

Pinellas Community Traffic Safety Team Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2003

The meeting called to order by Team Chair Dave Fechter at 10:02 am.

A motion for correction or approval of minutes from the last meeting was made. The minutes were unanimously approved with no corrections.

Enforcement Subcommittee Report: Ron McKenzie, Chair

- Clearwater Police Department will be setting up a Pedestrian "sting" operation using a plain-clothes officer to apprehend and cite violators.
- Pinellas County Sheriff's Department would like all county agencies to work together by putting a united message on message boards to remind drivers to "move over" and obey the "Move Over" law helping protect emergency vehicles and personnel. The messages will be at locations throughout the County during the week of October 6-10, 2003.
- Two groups want to hold a "Child Safety Seat" day on 11/13/03 in Pinellas Park. They are looking for Car Seat Technicians, but can't find any available for that date. The Team suggested that for future child seat safety check events, technicians should be contacted beforehand to verify dates of their availability.

Engineering Subcommittee Report: Marc Hanger, Chair

- Children walking to school within a two-mile radius of Forest Lakes Elementary are reportedly crossing two major arteries. Parental complaints are based on the safety of the children along the pathways to the school. Technically, the volume is not high enough for busing, but the group was asked if there were any other situations in the county where school children also cross two main arteries to get to school. No one knew of any other specific cases. Students from the area on the south side of SR 580 cross 580, then cross either Bayview or Tampa Road. Pinellas County Schools bus children who are more than two miles from schools per state law. There is also a commercial truck issue in the area, adding much heavy traffic, and a driveway proximity problem. Felicia Leonard, new Chair of the STEPS school committee, will raise this at their next meeting. Tom Reichert from Pinellas County Schools may also be able to provide information and a solution.
- East Lake Road and Tarpon Woods Boulevard. The MPO is receiving complaints that cars are making illegal U-Turns to avoid a traffic signal. Recently signs prohibiting the U-Turns were posted and strong enforcement is also underway to curb this driver behavior.
- The State of Pennsylvania has a pilot program where they are using large dots painted on the roadway to help drivers realize proper following distance and safe spacing of vehicles to meet the recommended two-second rule. Comments from the group were doubtful whether or not the dots would be effective in congested areas. Advisory signs for drivers to understand the purpose of the dots would be needed. A similar method has been successfully used in Tallahassee on a stretch of urban road. One CTST member commented that the dots would need to be placed at distances corresponding to specific speeds to be effective.
- Dunedin has several audible pedestrian signals in place. Audible tones, as well as a verbal message, are used to help visually impaired pedestrians to cross safely. City

officials indicated the signal is working effectively. There are no current plans to add additional audible signals.

- An Audible Pedestrian Signal Workshop will be held in New Orleans. If anyone is interested in acquiring more information, CTST member Felicia Leonard of the City of Clearwater can provide details.
- Michael Frederick, City of St. Petersburg, brought the engineering report for the intersection of 94th and MLK. Engineering studies were conducted to evaluate the high volume of crashes occurring at that intersection. The report indicated that the accidents are primarily rear-end collisions caused when eastbound traffic (exiting the highway at typical speeds of 65 mph) have to slow down for the right turn lane and merge with southbound traffic. The engineering recommendation is to eliminate the right turn lane by forcing drivers to go to the light, wait and then make the right turn. Such changes would cost approximately \$135,000 due to the mandatory overhaul of the traffic lights and construction, with most of the expense being to upgrade the traffic signal equipment to current code. The Engineering subcommittee suggested few alternative options to try since the cost may be prohibitive in the short-term: put several sections of rumble strips in the right lane, replace the yield with a stop sign, add signage to the roadway such as "slow", extend the southbound curbing to physically block crossover, create a new right access lane.
- A detailed crash analysis of three high-crash intersections (Drew & US 19, Gulf-To-Bay & Belcher, and Tampa Road & US 19), provided four specific results. 1) Most of the accidents occur during "Snowbird season" from November to April, 2) Monday, Wednesday and Friday are the three worst days for accidents, 3) The lunch hours from noon to 2 p.m. and time immediately before the evening rush hour were the times of day with the highest number of accidents, and 4) Rear end collisions are the most frequent type of accident at all three intersections. Alison Weber conducted the analysis based on MPO data and presented findings to the CTST. Drew and US 19 is currently undergoing major construction, restructuring the road to resemble the area near the Countryside Boulevard exit. Neither the Gulf-To-Bay & Belcher nor the Tampa Road & US 19 intersection have any funding planned for the next 25 years according to MPO records, yet 2003 accident rates are keeping pace with those from 2002. CTST members are asked to review the analysis findings and try to come up with strategies to reduce the accidents in these three locations.
- DOT's traffic study of US 19 has resulted in a decision to modify certain areas. The MPO is currently deciding upon appropriate alterations and considering options. Several members of the CTST commented that "turtle shells" are a safety hazard for motorcycles and pedestrians, which should be kept in mind during the planning stages.

Education Subcommittee Report: Kristy Patterson, Chair

- Funding sources for a "bus wrap" with a safe driving message has been stymied since the transit authority does not permit this type of advertising for non-profit purposes. According to Diane Roffey, the "bus wrap" advertising is only acceptable by commercial companies. It may be possible, however, to share a safe driver message with a commercial advertisement.

- Educating drivers on the effects of driving while impaired is still considered the biggest issue to address. Secondary topics are cutting-off drinkers, adolescent drinking and getting taxis to provide services so people won't drive drunk.
- A mock DUI crash has been scheduled for Palm Harbor University High School. A second location is desired.
- Three insurance companies, Progressive, Allstate and State Farm, may be a source for funding to sponsor the events since they heavily promote vehicle safety.
- The subject of coordinating a mock school bus crash was raised again, with Kristy expressing a strong desire to hold one for practice. Recently two full school buses and at least one automobile were involved in an actual crash. 51 patients were triaged on the scene. Emergency responders may be better prepared to handle such emergencies if mock crashes were used to drill and train. George Francey from Pinellas County Schools may have more information.
- On February 7, 2004, a car seat safety check will be sponsored by the Suncoast Safe Kids Coalition and called Safe Kids Across the Bay (formerly Hands Across the Bay). Seats will be checked on both sides of the Sunshine Skyway by trained technicians.

Dave Fechter asked if September recap of CTST subcommittees had been submitted. Members were awaiting development of an appropriate form by Peter Hsu, who has been working on development. Chairs were asked to submit a recap to Dave.

Elissa Nauful and Jennifer Chapman of News Channel 8, WFLA-TV presented ideas for Tampa Bay Safety Pilot Programs they are developing in cooperation with the CTSTs in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. Select commercials are scheduled to air in 2003-2005. The objective of the comprehensive media campaign is "to educate the driver and pedestrian with three key safety messages to reduce injury and fatalities of pedestrians in Hillsborough and Pinellas County". The media campaign will reach ten counties locally via newspaper, television and on-line. Three specific topics in development are: Pedestrian Safety, Bike Safety and Motorcycle Safety. The idea, while under development by News Channel 8, would really be "owned" by the CTSTs and requires coordination and cooperation with both CTSTs.

A printout of the presentation explaining the media plan is attached to these minutes. CTST members were asked to review the preliminary ideas presented in the presentation and provide input so the completed programs will have current, accurate information. Recommendations on how to make the project more effective are also welcome. Please provide feedback directly to Elissa and Jennifer as follows:

Elissa Nauful
813-221-5760

email at enauful@wfla.com

Jennifer Chapman
813-221-5743

email at jchapman@wfla.com

The meeting was dismissed at 11:09 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Weber, MS, CSP

Pinellas County Traffic Safety Team Secretary

Members Present:

G.J. Bickel	Clearwater Police Dept.	
Jim Bordner	Pinellas Sheriff's Office	582-6439
James Byers	PSTA	533-4304
T.C. Carter	FDOT-Maintenance	570-5101
Robert Daugherty	City of So Pasadena	347-4171
David Fechter	TEI Engineers & Planners	813-884-7339
Michael Frederick	City of St. Petersburg	893-7843
Vicki Gilbert	RID of Tampa Bay	545-1260
H. Burns	RID of Tampa Bay	
Mike Gust	City of Dunedin	298-3223
Marc Hanger	Pinellas MPO	464-8200
Peter Hsu	FDOT Safety	813-975-6251
Ciara Jalandoni	Bay Area Commuter Svcs	813-282-8200x232
Sandra Knoebel	Pinellas MPO	464-8200
Nancy Kelly	Tarpon Springs Police Dept	938-2849
Felicia Leonard	Clearwater Bike/Ped	562-4852
Ron McKenzie	Pinellas Park Police Dept	541-0758
Lynda Meyer	Pinellas Traffic Eng	464-8907
Bala Padmanabhan	Greenhorne & O'Mara	576-0402
Kristy Patterson	Palm Harbor Fire	787-5974
Diane Roffey	Suncoast Safety Council	442-0233x328
Jeanette Rouse	FDOT Safety	813-975-6256
Kris Scholz	Palm Harbor Fire Rescue	787-5974
Bruce Shaw	CSX Railroad Police Dept	813-664-6397
Bill Sparrowhawk	Citizen	360-9144
Scott Vaughn	St. Pete Beach Police Dept	363-9200
Sgt. Butch Ward	Largo Police Dept	586-7473
Lydia Wardell	State Attorney	464-6786
Alison Weber	Pinellas Co Schools	588-6151
Thea Johnson	Neighborly Care Network	571-4384
Demian Miller	Tindale-Oliver & Assoc	813-224-8862
Michael Preshur	St. Pete Police Dept	893-4885