



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY TRAFFIC OPERATIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE & SAFE ON 17 TASK FORCE MEETING AGENDA

Date: Wed. October 15, 2025	Dial-In Option: (669) 900-9128
Start Time: 10:00am	Meeting ID: 850 2826 5664
Location: 1101 Pacific Ave, Suite 250, Santa Cruz, CA and Online via Zoom	Passcode: 094804

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

- Max Friedman (RTC)
- Marshall Ballard (RTC)
- Luis Mendez (RTC)
- Vanessa Faul (Caltrans D5)
- Kathy Kleinschmidt (Caltrans D5)
- Kelly McClendon (Caltrans D5)
- Eric Carver (Caltrans D5)
- Paul Guirguis (Caltrans D5)
- Adam Cuellar (Caltrans D5)
- Ian Nguyen (Caltrans D5)
- Sheridan Nansen (Caltrans D4)
- Orlando Ramirez (Caltrans D4)
- Kane Wong (Caltrans D4)
- Minyoung Kim (Caltrans D4)
- Abul Bashar (Caltrans D4)
- Bryce Danenhauer (CHP San Jose)
- Jack Louder (CHP San Jose)
- Jesse Pidcock (Scotts Valley PD)
- Joe Winter (Santa Clara County Fire Department)
- Troy Vincent (CHP Santa Cruz)
- Katelyn Costa (MTC)
- Lisette Jones (Assembly Member Gail Pellerin's Office)
- Cliff Barber (American Civil Constructors)
- Jeff Bates (Community of Redwood Estates)

1. **Introductions** – Introductions were made.
2. **Oral Communications** – None.
3. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – Items 7 and 8 were consolidated into one item.



4. **Received Information Items** – Max Friedman provided a summary of major incidents on Highway 17 over the past year and an overview of current collision and enforcement trends. The current three-year contract with CHP for enhanced enforcement is in its final year, with RTC contributing \$100,000 annually for enforcement on the Santa Cruz County side and MTC contributing \$50,000 annually for the Santa Clara County side.

Max reported that there were 621 total collisions on Highway 17 in 2025 to date. There have been 5 fatal collisions, compared to zero fatalities in the prior year. CHP Santa Cruz has issued 1,556 regular time citations and 670 overtime citations. CHP San Jose has issued 1,402 regular citations and 216 overtime citations. CHP Santa Cruz logged 490 overtime hours on Highway 17 while CHP San Jose logged 187. Most collisions occurred during the winter months, coinciding with wet-weather conditions.

Max also shared an update on the Freeway Service Patrol program. FSP operates two towing beats in Santa Cruz County, including one along Highway 17. On Highway 17, FSP provided 504 motorist assists in the past year. Most assists were related to flat tires, mechanical issues, and collisions. There are approximately 65 call boxes countywide, with fewer than 20 on Highway 17. Due to declining usage, staff is evaluating options to remove the call box system.

5. **Received Update on California Highway Patrol Safe on 17 Program Statistics and Public Information Efforts** – CHP representatives provided an overview of current enforcement activity and operational challenges on Highway 17. Officers noted that rainy-season conditions continue to limit safe areas to conduct enforcement stops, which affects their ability to respond quickly and maintain a visible presence. To address this, CHP is combining beats from adjacent areas, deploying more officers when feasible, and preparing for increased enforcement as winter storms approach.

CHP also shared upcoming public information activities. Both Santa Cruz and San Jose Areas are hosting Start Smart and Age Well classes to promote driver safety. CHP Santa Cruz operates a countywide program called Before Aggressive Drivers Get Everyone Stopped (BADGES), which brings together allied agencies to assist with traffic enforcement.



CHP clarified that the southern limit of the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) on Highway 17 remains at Mount Hermon Road. This boundary is based on historic incident data and overall program length considerations.

A member of the public expressed worries about dangerous driving speeds and lack of effective enforcement despite recent improvements. CHP acknowledged these challenges, noting that while fatal collisions have decreased, they still occur frequently and enforcement is limited by road conditions. Kathy Kleinschmidt (Caltrans D5) noted that Caltrans is taking a collaborative approach to safety, which includes high-friction surface treatments and emerging technologies, while acknowledging the need for both engineering solutions and enforcement to address the increasing traffic volumes and speeding issues.

6. **Received Caltrans District 5 Highway 17 Project Updates** – Kelly McClendon (Caltrans D5), presented an update on the Caltrans Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan for State Route 17, emphasizing the need for coordination between Districts 4 and 5. He highlighted demographic data showing population growth in Santa Cruz, high job concentrations in Silicon Valley, and housing affordability challenges, with many residents commuting to Santa Clara County, leading to increased traffic demand on Highway 17. The plan aims to address these challenges by identifying potential project categories and engaging stakeholders, with a completion target by the end of the fiscal year next June.

Caltrans District 5 staff also provided an overview of active and upcoming construction projects on Highway 17. Caltrans is investing in pavement preservation and high friction surface treatment installations, integrating safety countermeasures such as rumble strips through SB 1-funded SHOPP projects at the northbound lanes of Highway 17. Caltrans D5 is also utilizing SHOPP funds to replace and repair drainage systems and culverts along Highway 17. They are also using SHOPP funds to repair damage caused by the overturned truck crash from earlier this year. Caltrans D5 staff also provided an overview of all of the different traffic management systems (TMS) elements being employed along Highway 17 to improve safety and operations. This includes changeable message signs, traffic cameras, vehicle detection stations, and radar feedback curve warning signs. These TMS elements can be viewed through the Caltrans QuickMap app.



7. **Received Caltrans District 4 Highway 17 Project Updates** – Minyoung Kim (Caltrans D4) provided updates on several projects along State Route 17. She reported that the recent Capital Preventive Maintenance (CAPM) project has been completed including repaving, ADA enhancements, and drainage system improvements. She also presented on the SR-17 Bridge Rail Replacement project in which a bridge over the Los Gatos segment of Highway 17 is being upgraded to meet crash and safety standards. She provided updates on the SR-17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project which involves reconfiguring the SR-17/SR-9 interchange in the Town of Los Gatos to improve traffic operations and safety. The construction phase of the project is scheduled to start in Fall 2028, with construction end scheduled for Fall 2030. Caltrans staff also presented on the SR-17 Pedestrian Overcrossing project in Los Gatos to improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility over SR-17 and the SR-17 Wildlife and Trail Crossing in coordination with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MidPen) to construct a new wildlife undercrossing and trail overcrossing near Lexington Reservoir on SR-17.

Caltrans District 4 provided updates on TMS. Like Caltrans D5, D4 staff provided an overview of different TMS elements being utilized on SR-17. Additionally, staff reported on a field visit with the Santa Clara Fire Department which highlighted accident-prone areas, particularly around Big Moody Curve. Caltrans D4 staff also provided an overview of the Caltrans Quickmap app and its utility as a key resource for real-time travel information, including collision data, lane closures, and traffic conditions. Caltrans also provides live video feeds from traffic cameras along Highway 17 to help travelers make informed decisions.

8. **Discussion** – The recent overturned truck crash on Highway 17 was discussed and Kathy Kleinschmidt (Caltrans D5) explained that Caltrans D5 may seek reimbursement for the repairs through the responsible party's insurance. Jeff Bates, a member of the public, raised concerns about Highway 17's traffic congestion due to population growth in Silicon Valley and Santa Cruz.
9. **Approved Next Meeting Date** – The next Safe on 17 Task Force & TOS Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, from 10 AM to 12PM. The meeting will be held in-person at the RTC office with remote option. Meeting details are listed on the [Safe on 17 meetings webpage](#).



Respectively submitted by: Max Friedman, Safe on 17 Program Manager