

Pinellas Community Traffic Safety Team Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 AM by Chair Dave Fechter, followed by introductions around the room.

Minutes of the previous meeting held 7/10/03 were reviewed and approved with two corrections:

- 1) Under the Engineering Subcommittee report, the intersection of 52nd to 56th North should have read 52nd North to 66th Street North.
- 2) Cleveland at Ft. Harrison was listed as one of the top five intersections, but the Law Enforcement Subcommittee felt that their data didn't support this ranking. Mark Hanger agreed the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) information should be reviewed to verify accuracy.

Subcommittee reports were presented.

Law Enforcement Subcommittee Chair Ron McKenzie presented information regarding enforcement activities for the month and upcoming events.

- 173 citations and 110 warnings were issued during one recent enforcement wave.
- A second wave issued 75 citations over three (3) days
- On August 29, 2003, a Wolf Pack meeting will be held at the Criminal Court Complex
- On September 13, 2003, training for traffic homicide investigations will be held
- The Kirby Foundation luncheon to aid an officer with cancer was planned for the afternoon of August 7. CTST members were invited to attend.

Engineering Subcommittee Chair Marc Hanger updated the group on progress and issues from previous meetings.

- A new chart from the Crash Data Reports was generated to add traffic volumes, organized by number of crashes vs. volume. Marc took the crash data and reviewed the intersections to determine which already have funding approved for projects. "Yes," indicated improvements are planned. Some improvements are strictly resurfacing, which is not necessarily considered a safety improvement to reduce crashes. Additional analysis will be conducted to further evaluate accident trends to develop safety recommendations.
- At East Lake Road, south of Tarpon Woods, the Pinellas County Public Works Department analyzed the roadway and has completed the following work based on their findings: addition of an advance right turn lane; new signage; rearranging signage for clarity; monitoring.
- Marc distributed a document to CTST members entitled *Making Intersections Safer: A Toolbox of Engineering Countermeasures to Reduce Red-Light Running*. Two items pointed out were 1) Drivers who intentionally run red lights are best deterred by law enforcement techniques and 2) Engineering modifications are more effective controls for drivers who unintentionally run red lights.
- DOT will be purchasing more intersection enforcement lights to be installed at intersections throughout Pinellas County.
- A discussion regarding the use of LED vs. incandescent bulbs in signals took place. Many signals throughout the county are gradually being changed over to LED. Law enforcement staff indicated they are not able to see the LED enforcement lights as

well as the incandescent bulbs during the daytime unless they are at a proper angle to the light. This makes it very difficult to be sure when a driver is running the red light. Also the color seems to be more blue than green. LED lights save energy, however, bulbs cost four times more than incandescent. LED lighting systems will run for four hours if the power is disconnected or shut down. Incandescent lights do not function at all in power outages, leaving the intersection lights dark.

- Peter Hsu of DOT confirmed that there is money available to buy more enforcement lights.
- The possibility of getting additional funding from DOT for other safety projects was briefly raised, with sidewalks being the issue for consideration. Sidewalk safety is currently a problem with the advent of the county's new school "Choice" program. Peter indicated District 7 does not use safety funds for sidewalks. When asked if it was possible to change the policy, Peter said that funding for sidewalks was provided very selectively based on studies of visible problems. Recent funding to the Bay Pines and VA area was provided following a study confirming the validity of residential complaints of safety problems crossing the busy roadway.
- Kristy Patterson asked if a person in an unincorporated area has pedestrian problems, where do they go? MPO employee Sue Dutill was identified as the Pedestrian Planner to contact to resolve such issues.
- More funding for US 19 pedestrian overpasses was approved and will add two new units at the intersections of 110th and 118th, ultimately making a 13 mile signal-free stretch on US 19.
- Two dates of note for upcoming events:
1-October 10, 2003 is Put on the Brakes Fatality Day.
2-October 27, 2003 is Pedestrian Safety Awareness Day.

Education Subcommittee Chair Kristy Patterson updated CTST members on funding and education issues.

- Diane Roffey stated that there are some grants available to help fund CTST education programs, but not for groups without being designated as 501(c)(3), a federal government designation for non-profit organizations. She suggested that local insurance companies could be contacted to request donations to fund safety educational efforts. Anyone with any contacts was asked to request funding for CTST education projects.
- A CTST in Jackson County got the 501(c)(3) designation through a formal process, which requires the development of bylaws, etc. Pinellas County's CTST could also acquire the designation, but would likely require the assistance of an attorney. Better funding may be available locally through Progressive or other similar companies and agents.
- Education programs will be targeted for young, impaired and drunk drivers using Prom Promise and mock DUI crashes at local area high schools.
- The Great American Teach-In is coming up on November 19, 2003. (The incorrect date provided during the meeting was November 12.) Pinellas County Schools may be very receptive to phone calls from Law Enforcement or other CTST groups represented to present various messages and career opportunities to students. Members were encouraged to contact schools to offer a presentation program.

- Jeanette Rouse stated that there are three types of posters/bookmarks available. These posters and bookmarks are on DUI, Pedestrian Safety and Move Over Law. They can be put around the county in public buildings and used for teaching purposes. She also has access to Public Service Announcements, press kits, videos and other literature for CTST members to use. She recommended that the CTST also dovetail with other agencies.
- The purpose of the Education group was reported to be a supporting role to the other two subgroups by narrowing the focus, doing what's possible for free, acquiring/using Public Service Announcements of good quality.
- A new group called Traffic Incident Management (TIM) is forming, with basically the same purpose as the CTST, but on a bigger scale. The group allows multiple agencies to interact more effectively by enhancing communication.
- Mike Jackson from DOT is the contact person if anyone wants to get involved in Traffic Incident Management.
- One idea recently discussed by TIM was that emergency vehicles should not use flashing lights unless they are actively involved on the scene. Studies are showing significant traffic backups due to the presence of emergency lights, often on the opposite side of the street even where the traffic is not impacted by the emergency situation.

A discussion of engineering vs. law enforcement safety regarding use of lights took place. While the engineering control to reduce the number of emergency lights at a scene might reduce traffic back-ups, law enforcement personnel clearly felt this would compromise the safety of the officers and other emergency responders. Law enforcement representatives stated that the lights are their only defense against the dangers of traffic and should not be shut off in spite of the traffic back-ups that occur. A suggestion that emergency lights could be modified to provide a shield that dropped down to block the lights on either side could minimize the impact on the opposing lane of traffic. Costs to replace even minor components on the emergency light bar were reportedly expensive. Each light bar costs approximately \$600. Parts are often \$50-\$150 for even minor components. A shield would likely be expensive to develop/purchase.

- The goal of clearing an accident scene within 90 minutes was briefly discussed as not usually being feasible. Law enforcement often finds important information is missed when accident scenes are cleared up too quickly. The goal is designed to help reduce the volume of traffic congestion occurring due to the accident.

Use of photogrammetry was discussed, with enforcement saying that the 6" (+ or -) error rate was not good enough.

Pinellas County emergency groups can communicate at the 800 mgHz frequency, but Florida Highway Patrol does not function on the 800 mgHz frequency.

Bridges were raised as an issue of concern for emergency response if crashes occur in the middle. The question was raised, "Who has the authority to close the Skyway?" The answer was that DOT does. TC Carter mentioned that plans are in place to eliminate any turn around areas for emergency vehicles on the Skyway except at the rest areas. This plan increases the length of drive time for responders to get to a scene as well as other access issues. Letters of concern over the closure of the emergency access pathways on the Skyway should be sent to the

federal government, but no specific agency or location was named. The motion to send a letter from the CTST was made, but withdrawn pending the offer by Kristy Patterson to bring more information to the next meeting.

A generic worksheet was recommended for use at crash scenes. The worksheet would be completed by the emergency responders, such as the paramedics/fire department who coordinate removal of victims to hospitals. The worksheet would provide basic information when people are transported from the scene prior to the arrival of law enforcement or other emergency personnel so they know where the victim has been taken. The worksheet could be left at the scene of the crash in a visible location (i.e. on the driver's seat) to improve communication between emergency services and law enforcement agencies.

Dave Fechter advised CTST members that group activities need to be tracked in a more organized format than just the minutes for each meeting. The rationale behind this effort is that REPORTS of accomplishments demonstrates RESULTS, and more likely continuation of funding for the CTST. The reports can also improve public awareness, ready access to accomplishments, and the ability to more easily submit for awards such as the AAA Gold Award. The information would be captured in a form and submitted on a monthly basis by the Chair of each subcommittee at the meetings. A couple of formats were suggested: a one-page report for specific events, a monthly "action report", and a spreadsheet. Subcommittee chairs would complete the report and give it to Jeannette, the CTST coordinator, at each meeting. The materials could be retained in a separate folder, attached to the monthly minutes and included on the website. Peter Hsu offered to develop a format for the next meeting using the KIS (Keep It Simple) philosophy. The group agreed that the monthly reporting of accomplishments could be a useful tool to help bring to light good events, which may go unreported.

The CTST website is considered a "work in progress". A contractor is waiting for funding to design one for Pinellas County CTST, along with the Hillsborough CTST website.

Presentation of a plaque to former CTST Chair Pete Yauch was delayed since Pete was unable to attend the monthly meeting due to work conflicts.

Peter Hsu handed out copies of the CTST calendar for August 2003-January 2004.

Terry Hensley mentioned efforts for sustained enforcement is ongoing, expanding from 10-15 in counties with the highest death rates by impaired drivers. Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties are included. Groups are asked to report events. Awards are being given to agencies, increasing levels of awards: a \$16,000 message board, banquets and car listed as some prizes. Agencies are encouraged to work together.

A lunch meeting to review the DUI enforcement programs for next year will be held on September 25, 2003, at the DOT office. CTST members were invited to attend this worthwhile event to provide feedback and congratulate agencies winning awards.

Sheila Martin of BACS spoke about grants to St. Petersburg and Clearwater to help kick off the September Pedestrian Safety campaign. Felicia Leonard, City of Clearwater Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, will be doing a presentation at the September CTST meeting. Handouts and pre-paid materials such as posters and "spots" are available. The media campaign will last

for one year. The Pinellas MPO agreed to continue to facilitate media exposure countywide using the various materials.

Materials are also available for Commuter Choice Week, coming up in early October, as well as "school pool". A pilot project at Coachman Fundamental is underway to help reduce traffic problems by getting parents to share driving duties, reducing traffic issues at local schools.

Jeanette reported the contest to name the new CTST newsletter had selected the name "Traffic Times" over 30 submissions. A \$25.00 restaurant gift certificate was awarded as a prize to Alison Weber, who submitted the winning name.

September 4, 2003 was noted as the next meeting date. The meeting was dismissed at 11:16 am by Dave Fechter, CTST Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Weber, MS, CSP
Pinellas CTST Secretary

Members Present:

Jim Bordner	Pinellas Co. Sheriff's Office	582-6439
T.C. Carter	FDOT Pinellas Maintenance	570-5101
David M. Chase	City of Pinellas Park	541-0773
Charles Cronin	Clearwater Police Department	562-4162
Robert Daugherty	City of South Pasadena	347-4171
Pat Siracusa	State Attorney's Office	464-6170
David Fechter	TEI Engineers & Planners	813-884-7339
Thomas Goldberg	Kenneth City Police Department	544-2564
Mike Gust	City of Dunedin	298-3223
Marc Hanger	Pinellas MPO	464-8200
Terry Hensley	Law Enforcement Liaison IPTM	367-9633
Sgt. Dennis Hobbs	Florida Highway Patrol	647-3743
Peter Hsu	FDOT Safety	813-975-6251
Sandra Knoebel	Pinellas County MPO	464-8200
Shelia Martin	Bay Area Commuter Services	813-282-8200
Ron McKenzie	Pinellas Park Police Department	541-0758
Chuck Mura	City of Largo-Engineering	587-6713
Kristy Patterson	Palm Harbor Fire Rescue	787-5974
Joseph Pratt	St. Pete Police Department	893-4883
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
Sgt. Butch Ward	Largo Police Department	586-7473
Alison Weber	Pinellas Co. Schools	588-6151
Steve Yeatman	Pinellas Signal Shop	464-8987
Chief Hill	Belleair Police Department	

Jim Byers	PSTA	
Art Brown	Clearwater Fire Rescue	562-4327
Felicia Leonard	Clearwater Bike/Ped	562-4852
Ciara Jalandoni	Bay Area Commuter Services	813-282-8200x232