

Pinellas County Community Traffic Safety Team Minutes from 5/6/04 Meeting

Meeting called to order at 10:20 am by Dave Fechter, Chair.

Introductions were held around the room.

Minutes from the April 2004 meeting were noted to have been distributed with the last page missing. Copies were provided to members and are available by contacting Jeanette Rouse at FDOT. Minutes were approved with no changes or other comments.

Subcommittee reports

Engineering, Marc Hanger, Chair reporting.

- A central website for all MOT's is in the design phase. It will be called SITS (Simple Intelligent Transportation System). All projects will be included. Resurfacing and utility activities will also be posted on the website.
- A public information meeting about Tampa Road between Lake St. George Drive and McMullen Booth Road was held on April 19, 2004 at Palm Harbor Middle School by Pinellas County Public Works concerning the recent fatal accidents nearby. The road segment is still under review, but several safety improvements have been made such as larger signs, flashers, restriped lanes farther away from the sidewalk and shoulder and a speed trailer.
- The Pinellas County MPO will be hosting the CTST website. It will be maintained jointly by the FDOT & CTST. All three sites will be linked to each other.
- 54th Avenue North & 28th Street North qualifies for FDOT safety funding. Pinellas County Public Works is considering purchasing the remaining right of way needed. The money is earmarked for year 2007 funding
- The MPO approved a countywide policy supporting the use of the white enforcement lights. Committees were selected by the MPO to review implementation and application.
- Navigational mile marker signs are set for placement soon along beach roadways: Mandalay, Gulf Boulevard, Blind Pass Road and Pass-A-Grille (Main Beach Drive). A colorful tropical fish designed by an artist decorates the signs. Distribution of brochures to the public is also planned.
- Safety funding for median work has been approved in 2004-2005 for the 49th Street & Park Plaza and Park Boulevard & Home Depot locations.
- MOTs: Both 38th Avenue North and Pinellas Trail in St. Petersburg will be closed 5/7-10/04 to set beams for pedestrian bridges.

Education, Bill Walker and Jeanette Rouse reporting

- The State PTA Convention is planning a Safety Fair on July 16, 2004 from 9:00 am to 6 pm at the Innisbrook Golf Course in Palm Harbor. The CTST has been invited to support safety educational efforts with materials, staff to distribute the material and answer questions on a variety of issues. Members were asked to provide informational materials on Child Passenger, Bike/Pedestrian safety, Traffic safety, School Bus safety and anything else which may help improve safety for parents and teachers. Six tables have been reserved.

Please contact Karin Brown at (355) 632-6282 for more information and to offer assistance or materials.

- Efforts to create a booklet of non-alcoholic holiday drinks similar to the Jacksonville CTST's "Recipes 4 the Road" are underway. Funding for the kickoff year is limited to print approximately 2000 booklets. Kick off ideas were requested. June 30 deadline was established. Contact Jeanette if you are interested in helping.
- Bill Walker gave an interview on Florida Law immediately prior to the recent East Lake High Mock DUI crash on April 23 to publicize the event. The show will not be rerun.

Enforcement, Corporal Jim Bordner reporting

- Clearwater Police Department held a city-wide DUI Wolf-Pack on 4/3/04. Results are as follows: 4 DUI arrests, 3 Minor in Possession Alcohol arrests, 2 Drug arrests, 1 .02 violation, 33 moving citations, 9 non-moving citations, 5 seat belt citations.
- Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) held two sobriety checkpoints during April 2004 with details as follows.
- Friday 4/16/04 from 8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. in Tarpons Springs at 2605 Keystone Road. 34 PCSO members with equipment and 2 Post 900 Explorers were present. 1140 vehicles passed through the checkpoint with 233 diverted for assessment. All drivers license and warrant status were checked. Average intrusion time was 1 minute 38 seconds. Five (5) subjects were arrested resulting in 6 charges (1 DUI, 4 DWLSR, 1 violation of probation), 19 traffic citations, and 3 vehicles impounded.
- Saturday 4/17/04 from 12:30 a.m. - 3:30 a.m. in Tarpons Springs at 38501 US 19 North. 34 PCSO members with equipment and 5 Post 900 Explorers were present. 1250 vehicles passed through the checkpoint with 250 diverted for assessment. All drivers license and warrant status were checked. Average intrusion time was 1 minute 48 seconds. Seventeen (17) subjects were arrested resulting in 24 charges (13 DUI, 6 DWLSR, 4 possession of marijuana, 1 possession of drug paraphernalia), 45 traffic citations, and 13 vehicles impounded.
- A Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement Detail was conducted jointly between PCSO and FDOT Motor Carrier Compliance on 4/19/04 from 7:00 am-12:00 pm in the mid-county area between SR 686 and 118 Avenue and US 19 to I-275. Six (6) PCSO Traffic Deputies and two (2) FDOT MCC Officers were present. Activities for the detail resulted in the following: 47 commercial trucks stopped for violations observed; 3 arrests (2 license violations, 1 warrant); 13 written warnings, 44 traffic citations (8 load violation, 17 equipment violations, 2 medical card, 5 driving while license suspended/revoked, 4 improper class DL, 2 seatbelt, 6 other non-moving violations); 9 CMV inspections; 5 Out-of-service vehicles, 5 Out-of-service drivers, 2 CMV impounded (arrest); 16 trucks weighed; fines collected for civil penalties (\$5, 285 total)
- A Railroad Grade Crossing Enforcement Detail was conducted jointly between PCSO, Pinellas Park Police Department and CSX Railroad Police on two dates with details as follows.
- Tuesday 4/20/04 from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. on 62nd Avenue west of 49th Street, traditionally a problem area where people tend to stop on the railroad tracks. The activities of the five (5) PCSO Traffic Deputies and 1 PPPD officer resulted in 3 written warnings and 33 traffic citations (stopping on tracks, passing within 100 feet of grade crossing, seatbelt violations, driving while license suspended/revoked).

- Tuesday 4/21/04 from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. on 62nd Avenue west of 49th Street, traditionally a problem area where people tend to stop on the railroad tracks. The activities of the five (5) PCSO Traffic Deputies, 5 PPPD officers and 1 CSX Railroad Special Agent resulted in 2 arrests, 2 written warnings and 44 traffic citations (failure to obey RR signals, stopping on tracks, passing within 100 feet of grade crossing, seatbelt violations, driving while license suspended/revoked, reckless driving).
- PCSO has two sobriety checkpoints scheduled for May 7 and 8 dedicated to the memory of Joseph Henry Jackson who was killed by an impaired driver on August 11, 1998.
- Other upcoming events are a K-9 demonstration at the Seminole Mall; a Car Show sponsored by the Make a Wish Foundation on 5/22/04; a DUI sobriety checkpoint on 5/21 in Kenneth City; a DUI Wolfpack in Clearwater on 5/28/04; the "kick-off" press conference for the 4th Annual Sea Air Land Enforcement (SALE) Wave over Memorial Day weekend at Clearwater-St. Petersburg Airport on 5/27/04 at 10:30 am. The SALE Wave begins May 28 and runs through May 31, 2004. CTST members are invited to attend the opening press conference.

Presentations:

Jim Byers of PSTA put forward a motion to the CTST that the group request the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization conduct a feasibility study to implement a full-fledged Traffic Incident Management program throughout the county. Dave Fechter suggested adding language to include FDOT and the motion to send a letter was passed.

Mobility Technologies has been hired by USDOT to develop and implement a telephone and web system for Tampa Bay area drivers to get real-time traffic information on interstate roads, public transportation systems, air & seaports, Amber Alerts, Traveler Tips, email alerts, website images of actual traffic, customer feedback and links to other websites. Abe Howard of Mobility Technologies presented information about the 511 Traveler Information System. Similar systems are already in use in many other major metropolitan areas throughout the country. The project is currently in the Planning and Design Phase with sensor deployment on local roadways 50% complete. Terms for information sharing with agencies is underway. July 2004 is the target date for testing the system with full launch of the 511 System & SunGuide website planned for August 2004. Roadways planned for coverage over six (6) counties appear to include only interstate roadways I-275, I-4 and I-75, not local streets and roads. Area residents will be able to dial 511 to use the voice-activated system for current road travel time information. Similar projects in Orlando and Miami areas are also planned. For more information, contact Abe Howard at (813) 637-0170 or ahoward@traffic.com. Copies of the presentation are available from the CTST secretary upon request.

CSTS member Bill Sparrowhawk voiced concern over the 511 system because it encourages the use of cell phones while driving, a hazard known to increase accident likelihood. Other members concurred.

Discussions:

Dave asked CTST members per request of County Commissioner Karen Seel about the existing crossing situation at the intersection of Ridgecrest & 119th. The STSC met on 5/5/04 and decided

to increase educational efforts with the children and parents to use the preferred path of travel over the pedestrian bridge instead of crossing the busy roadway. Construction is pending to widen Ulmerton road from four to six lanes in that area, further increasing vehicular hazards to pedestrians. CTST member Terry Hensley suggested that an incentive program be initiated to get the kids to use the bridge. Other members agreed that this approach may be more successful than simply education. Robert Davis commented that while four "E's", Enforcement, Environment, Education and Engineering are often used, the fifth, Encouragement is often forgotten. Members recommended that an incentive program also be used at the Madiera Beach Middle School crossing as well, since the issue is similar. PTAs should be contacted to see if they would get involved. CTST member Jackie Zakrezewski voiced concern that a pedofile observing the incentive program practices could be an issue.

Dave stated that Commissioner Seel also requested that Bike & Pedestrian safety be a priority issue for both the Educational and Enforcement committees.

At Oldsmar Elementary, near Tampa Road & 580, kids living within two miles are now being bused to school with Pinellas County Schools bearing the cost burden. According to Tom Reichert of the school Transportation Department, areas around both Oldsmar Elementary and Forest Lakes Elementary do not meet the state criteria for a "hazardous crossing" or funding to cover transporting students. With parental complaints and concern for the welfare of the children in mind, the school district agreed to transport the children within the two mile zone.

Attached to the last copy of the CTST minutes was a survey form asking recipients if they would prefer to receive the information via email or regular mail. Approximately 44 people responded to date with half indicating email as their preferred method of delivery.

At the recent State CTST Coalition meeting, Dave Fechter was elected the new Chair. The next Coalition meeting (quarterly) will be held at the Tampa FDOT office on 7/12/04 from 10:00 to 2:00 pm. The address is 11201 North McKinley Drive (Fowler Ave across from USF). CTST members are encouraged to attend.

The Pinellas CTST was recognized as a recipient of the Gold AAA award at the recent CTST Coalition meeting. Six counties throughout the state received AAA awards. Only two received gold awards. CTST members are encouraged to attend the upcoming luncheon in Jacksonville on 6/18/04 at which the CTST of the Year Award will be announced by IPTM.

Voting for new officers will be held at the next meeting in June with their term of office to begin in July 2004. CTST members should consider candidates.

Dave Fechter provided copies of a recent article entitled, "Amid all this loss of life, can't we try to be safer?" written by Mary Jo Melone, a columnist at the St. Pete Times. Ms. Malone' column addressed the pedestrian safety issues in the area, citing statistics, problematic behavior patterns of both drivers and pedestrians and calling for civility.

Terry Hensley mentioned that a State Farm representative has contacted him to offer a free photocopier. They apparently have four functioning machines as of the meeting date they would like to offer to CTSTs. Contact Terry for additional information.

Jeanette Rouse mentioned that volunteers are needed to staff the CTST table at the Tampa Storm games both on 5/9/04 and 5/23/04. Tickets to the game will be provided to volunteers.

George Francey related the findings of the recent Pasco emergency drill Mock DUI crash. The drills were conducted three consecutive times to troubleshoot and improve response and coordination activities. During the first drill, problems were encountered. The second and third drills both improved dramatically. An Incident Command Center helped to coordinate efforts more smoothly. Changes will be made to procedure manuals for better response.

George also reported on the recent State Bus Driver's Competition in which Pinellas County Schools drivers participated. PCS drivers placed 8th out of 17 teams. One staff member won the Rookie of the Year Award and another placed 10th within the state.

The May 2004 Traffic Times newsletter was distributed to CTST members.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m..

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Weber, MS, CSP
Pinellas County CTST Secretary