



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, March 9, 2016
10:00am-12:00pm

**San Jose California Highway Patrol
2020 Junction Ave, San Jose**

Meeting Participants

Lt Scot Loetscher, San Jose CHP
Lt Ian Troxell, Santa Cruz CHP
Jennifer Wilson, Caltrans D5
Devin Porr, Caltrans D5
Jeff Bates, Redwood Estates Services Association
Farokh Parsijani, Caltrans D4
William Tyson, Office of Senator Beall
Angelica Torres, Office of Senator Beall
Stephanie Stuehler, Santa Clara County Fire Dept
Engine 84, Santa Clara County Fire Dept
Kieran Kelly, Office of Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager
Officer Grant Boles, Santa Cruz CHP
Officer Trista Drake, Santa Cruz CHP
Cliff Barber, American Civil Constructors
Angela Gile, Office of Assembly Member Mark Stone
Elaine Daniels, Redwood Estates Services Association
Kelly McClendon, Caltrans D5 Planning
Ray Kwan, Caltrans D4 Maintenance
Tom Barnett, Caltrans D5 Maintenance
Ramin Bolourchian, Caltrans D4 TMC
Brian Winterhalder, Santa Clara County Fire Department
Janet Wohlgemuth, California Conservation Corps
Jesse Morris, CalFire
Patty Ciesla, Santa Clara County FireSAFE Council
Gary Richards, San Jose Mercury News, (teleconference)
Rosemary Anderson, Office of Emergency Services, Santa Cruz County
(teleconference)
Luis Duazo, Caltrans D5 (teleconference)
Jacques van Zeventer, Caltrans D5 (teleconference)
Doug Hessing, Caltrans D5 (teleconference)
Ginger Dykaar, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission



1. **Introductions** – Introductions were made.
2. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** –added oral communications item for public to present information on topics not on agenda
3. **Oral Communications** - Cliff Barber, a member of the Hwy 17 community spoke about his concerns on the number of collisions on Hwy 17. He works for American Civil Constructors, and was involved in installing the high friction surface treatment (HFST) on Hwy 17 near Laurel Rd. He suggested implementing more engineering solutions along Hwy 17 particularly HFST.
4. **Reviewed and Accepted Minutes of the September 16, 2015 Joint TOS Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Meeting**
5. **Received Information Items** - Ginger Dykaar presented the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) Program Update. For FY 15/16, the allocation from Caltrans (CT) for Santa Cruz County (SCC) FSP is approximately \$33,000 less than previous years due primarily to a change in the way congestion is determined for Santa Cruz County. The allocation for FY16/17 will likely be a similar reduction. RTC has typically provided a match to the CT funds of 40 to 50% when only 25% is required but the amount of matching funds will likely be reduced as well given the reduction in gas prices and effects on available transportation funds for FSP. All of these reductions in funding add up to the need to reduce FSP hours on both Hwy 1 and 17. Caltrans will be installing 3 traffic volume detectors on Hwy 17 to measure congestion which should increase our funds from CT for FSP in the future.

Articles/Public Feedback –Ginger Dykaar discussed an article about the public outreach that CT has been doing for the Hwy 17 Access Mgmt Plan. There are some quotes from the public about the challenges with not being able to take a left turn onto Hwy 17. An article written by Gary Richards responding to questions from hwy 17 motorists concerned about dangerous driving on hwy 17 was discussed. An article about a mountain lion that was hit by a car on Hwy 17 near Lexington Reservoir was mentioned. The Land Trust spoke to the group at the September meeting about their interest in building a wildlife tunnel under Hwy 17 for habitat connectivity for mountain lions and other animals. They have been partnering with Caltrans on this project and continue to make progress towards this project becoming a reality.

6. **Received Update on California Highway Patrol Safe on 17 Program Statistics and Public Information Efforts** - Lt Scot Loetscher with San Jose CHP stated that there were no fatalities in 2015 on the Hwy 17 corridor. The number of injury collisions was higher than previous years. With improvements in the economy, the traffic volume is increasing which correlates to increases in



the number of collisions. The total number of extra enforcement hours on Hwy 17 by San Jose CHP was less than last year.

Officer Trista Drake from Santa Cruz CHP stated that having no fatalities on the Hwy 17 corridor is a significant achievement. The extent of injury for the 2015 collisions has not been analyzed and may show that many of the injuries were minor relative to previous years. The collisions may have also been solo vehicle collisions affecting less people. Officer Drake stressed that the number of citations does not fully reflect the work of CHP. The amount of CHP contact with the public that motivates motorists to obey the traffic rules is a better measurement. The number of January 2016 collisions are likely due to the stormy, wet weather.

Ginger Dykaar stated that the total number of injury and fatal collisions for 2015 is the highest since 1999, when the Office of Traffic Safety Grant was initiated. Similarly the total number of all collisions is the highest since 2005. This increase could be related to an increase in traffic on Highway 17. Only data that is currently available for assessing traffic trends is from CT traffic operations who estimate the traffic volumes on state highways. Data from Caltrans traffic count detectors on Hwy 17 once installed will provide a way to assess traffic trends. The number of extra enforcement hours was down in 2015 compared to other years and the number of total citations also decreased. CHP enforcement is extremely valuable for reducing the number of collisions. Optimizing your efforts by focusing your enforcement schedule (both regular and extra) to target times with higher collision rates is extremely important.

- 7. Received information on Santa Cruz County's New Emergency Operations Center** - Rosemary Anderson from the Office of Emergency Services, SCC introduced herself. Santa Cruz County has opened a new Emergency Operations Center on Chanticleer Avenue in mid-county. She has just recently started working for the county in this position. Once she has time to settle into her new position, she will come back to a future TOS meeting to discuss emergency operations for SCC.

- 8. Highway 17 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project in Vicinity of Redwood Estates** – Patty Ciesla from Santa Clara County FireSafe Council discussed a proposed project to reduce wildfire risk along Hwy 17 near Redwood Estates. The excessive amounts of dead and diseased vegetation along the highway are a fire hazard. Vehicle fires could ignite roadside vegetation then move into residential areas. A wildfire originating outside the highway right of way (ROW) could blow across the highway trapping people in vehicles on a congested roadway. Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is partnering with Caltrans, Cal Fire, Santa Clara County Fire Dept and others to fund this project in order to remove vegetation along the



Highway 17 ROW and nearby Redwood Estates residential areas to reduce the risk of a wildfire along Hwy 17. If grant is awarded, work will start this summer.

9. Received Caltrans District 5 Highway 17 Project Update

Kelly McClendon discussed the Hwy 17 Access Management Study to improve mobility, access, safety and reduce conflict points along the Hwy 17 corridor in SCC. A website was launched in mid-November including an interactive mapping activity to promote public input on the project. To reach Hwy 17 users beyond the adjacent neighborhoods, a survey was used and input from public at the Santa Cruz farmer's market was solicited. Concerns expressed were a lack of convenient and accessible crossings and that more and more people are traveling fast through local road network to avoid Hwy 17 congestion. Public has expressed a desire for a truck ban, but truckers expressed importance of keeping Hwy 17 open to trucks. A Caltrans study has found that Hwy 17 is the most viable trucking route connecting the Bay area to Santa Cruz County.

Jennifer Wilson from CT D5 discussed the Hwy 17 Shoulder Widening and Concrete Guardrail project near Scotts Valley. The project runs from 0.4 miles south of Sugarloaf to 0.1 mile south of Laurel Rd. The project is planned to be completed by Fall 2016. Caltrans has also been working on a project to extend the merge lane from Hwy 1NB to Hwy 17 SB. This project is anticipated to be completed by Spring 2016. D5 maintenance will be paving sections of Hwy 17 at night mostly in SB direction.

10. Received Caltrans District 4 Highway 17 Project Update

Farokh Parsijani from Caltrans D4, presented the project update for Santa Clara County side of Hwy 17. On Hwy 17 near the City of Los Gatos, a project is planned for 2019/2020 to construct a safety light, shoulder rumble stripes, a guardrail system, dynamic speed warning signs, and enhanced wet-night visibility striping at targeted locations. Another project north of Hebard to I-280 is planned for 2019/2020 that includes cold planning and overlaying, guard rail and crash cushion upgrades, loop detector replacement, pavement delineation, drainage and dike improvement.

11. Received Traffic Operations Systems Updates

Traffic Management Center (TMC) Update - Ramin Bolourchian stated that if anyone sees any problems with the changeable message signs (CMSs), to please contact the TMC.

Jacques van Zeventer discussed the information in the packet on the traffic detectors on Hwy 1 that are and are not operational. He will check with his staff and let us know what detectors will be kept maintained. Ginger Dykaar stressed



the importance for having this traffic data and requested that if the detectors will not be kept operational, to consider removing from PeMs.

Caltrans will be installing 3 traffic detectors to Hwy 17. A traffic detector has already been added at Laurel Curve but has not yet been reporting to PeMs and two more detectors will be added – one north and one south of Laurel Curve.

12. Received Major Incident Review – none

13. Received Additional Items - none

14. Approved Next Meeting Date

Joint Safe on 17 Task Force & TOS Oversight Committee Meeting – Wednesday, September 14, 2014 10:00 to 12:00 at Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, 1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

Respectively submitted by


Ginger Dykaar