties Performance Measures and 4c- Infrastructure Bond Summary.

5. **California Highway Patrol (Officer Perea & Officer Butler)**

Officer Perea reviewed the San Jose CHP collision and enforcement statistics from January 2006 to date. Collision statistics for 2006 are on track to match the 2005 total annual reported collisions. This year there has been one fatality on the Santa Clara County side of Highway 17. The fatality was a DUI fatality.

Officer Perea reported that there have not been overtime citations on the Santa Clara County side of Highway 17 in 2006 with the exception of June when 102 citations were issued. San Jose CHP has limited staffing availability for overtime hours which has resulted in no overtime citations issued in 2006 on the Santa Clara County side of Highway 17. Officer Perea stated that the San Jose CHP continues to provide regular enforcement on Highway 17. San Jose CHP will double enforcement efforts during the remainder of 2006 and expects to utilize the Safe on 17 funds allocated to San Jose CHP for 2006.

Officer Butler reviewed the Santa Cruz CHP collision statistics for 2006. To date 2006 collision statistics are on par with the nine year average (1998-2006). Officer Butler highlighted that there is a trend between the 2006 collision statistics and the local weather patterns. He pointed out that January, March and April in 2006 were wet months and subsequently the statistics reflect a higher number of collisions. February in 2006 was dryer than in previous years and we observe a decrease in collisions in February 2006 when compared with previous years. Officer Butler also



reported that one fatality occurred on the Santa Cruz side of Highway 17 in May near Pasatiempo.

Officer Bulter reviewed the Santa Cruz CHP citation statistics for 2006. He said that Santa Cruz CHP continues to write regular time and overtime citations on Highway 17. They are targeting Primary Collision Factor citations. In 2006 an average of 66 citations per month have been issued during overtime hours and an average of 630 citations per month have been issued during regular time hours. He also reported that the Santa Cruz CHP just implemented the use of lidar. Lidar allows officers to pick one car out of a group of cars and identify which vehicle is speeding.

Officer Butler emphasized that the Santa Cruz CHP continues to schedule enforcement and to issue citations on Highway 17. He noted that we can expect to see more public outreach related to wet weather driving education this winter.

Officer Perea added that the Los Gatos Police Department Police Connection Program no longer has funding. The radio station provided an opportunity for Officer Perea to highlight the importance of safety and the Safe on 17 Program. Officer Perea also does outreach using the Traffic Safety Community Network and includes Safe on 17 Program in his notice.

Officer Butler mentioned that Santa Cruz CHP is involved in outreach with schools in Santa Cruz County.

6. Reviewed 2005 Safe on 17 Annual Report

Grace Blakeslee reviewed the Draft 2005 Safe on 17 Annual Report. She requested that Task Force and Committee Members review the report and provide input by Tuesday, September 26.

7. Reviewed Highway 17 Speed Survey Information

Jacques Van Zeventer provided a brief overview of speed surveys and speed zones. He said that speed surveys have a sunset clause of 7 years with a possible 3 year extension and that speed surveys are required to enforce speed limits. A Highway 17 speed survey was completed in March 2006. Mr. Van Zeventer said that residents on Crescent Drive adjacent to Highway 17 have expressed concern regarding the speed adjustments on the segment of Highway 17 near Crescent Drive as a result of the speed survey.

Wendy Anderson, a Crescent Drive Resident, said that Crescent Drive residents were surprised to see the increased speed limit on Highway 17 near Crescent Drive. She expressed concern about the safety of people entering and exiting Crescent Drive.



Commissioner Stone inquired if the rate of speed changes between speed zones was considered in the speed survey. Commissioner Stone pointed out that motorists take time to modify their driving speed to accommodate diminishing speed limits on adjacent roadway segments. Commissioner Stone noted that when speed limits are changed at one location it appears to impact the speed on the adjacent road segment.

Jacques Van Zeverter responded that the speed survey on Highway 17 was conducted before the speed limit signs were modified to reflect the speed survey results. He explained that the speed survey takes a snap shot of the speed zone segments. Mr. Van Zeverter said that Caltrans moved the 65 speed limit sign one quarter mile south of its previous location at Crescent Drive in response to concerns from Crescent Drive residents.

Mr. Van Zeverter reviewed the speed zone handout and the misconceptions surrounding speed limits. Deb Larson noted that collision rates and roadway geometrics are considered when the speed survey is conducted.

Wendy Anderson inquired about other safety improvements that could be made to improve site distance or improve awareness and safety at the Crescent Drive Intersection.

Commissioner Stone requested the Caltrans keep an eye on the impacts of the speed adjustments on Highway 17. He reiterated that Highway 17 is a unique corridor that presents many safety challenges and said that he appreciated Caltrans's attention to safety issues on this corridor.

Jacques Van Zeverter suggested that Caltrans do another sample speed survey in March 2007 to provide another picture of speeds on this segment of highway. George Dondero requested that Caltrans survey more than one location to address the issue of incremental speed changes between roadway segments. Mr. Dondero inquired about the use of flashing beacons to increase safety and the potential effectiveness of installing flashing beacons at this location.

Deb Larson responded that Caltrans would take a closer look at this intersection. Wendy Anderson mentioned that the intersection of Vine Hill Road and Highway 17 is an example of an intersection with effective signage.

8. Reviewed Operations and Status of the Traffic Operation Systems

Grace Blakeslee noted that Siga alerts, Highway Advisory Radio and Changeable Message Signs messages for the period from January 2006 to date were included in the packet. Jim Richardson reviewed the system activations report and mentioned that approximately 700 messages have been posted on Highway 17 in the last twelve



months. Mr. Richardson noted that the HAR at 1/17 is out of service during the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Construction.

Luis Mendez asked if it might be useful to have special enforcement near the Highway 17 and Ocean Street intersection. In addition, he suggested the use of public information to educate motorists about slowing down at this location. Tom Barnett noted that both recent fatal incidents at this location involved visitors from out of the area and were a consequence of excessive speed. Mr. Barnett noted that Caltrans is evaluating the area for safety concerns.

9. Monitoring Stations on Highway 17

Grace Blakeslee noted that Santa Cruz County Vehicle Loop Detector Information is now available on the PeMS website. Pranav Shah said that the Traffic Monitoring Center still can not see Santa Cruz road data. Jim Richardson mentioned that traffic.com is a federally funded website that is intended to bring 50 metropolitan areas road data onto a webpage.

10. Communications with Local Law Enforcement

Linda Olmstead noted that the results of the 911 survey throughout the state indicated that the Monterey Dispatch Center was in need of 8 new dispatchers and 1 new manager. Ms. Olmstead said that without these positions there is difficulty making notifications in a timely fashion. Ms. Olmstead also informed the committee that the Monterey Dispatch Center is initiating enhanced 911 for wireless carrier by carrier. With enhanced 911 for wireless the dispatch center can identify which cell tower the call is coming from. Ms. Olmstead noted that this addresses some issues associated with locating cell phone callers. She said that the enhanced 911 for cellular also results in a small reduction in 911 calls to the dispatch center. Rather, some cellular calls will now directly transfer to the appropriate allied agency.

11. Caltrans Provided an Update on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Improvement Project

Siobhan Sanders provided a presentation on key elements of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project construction. Bridges are currently being widened and extended. Caltrans installed a stop sign at the Morrissey off-ramp prior to the beginning of the school year. Installing the stop sign required re-striping and the development of a right hand turn pocket. Caltrans has received positive feed back from neighbors and the City of Santa Cruz Police in response to the stop sign installation.

The Highway 1/17 Traffic Operation Systems Improvements will include five CCTV cameras. In the northbound direction on Highway 1 cameras will be located north of La Fonda, between Morrissey and Branciforte Ave, north of Emeline, north of the



Fishhook and on Highway 17 where 1/17 starts to merge with Highway 17. The cameras will be installed at the end of the project. A temporary camera will be installed in the interchange area on the hill on the Santa Cruz side. It will be live on the Highway 1/17 Construction website in approximately six weeks.

12. Received Update on the Regional Transportation Commission Transportation Funding Task Force (TFTF) Workshops

Karena Pushnik provided a brief update of the TFTF activities. The SCCRTC held a series of workshops and hosted a website to solicit information from residents about their transportation concerns and proposed solutions. The workshops and website also asked questions about potential funding options for the solutions. A general summary of the input received from participations is available on the SCCRTC website. Ms. Pushnik said that participants did raise safety as one of their concerns; specifically, participants identified rude drivers and unsafe conditions as transportation concerns. Participants suggested enforcement and driver education as a solution for safety concerns. She also informed members that a draft plan is expected to be released early next year. There will be another round of TFTF workshops once the draft plan is released.

13. Received Update on Highway 17 Caltrans Projects

Deb Larson gave a presentation of Caltrans Highway 17 Safety Projects. Caltrans recently completed a safety project which widened the roadway shoulder at the fishhook by approximately 4 feet. Ms. Larson reported that with 23 months of collision data available from the Dynamic Curve Warning Sign location we continue to see a reduced collision rate. The reduced collision rate realized at this location is likely a result of the Dynamic Curve Warning Sign, pavement improvements and additional enforcement at that location. Ms. Larson also reported that the Laurel Curve Safety Project is under construction and is expected to be completed in Spring 2007. She informed members that the geotech drilling has been completed for the Glenwood Curves Safety Project. Caltrans is now wrapping up the Project Initiation Document. Once the PID is complete, Caltrans will recommend that it would be amended into the 2006 SHOPP. If approved for funding, construction is scheduled to be initiated in Summer 2007. Ms. Larson also reported that the Highway 17 proposed guardrail projects were included in the 2006 SHOPP. These include the Santa Village Road New Guardrail Project and shoulder widening and guardrails at various locations on Highway 17. These guardrail projects are programmed in 2009/10 fiscal years. Ms. Larson indicated that Caltrans has noticed an increase in wet weather collisions nears Vine Hill Road and that a new safety projects is proposed at this location.

14. Reviewed the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP)



Grace Blakeslee informed members that Caltrans is updating the 10 year SHOPP which is Caltrans' planning document for highway improvements. Ms. Blakeslee requested that members review the Santa Cruz County Collision Reduction Projects included in the 10 year SHOPP list. She also encouraged members to inform Caltrans of projects that are not on the 10 year SHOPP list that they think warrant further consideration.

15. Received a Presentation on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (discussed prior to item 14)

Deb Larson reviewed the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. She indicated that the SHSP is a new requirement by the federal government as part of Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Ms. Larson said that Caltrans annually reports on state highways safety improvements. The new SHSP focuses on state highway safety improvements and local roadway improvements. The purpose of the SHSP is to coordinate state goals to reduce fatality and injury accidents on all public roads. Ms. Larson reviewed the stages of the SHSP development and the next steps.

16. Received Summary of 2005 Freeway Service Patrol Statistics

Grace Blakeslee reviewed the 2005 Freeway Service Patrol Operational and Financial Report and highlighted that weight times slightly decreased in 2005 and assists per hour slightly increased in 2005. She also informed members that the RTC will release a request for proposals for Highway 17 Freeway Service Patrol services for the period between July 2007 and July 2011 on September 29, 2006.

17. Update on the Santa Cruz County Call Box Upgrades

Grace Blakeslee informed members that the call box upgrades have been delayed, but are now moving forward and should be complete this winter.

18. Additional Items

Jim Richardson noted that this year is expected to be an El Niño Year and that trends show that collisions increase during El Niño Years.

19. Accepted proposed date for the next Meeting: Joint Safe on 17 Tasks Force/TOS Committee Meeting – March 14th, 2007

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 1:00pm

Respectfully Submitted _____
Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner