



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2015
10:00am-12:00pm

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

TOS Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Task Force Meeting Participants

Christopher Cook, Caltrans D5, Program/Project Management
Lt Scot Loetscher, San Jose CHP
Lt Brian Hawkins, Santa Cruz CHP
Officer Trista Sharp, Santa Cruz CHP
Kelly McClendon, Caltrans D5, Planning
Brandy Rider, Caltrans D5, Planning
Earl Sherman, Caltrans D4, Maintenance
Ruben Herrera, Caltrans D4, Maintenance
Bruce McPherson, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Nicole Stewart, CHP, Monterey Dispatch
Heather Adamson, AMBAG
Ramin Bolourchian, Caltrans D4, Transportation Management Center
Mona Raby, Redwood Estates Service Association
Kieran Kelly, representing Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager
Marshall Ballard, Valley Transit Authority (VTA)
Gine Johnson, representing Santa Cruz County Supervisor Bruce McPherson
Eric DeGroot, Caltrans D5, Maintenance
Bertha Roman, Caltrans D5, Program/Project Management
Susana Cruz, Caltrans D5, Public Information
Patty Ciesla, Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council
Dan Medeiros, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Gary Richards, San Jose Mercury News, (teleconference)
Jacques van Zeventer, Caltrans D5, Traffic Management, (teleconference)
Doug Hessing, Caltrans D5, Program/Project Management(teleconference)
Scott Hamby, City of Scotts Valley Public Works (teleconference)
Kim Shultz, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)
Amy Naranjo, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Ginger Dykaar, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission



1. **Introductions** – Introductions were made.
2. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** - none
3. **Reviewed and Accepted Minutes of the March 11, 2014 Joint TOS Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Meeting**
4. **Received Information Items**

Ginger Dykaar provided a brief update on the new 3-year extra enforcement contract between RTC and CHP. The contract with MTC has also been amended. RTC and MTC will continue to provide \$50,000 per year each for extra enforcement for the next 3 years.

Ginger Dykaar presented the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) Program Update. Funds are provided by Caltrans for Freeway Service Patrol on both Hwy 1 and Hwy 17. The allocation of funds for Santa Cruz County FSP has been reduced for the FY 15/16 fiscal year by \$33,000, an approximately 15% reduction. The allocation is based on a formula that includes population, the number of freeway lane miles, and the amount of congestion. Prior to the detectors being put in place on Hwy 1, Caltrans estimated the amount of congestion in SCC. Now that we have detectors on Hwy 1, these detectors can provide real data on the amount of congestion but since we do not have detectors on Hwy 17 near the summit where congestion often occurs, the algorithm assumes that there is no congestion. RTC would like to work with Caltrans to discuss what options may be available for adding detectors on Hwy 17 in order to substantiate the congestion here. Due to this funding decrease, RTC staff is currently evaluating how best to reduce FSP hours and will take into consideration the times of day when there are fewer assists. Summer weekend hours may need to be reduced or eliminated and a reduction in weekday service may also be necessary.

Amy Naranjo presented information on the RTC 511 traveler information service website – Cruz511 that was launched in May 2015. The site has been designed to view on smart phones, tablets and computers and features: Real time traffic information, incident information, traffic cameras, multimodal info and trip planning tools, Google's transit trip planner, specialized transportation, emergency alerts and more.

Ginger Dykaar presented a summary of the 2014 Safe on 17 Annual Report. The 2014 Safe on 17 Annual Report shows that the total number of injury and fatal collisions was the highest in 2014 since 2005. Similarly the total number of collisions in 2014 is the highest since 2005. This increase may be just a normal variation or could be due to other factors including traffic volume changes, decrease in the number of total citations issued and/or an increase in distracted driving using cell phones. The number of overtime citations have been about the same over the last many years but there has been a decrease in the number of regular citations. Opportunities to increase the regularly scheduled enforcement on Hwy 17 or optimize the current efforts during high collision times would be beneficial.

Lt Hawkins with Santa Cruz CHP stated that the number of citations is not representative of the complete level of services that CHP is providing to increase safety on highways. Their efforts have shifted to more preventative strategies that will modify behavior in the long run rather than the penalty approach of issuing citations. Preventative strategies include increased public education to all



age groups, from youth to seniors. Lt Hawkins (Santa Cruz CHP) and Lt Loetscher (San Jose CHP) both expressed the challenges that CHP has been facing due to a reduced workforce and high turnover in both offices. CHP has been working to create incentives for officers to stay in San Jose where the cost of living is high such as encouraging local kids to participate in the “Explorer” program that provides training for young men and women to explore their future in law enforcement.

Articles/Public Feedback –The packet contains a news article written by Gary Richards from the San Jose Mercury News about the increase in collisions on Hwy 17 as shown in the 2014 Safe on 17 Annual Report.

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

Collisions and Citations, San Jose - Lt Scot Loetscher with San Jose CHP stated that so far this year there were zero fatalities on the Santa Clara side of Hwy 17, but a higher number of property damage only collisions and injury collisions. Lt Loetscher’s assessment is that even though the number of injuries has increased, the injuries are less severe this year than previous years. Lt Loetscher expressed that he has noticed that the traffic has been increasing since the low during the economic downturn of 2007-2008.

Ginger Dykaar expressed that there is a location on Hwy 17 NB north of Summit Rd where there have been a number of collisions. Lt Loetscher stated that the CHP officers find the locations where more enforcement may be needed and they have been targeting this area in particular. Ramin Bolourchian from Caltrans D4 TMC will investigate the possibility of placing a dynamic speed warning sign at this location.

Collisions and Citations, Santa Cruz - Officer Sharp from Santa Cruz CHP stated that so far the total collisions and injury collisions have decreased since last year and there have been no fatalities on the Santa Cruz County side of Highway 17. There has been a substantial reduction in number of collisions near Laurel Curve due likely to the placement of the median barrier and the high friction surface treatment on the SB side of the highway approaching Laurel Rd. There are more collisions near Glenwood now. CHP is focusing their efforts on days with inclement weather. The number of officers that patrol Highway 17 is reduced to one officer/day for a 10 hour shift in comparison to the late 1990’s when there were three officers/day with eight hour shifts each.

Public Information - CHP Santa Cruz have been working hard on modifying driving habits to improve safety and gain public trust. CHP offers monthly training to youths, seniors and incorporates the message of safety on Highway 17 in all of their public affairs activities.

Enforcement Hours - Ginger Dykaar mentioned that both Santa Cruz and San Jose have a plan for spreading extra enforcement hours throughout the year at approximately 40-60 hours per month.

6. Received Caltrans District 5 Highway 17 Project Update

Kelly McClendon presented the public outreach component of the Access Management Study for the Hwy 17 corridor from Granite Creek Rd in the City of Scotts Valley to Summit Rd. Strategies include interactive web mapping tool, workshops, surveys, social media, outreach booths at local events,



focused small group meetings, and leader interviews. Outreach will be bi-literate and culturally fluent and will occur this fall and spring with the Summary Findings Report completed by July 2016.

Dan Madeiros from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County presented the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing project. The Conservation Blueprint Plan developed by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County emphasized Highway 17 as a significant barrier for wildlife to cross and identified Laurel Curve as the ideal location for building a wildlife crossing due to the large undeveloped properties in this area. Land Trust has since purchased or is planning to purchase over 400 acres in this area. The Land Trust has been working with Caltrans on this project. Caltrans has developed the Project Initiation Document (PID) for this project and the project has been advanced for the 2016 SHOPP. In the PID, two design options were identified with costs up to \$12 million. Brandy Rider from Caltrans, D5 Planning, stated that Caltrans is trying to get the project programmed through the SHOPP but that it did not compete well given only \$7M available for mitigation projects statewide. Dan Medeiros stated that the Land Trust will raise funds to cover some of the costs of this project.

Christopher Cook from Caltrans D5 expressed that the Laurel Curve Shoulder Widening project on the northbound side of Hwy 17 near Laurel Rd has been completed. He also discussed the Hwy 1/17 merge lane project that will improve safety by increasing the number of lanes from 3 to 4 lanes so that 2 lanes will not be merging into one. Only restriping and improving crash pads on guard rails will be required. Project should start October 30, 2015 and take about 60 to 90 days.

7. Received Caltrans District 4 Highway 17 Project Update

Earl Sherman from Caltrans D4, stated that there are no major construction projects planned for Hwy 17 on the Santa Clara County side. There is a project on Hwy 17 north of Hwy 9 to replace signage. CT maintenance continues to be challenged recruiting people due to high cost of living in area. Graffiti, litter and illegal encampments are major maintenance issues that continue to take time away from other work.

8. Received Traffic Operations Systems Updates

Traffic Management Center (TMC) Update - Ramin Bolourchian, Caltrans D4, TMC discussed how Caltrans received an email from a member of the public expressing his concern over using the CMS on Hwy 1 near 41st Ave for nonemergency messages during morning commute times due to the increased traffic congestion. Ramin expressed appreciation to Caltrans D5, Public Information Office for their response to the public's concern. Ramin stated that Caltrans has over 150 to 200 messages per year that they are required to post on the changeable message signs as part of Caltrans' mission to improve highway safety. There have been a number of complaints about the CMS on Hwy 1 near 41st Ave causing traffic congestion. He stated that Caltrans' intent is to not use this CMS for nonemergency messages during peak periods although a few messages were posted over the last year. Caltrans has analyzed travel time data available from INRIX to determine whether there are increases in congestion when this CMS sign is posted but they have not seen an increase over the already congested NB roadway during the morning commute. The day on which the gentleman expressed his concern about the CMS causing congestion, also showed that CHP slowed traffic to remove debris on the road which did increase the congestion in this area. Regardless of whether the CMS messages on the Hwy 1 sign near 41st Ave cause real or perceived delay, Caltrans intent is to not post nonemergency messages during the morning peak period at this location.



Communications Update - Nicole Stewart, CHP Monterey Dispatch, stated that there is an increase in call volume to the dispatch center and a decrease in staffing. In order to optimize work flow, they have eliminated the faxing of sigalerts. Sigalerts are on website and are provided via email.

Traffic Operation Equipment Update - Jacques van Zeventer stated that there are a number of detectors on Hwy 1 but only two on Hwy 17. Perhaps through the Access Management Study, Caltrans will be able to provide operational detectors on Hwy 17 but there is nothing currently planned. The focus of the Traffic Operations group is 90% health and reliability of equipment. There are limited resources for any additional efforts. Contact Julie Gonzalez, Caltrans D5, about improving the detection on Highway 17. If you see any problems with detectors on Hwy 1, please let Caltrans know so can work toward goal of 90% health and reliability.

Callbox System - CHP, Caltrans and the RTC have approved a reduction plan for the call box system in SCC. A map of the boxes to be removed and the ones that will remain is shown on page 36 of the packet. All remaining boxes will be made ADA compliant. RTC staff is working with Caltrans permitting to get this work completed.

9. Received Major Incident Review

The task force discussed the overturned tea truck incident on Hwy 17 and the five car pileup with fatality on Hwy 1.

10. Received Additional Items - none

11. Approved Next Meeting Date

Joint Safe on 17 Task Force & TOS Oversight Committee Meeting – Wednesday, March 9, 2016
10:00am to 12:00pm at San Jose California Highway Patrol, 2020 Junction Ave, San Jose, CA 95131

Respectively submitted by 
Ginger Dykaar