



JOINT MEETING OF
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY TRAFFIC OPERATIONS SYSTEMS (TOS) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
AND
SAFE ON 17 TASK FORCE

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
10:00-12:00

Santa Jose Area California Highway Patrol Offices
2020 Junction Avenue
San Jose, CA 95131

TOS Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Task Force Meeting Participants

Tom Barnett, Caltrans District 5 Maintenance
Marshall Ballard, Valley Transportation Association
Ramin Bolourchian, Caltrans District 4 TMC
Megan Doyle, MTC Commissioner Yeager Representative
Russell Ellingworth, Caltrans District 5 Maintenance
Shawn Enjily, Caltrans District 4 Design
Adrian Fine, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Doug Hessing, Caltrans District 5 Project Manager
Hugh Holden, Santa Cruz CHP
Gavin Hansen, Santa Cruz Area CHP Freeway Service Patrol Officer
Collin Jones, Caltrans District 5 Public Information Officer
Jaime Maldonado, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Christina Manriquez, Santa Cruz CHP Captain
Stefanie Pow, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Gary Richards, San Jose Mercury
Nina Rohlich, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Siobhan Saunders, Caltrans District 5 Construction
Pranav Shah, Caltrans District 4 Traffic Systems
Earl Sherman, Caltrans District 4 Maintenance
John Thomas, Caltrans District 4 Project Manager
Bernard Walik, Caltrans District 4 Public Affairs
Martin Wittmers, Caltrans District 5 Electrical
Scott Wood, San Jose CHP

Staff Present

Grace Blakeslee

- 1. Introductions** –Introductions were made.
- 2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – None.
- 3. Reviewed and Accepted Minutes of the September 16, 2009 Joint TOS Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Meeting**



4. Received Information Items

Grace Blakeslee reviewed articles related to traffic safety relevant to Highway 17. She also provided an update on the Freeway Service Patrol Program and the development of a Monterey Bay Area 511 Traveler Information System Feasibility and Implementation Plan and informed that committee that staff would be requesting their input on the need for traveler information and the design of the system.

5. Received Update California Highway Patrol Safe on 17 Program Statistics and Public Information Efforts

Lieutenant Wood of the San Jose Area Highway Patrol reported that injury collisions were down 38 percent in 2009 from 2008 and there were no fatalities in 2009. He reported that overtime hours are used to target Primary Collisions Factors. In some cases, efforts during extra CHP enforcement hours may be focused on intercepting motorists conducting unsafe driving behavior and less time writing routine citations, which results in fewer monthly citations recorded for that time period. He also noted that factors, including reduced average daily miles traveled on Highway 17 likely resulting from the recession, and the effectiveness of the public outreach associated with the Safe on 17 Ten-Year. Grace Blakeslee explained that on the Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County side of Highway 17 both strategies, targeting hours during a specific month or distributing hours more evenly throughout the year, have been applied and seem to be effective towards maintaining a reduced collision rate. She emphasized that consistent CHP visibility is a key factor in keeping collisions down.

Officer Holden reported that for the third-quarter of 2009 there were 48 collisions and during the fourth- quarter of 2009 there were 60 collisions, including one fatality. Overall, traffic collisions in 2009 decreased by 4.5 percent from 2008. He reported that in 2009 there were 199 overtime citations, 39 in the third-quarter and 49 in the fourth-quarter. This is a 65 percent decrease in overtime citations from 2008. Similarly, the number of extra CHP enforcement hours decreased by almost half, primarily due to less funding available. Meanwhile, in 2009 regular time citations increased by 16 percent from 2008. In 2009, two fatalities occurred on Highway 17 in Santa Cruz County, both occurring near Laurel Curve Road. In response to further discussion from committee members about the Laurel Curve area, Grace Blakeslee recommended that the committee discuss the Laurel Curve area and related incidents at the next meeting. She also noted that Caltrans typically compares before and after statistics for a project location after a three-year period.

Grace Blakeslee complimented the CHP for focusing overtime citations on primary collision factors, which is the focus of the Safe on 17 Program. She noted that historical trends show that there is a positive relationship the number of extra CHP enforcement hours and reduced collisions. Grace Blakeslee reminded the group that the current CHP contract covers the period through June 30, 2012 and that the accounting for the program has changed to a fiscal year, rather than a calendar year cycle. She explained that since the San Jose CHP focused the majority of their enforcement hours in the winter months, there is little funding left for San Jose CHP extra enforcement hours through the rest of the project period, June 30, 2010.

6. Received Highway 17 Project Update from Caltrans District 4

John Thomas introduced Shawn Enjily, the Caltrans District 4 Design Engineer responsible for the Wet Weather Project expected to be ready to list in 2010 and go to construction in 2011. This project covers over two miles from the Summit to Idlywild on Highway 17 in Santa Clara County. He explained that there are approximately six intersections within this segment of highway. The overall scope of the



project is to improve drainage and that the current drainage system is very outdated. Most concrete barriers will also be replaced and some road slope protection will be completed. Construction is expected to last 18 months and mostly take place at night. Shawn Enjily explained that his office has spoken with many regional stakeholders and residents in the project area to inform them about this project and request their input. He also thanked Caltrans District 5 and CHP for providing helpful information about recommended project staging and construction activities based on their experience on recent Highway 17 construction projects. Shawn Enjily explained that they have incorporated removable barriers into the construction design to expedite the construction activities. He also explained that detours have been established if there are full roadway closures, although none are expected. John Thomas added that Caltrans expects to make some striping enhancements including adding a stripe to the barrier to increase visibility of the barrier since there is no median shoulder in some areas. Shawn Enjily and others discussed the challenges posed due to the narrow roadway width. John Thomas reminded folks that the speed limit in the construction area is 35mph. Due to the type of incidents that occurred at the Glenwood Curves project during construction, Grace Blakeslee recommended contacting trucking associations to give them direct notice of the construction impacts posed by this project. Shawn Enjily explained that the shoulder width will not be increased as part of this project and that the cost of the project is approximately \$20 million. Grace Blakeslee recommended that the Caltrans Public Information staff request that the Santa Cruz Visitor's Council post construction notices on their website. Marshall Ballard recommended that Caltrans take a look at the spring on the northbound side near Madrona Drive in lane two as part of this project.

7. Received Highway 17 Project Update from Caltrans District 5

Doug Hessing reported that Caltrans District 5 is currently upgrading guardrail at 28 locations on Highway 17 in Santa Cruz County. He also reported that the Caltrans District 5 is making improvements north of Scotts Valley at Santa's Village Road on the northbound side of Highway 17. He suggested that Caltrans District 4 and District 5 coordinate construction schedules because of the proximity of the the Santa's Village Road Project to the Wet Weather Project and the timing of construction. Russell Ellingworth asked how many of the guardrail improvements would install concrete versus metal barriers. Doug Hessing reported that the majority of guardrail upgrades are to concrete, but that concrete guardrail couldn't be accommodated in all places due to design requirements. Grace Blakeslee explained that the portable CMS signs placed on Highway 17 noticing construction between January 2010 and December 2010 are referring to the guardrail project activities. She also requested that Caltrans inform her if any of the call boxes will be impacted by the guardrail projects, including if the call boxes will be located behind a guardrail once the improvements are complete. Colin Jones from Caltrans District 5 reported that the Highway 1/17 landscaping project is scheduled to begin soon.

8. Received Recommendations for Alternate Locations for New Proposed Highway 1 Changeable Message Signs (CMS) from the TOS Sub-Group

Grace Blakeslee reminded the committee that Caltrans District 5 is planning to install two new CMS on Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County. She presented alternate locations for the new signs based on the TOS sub-group recommendations, which was tasked with reviewing the new proposed CMS sign locations. Captain Manriquez requested that the committee be provided the exact post miles of the revised locations before forwarding any recommendations to Caltrans. Grace Blakeslee agreed to send this information to the committee and wait to forward recommendations to Caltrans until after hearing additional responses from committee members.



9. Reviewed Operations and Status of TOS System

Grace Blakeslee provided an overview of the messages posted on CMS on Highway 17 and in Santa Cruz County between September 2009 and February 2010. She noted that the signs appeared to be used effectively to notice incidents, even small incidents, which occurred during commute times. She stated that the signs were also activated for long incidents and closures and to caution drivers. She explained that a fewer portion of incidents overall appeared to be noticed using CMS during this period, based on a comparison to the number of incidents reported in the newspaper. She highlighted that there were a number of closures affecting Highway 1 northbound that may have benefited from the use of a CMS sign alerting motorists traveling southbound Highway 1. She also informed members that several incidents impacted the Highway 1/9 intersection during this quarter and asked for committee member's suggestions about how to best inform motorists about events causing delays at this location. Captain Manriquez and Tom Barnett said that efforts are underway to improve communications amongst Caltrans, CHP, police and other responders. Grace Blakeslee recommended that any communications between local Caltrans staff, CHP and police also be communicated to the TMC to ensure that the 41st Ave CMS is activated to inform motorists about impacts to the Highway 1/9 intersection. Ramin Bolourchian reported that his office is aware of intermittent problems with the CMS in Santa Cruz County. He reminded committee members and CHP to call the TMC if they notice that any of the CMS are malfunctioning. Grace Blakeslee thanked Caltrans District 4 for replacing the bulbs in the CMS signs and explained that an effort to discuss future maintenance strategies for Santa Cruz County TOS equipment is on hold due to resource constraints.

10. Received Information about SB 1418

Grace Blakeslee provided an update on the SB 1418- SAFE Modernization Bill jointly sponsored by RTC and MTC. She stated that the SAFE revenues generate approximately \$240,000, which in Santa Cruz County funds call boxes, extra CHP enforcement and Freeway Service Patrol. She explained that the proposal would allow SAFEs to increase the SAFE fee from \$1 to \$2 dollars and expand the eligible use of SAFE funds to include projects that address incident management and detection and dissemination of roadway information.

11. Additional Items

Grace Blakeslee informed members that there is a Highway 17 Facebook page and requested that members check it out and report back to the group. Tom Barnett requested that RTC staff provide the decals and exact locations for the new Safe on 17 signs.

12. Approved Next Meeting Date: Joint Safe on 17 Task Force & TOS Oversight Committee meeting – September 15, 2010

Respectively submitted by _____
Grace Blakeslee