



Santa Cruz County Traffic Operations Oversight Committee & Safe On 17 Task Force

Date: Wed. March 20, 2024 **Dial-In Option:** (669) 900-9128
Start Time: 10:00am **Meeting ID:** 844 7518 2886
Location: [Online via Zoom](#) **Passcode:** 217329

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Attendees:

- Amy Naranjo, SCCRTC
- Ben Standen, Scotts Valley PD
- Brian Winterhalder, SCCFD
- Bryce Danenhauer, CHP San Jose
- Christian Oliver, CHP San Jose
- Duy Tran, CHP San Jose
- Eldar Levin, HDR
- Jeff Bates, Redwood Estates
- Katelyn Costa, MTC SAFE
- Lisette Jones, Asm. Gail Pellerin’s Office
- Marjorie Kline, Resident
- Matt Welker, Caltrans D5
- *Name Unknown*, KCBS Radio
- Orlando Ramirez, Caltrans D4
- Paul Guirguis, Caltrans D5
- Pete Hendrix, Caltrans D5
- Regina Valentine, AMBAG
- Ross Lee, CHP San Jose PIO
- Ruben Magallanes, Caltrans D4
- Stephen Terrin, MTC SAFE
- Troy Vincent, CHP Santa Cruz
- Victor Gauthier, Caltrans D4 PIO

1. **Introductions** – Introductions were made.

2. **Oral Communications** – Marjorie Kline, a Santa Cruz Mountains resident, expressed concern about the rise of collisions on the stretch of northbound Highway 17 between Raineri Ln and Idylwild Rd. Ms. Kline requested statistics on the number of crashes that occurred at this location this winter compared to the number of crashes reported last winter. Lieutenant Duy Tran from CHP San Jose agreed to follow up directly with Ms. Kline. Pete Hendrix, Caltrans District 5, Traffic Division, shared with the group that data on traffic collisions for any public highway in California can be obtained through a California Public



Records Act (CPRA) request. He provided a link to the [Caltrans online request form](#) to simplify the process for Ms. Kline.

3. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – There were no changes made to the agenda.
4. **Received Information Items** – Amy Naranjo shared that the RTC Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) is entering another 3-year agreement, effective July 1, with CHP and MTC SAFE to continue funding enhanced enforcement on Highway 17. Amy provided details about the motorist assistance programs offered by the RTC on Highway 17, including freeway service patrol (FSP) and emergency call boxes. Amy also shared an update about the planned closure of Highway 1 for the Capitola Avenue overcrossing demolition on the Highway 1 Bridge Demo project. Originally scheduled for March 23-24, the full closure of Highway 1 between Bay Avenue/Porter Street and Park Avenue has been moved out to April 6th and 7th. Lastly, Amy shared that staff is working on the 2023 Safe on 17 Annual Report and provided a preliminary summary of collision, citation, and overtime hour statistics for the past year.
5. **Received Update on California Highway Patrol Safe on 17 Program Statistics and Public Information Efforts** – In 2023, there were 636 collisions on Highway 17 between Santa Cruz and Los Gatos, including 197 injury collisions and 5 fatal collisions. CHP issued 822 citations during 923 Safe on 17 overtime enforcement hours. The 3 fatal crashes in Santa Cruz County involved single vehicles. There wasn't a clear connection between the crashes, and they happened in different locations. Based on past crashes, Sgt. Troy Vincent (CHP Santa Cruz) emphasizes the importance of slowing down on wet roads, even when it's not actively raining. Wet roads can lead to a significant number of accidents. One of the fatal crashes involved someone with bald tires. This highlights the importance of maintaining your vehicle properly. Many crashes tend to happen during the rainy season and CHP uses "round robins," where officers drive with their lights on to slow down traffic, especially during light rain. The key message is to be aware of the dangers of Highway 17. It's a curvy, mountainous road, and slowing down is crucial for safety. Jeff Bates, Redwood Estates Services Association, raised a concern about the frequent solo accidents on northbound 17 at Big Moody or Redwood Estates, and questioned whether the CHP issues reckless citations for these incidents. Captain Christian Oliver (CHP San Jose) clarified that the discretion to issue a citation lies with each individual officer and that they aim to balance the issuance of citations with the intention of educating drivers and ensuring



public safety. Captain Oliver also shared that their goal is to clear crashes from lanes and minimize exposure to danger.

6. **Caltrans Resiliency and Adaptation Plan** – Matt Welker, Caltrans D5, and Orlando Ramirez, Caltrans District 4, shared information about the development of a comprehensive multimodal corridor plan (CMCP) currently underway for State Route 17 in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. The plan aims to advance the goals of the California Transportation Plan 2050 and Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure. The CMCP focuses on projects that address two key areas: evaluating risks from physical climate changes and making safety improvements to reduce deaths and serious injuries. Mr. Welker invited interested parties to attend an upcoming virtual community meeting on Wednesday, April 3rd from 6-730 PM to learn more about the plan development, provide input on the proposed corridor goals, objectives, and performance measures, and to ask questions.
7. **Received Caltrans District 5 Highway 17 Project Updates** – Pete Hendrix, Traffic Safety Systems Branch Chief for Caltrans District 5, discussed Caltrans' shift towards a [Safe Systems Approach](#) (Directors Policy DP-36), focusing on reducing fatal and severe injury collisions and addressing disparities based on race, age, and ability. He presented the 'Safety Wheel' illustration of the safe systems approach and mentioned the development of road safety action plans in collaboration with local agencies. Pete also shared information about the HM-4 Safety Pilot Program utilizing the Highway Maintenance (HM) programs' delivery process, which has a unique ability to install, implement, and maintain safety enhancements more quickly than other traffic safety improvement programs. Pete and Paul Giurguis, Caltrans D5 Regional Planning Liaison, reviewed the status of ongoing construction and maintenance projects on SR-17. High friction surface treatments will be applied at various locations between Scotts Valley and Summit Rd in 2024. The Jarvis Slide Rock Fence project was delayed due to unavailability of specialty asphalt needed for a culvert trench and is expected to be completed by the end of March 2024.
8. **Received Caltrans District 4 Highway 17 Project Updates** – Victor Gauthier, Caltrans D4 Public Information Officer for Santa Clara County shared that he had no specific project updates but was available for questions. Amy Naranjo asked the status of the SR-17 Roadway Improvement Project and Victor shared the project was nearing completion. Jeff Bates, Redwood Estates Services Association, asked about plans for installing permanent



K-rail at Redwood Estates. Victor did not have those details available and will reach out to the construction manager and provide an update to Jeff and the Safe on 17 Task Force. Amy Naranjo shared information about 2 projects under development on the Santa Clara County portion of Highway 17. The SR-17 Corridor Congestion Relief project makes improvements on SR-17 and upgrades the SR-17/ SR-9 interchange in the Town of Los Gatos. This project is a collaboration between VTA, Caltrans D4, and the Town of Los Gatos. The Highway 17 Wildlife and Trails Crossing project seeks to facilitate safe movement for both wildlife and trail users, while expanding regional trail connectivity. This project is a collaboration between VTA, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MidPen), and Caltrans.

9. **Received Traffic Operations Systems Updates** – Paul Guirguis, Caltrans D5, emphasized Caltrans Quickmap for real-time traveler information. [Quickmap](#) enables the traveling public to make informed transportation choices. Pete Hendrix provided the following information about TOS elements in Santa Cruz County. There are 4 Traffic Census stations (loops) along Highway 17 owned and operated by District 5. There are 3 total Changeable Message Signs (CMS) in Santa Cruz County, 2 of which are located on Highway 17, and are all owned, operated, and maintained by District 4. One CMS is located at Hwy 17 SB Just South of Granite Creek and the other is located at Hwy 17 SB Just South of Summit Road. There are 5 CCTVs on Highway 17 in Santa Cruz County. There are 4 MVDSs (Microwave Vehicle Detection System) owned and operated by District 5 on Highway 17. These are used to count cars and vehicle speeds 24/7/365. All of them are operational and provide accurate data.
10. **Received Additional Items** – Jeff Bates, Redwood Estates, asked about the reasoning behind the decision to do a full 24-hour highway closure to demolish the Capitola Avenue overcrossing instead of multiple shorter nighttime closures. Paul Guirguis, Caltrans D5, explained the key factor was traffic safety. Partially demolishing an overhead bridge, even with the most careful measures, carries the risk of unexpected collapse during the day when traffic is flowing. While the project team understands the inconvenience a full closure creates, this approach minimizes risk and prioritizes everyone's safety.
11. **Approved Next Meeting Date** – The next Safe on 17 Task Force & TOS Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, 2024, from 10 AM to



12PM. The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. Meeting details are listed on the [Safe on 17 meetings webpage](#).

Respectively submitted by: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AN", is written over a horizontal line.

Amy Naranjo, Safe on 17 Program Manager