

## **STNC Safe Traffic and Transportation Committee Meeting**

**S-T branch of LA Public Library, 7771 Foothill Blvd, Tujunga, CA.**

**October 23, 2018**

**1. Call to Order** by Pat Kramer, chairperson of STNC's Safe Traffic and Transportation Committee, at 6:34PM in the meeting room of the S-T branch of LA Public Library, 7771 Foothill Blvd, Tujunga, CA.

Present were: Pat Kramer, Jerry Sherman, Jennifer Sonalia, Hrant Vartzbedian, David "Doc" DeMulle, John Clausen, Claudia Akin, Nancy Shannon, Dyan McManus, Jon von Gunten, Nina Royal, Barbara Rowe and Cindy Cleghorn.

**2. Review of Vision and Mission of STAT:** Pat Kramer read the mission and vision of the new STAT committee:: Reviewing issues that have not yet been resolved, following up on any new issues, coming up with ideas on ways to better educate the public to lower the # of accidents/fatalities, improve bicycle safety, and generally be a spokesperson as a committee to the LADOT, Council Office, Caltrans, Metro, LAPD, Sheriffs' and state legislators on issues impacting public safety on our roads.

She then reviewed stats from the California Department of Transportation which states that: 35,000 die each year across the USA in traffic accidents & 32 dead daily due to alcohol related accidents. There are also 4.1 million injuries caused by drunk driving. She reviewed the number of fatalities, which has increased over the past few years in our community and talked about the results of the survey done, online, and the concerns local residents have for their safety on the roads, particularly Foothill Boulevard, Wentworth Street in Shadow Hills, and La Tuna Canyon, which are adjacent to our communities' borders.

From this, she stated that the purpose of the committee would be to identify solutions to the issues faced and to work with the various City departments to provide constructive solutions as well as to interface with the local schools to provide an educational component for students, our next generation of drivers. Kids can also influence their parents and neighbors to be proactive about safe driving.

Other suggestions she reviewed were to look into holding a series of workshops in our community where people could meet others in the community, learn how to improve our community's safety, and take home information. Possible sources for this could be LADOT, AAA, LAPD and the Sheriff's Department. Pat then read helpful tips we can use today to combat road rage and unsafe driving by others (or ourselves) including making a commitment not to text while driving, not responding to unsafe drivers to avoid confrontations, and extending courtesy to cyclists and motorcyclists. Finally, she stated the cost to defend a DUI is \$5K to \$12K.

### **3. STAT Community Update from local reps and officials:**

Pat said there will be an update every month to chart the progress or different transportation related events in our community. To that end, she gave the following update on behalf of CD7:

From Eve Sinclair (who provided this info to Pat): CD7 is looking for funding for lefthand turn signals at Mt. Gleason and Foothill and Oro Vista and Foothill. Eve said since these are not on the City's priority list, other funding is being looked into from the State.

LADOT will be looking at ways to close off traffic at the junction of Summitrose and Foothill (by the Rattler), possibly by installing bollards to prevent access by motorists taking this unsafe shortcut.

Following LADOT's speed survey in 2017, LAPD was looking at increasing the speed limit by 10 mph on Foothill (from 35 to 45) but due to the # of accidents, it was only raised by 5 mph to 40. To date, we know of at least 13 fatalities on Foothill in S-T in the last five years. Pat asked anyone who could research this further to help do so as LADOT's website is split into two sections of Foothill but the information doesn't align and is confusing and not updated for this year, 2018.

Pat received an email from Pastor Aaron Schwartzbart of MOTORGOSPEL Ministries who says he is working on helping to quell the problems caused by illegal street-racing at night on the border of our community on Wentworth.

**4. Introductions:** Pat asked each person present to introduce themselves, their affiliations in the community and what they consider the priorities to be for the STAT committee.

Gerry Sherman is a landlord and a member of the STNC Beautification Committee, and CPAB. He said aggressive drivers are the main problem. Could insurance companies help in some way? LAPD Motor Bureau is responsible for putting traffic cops on bikes.

Nancy Shannon – STEP. Problems include buses, drivers, pedestrians. Suggests education because it's not possible to have enough cops.

Claudia Akin – STEP Committee. Education is needed at all levels, as it's often older ladies whose driving endanger Claudia and her dogs when she's walking them. Declined ongoing membership.

Jennifer Sonalia – Longtime resident stressed the need for driver safety education.

Hrant Vartzbedian – Neighborhood Watch can help. Keep reporting! Enlarge Neighborhood Watch. Include businesses to create a Business Watch on Foothill Blvd.

Do LAPD artificially reduce traffic accident stats? Nina Royal responded that doesn't happen on TRAFFIC stats, implied perhaps elsewhere. Suggested signs in high school and junior high parking lots, in our 20 large business parking lots; and in liquor stores. Signs in bars should encourage Uber/Lyft ride home or a sober buddy. Newest dash-cams are front and back, very useful.

David "Doc" DeMulle – Editor of Foothill Paper. Our last 6 fatalities all involved DUI or pot. An LAPD Volunteer Surveillance Team (VST) should video offenders at stop signs. Mount a Shame Campaign. LAFD and coroner have useful stats on traffic fatalities. The dollar fine for a DUI is 10 times the fine for a hit n run if perp returns to scene shortly.

John Clausen – Long-time S-T resident. It's speeders! He sees almost no police, but sees five speeders a day.

Dyan McManus – Foothill Paper. Drive defensively.

Nina Royal – Is working with LAPD Capt Grimes. Wants to restore block by block Neighborhood Watch meetings and a more hierarchical approach. Ojeda will set it up. Advocated for 1000 new motor officers.

Barbara Rowe – Longtime cyclist who survived several accidents.. Bike lanes give cyclists false sense of safety. They must learn to tumble and always wear full safety equipment. Cars need dash cams to prove infractions, fault, and protect against insurance fraud. Nextdoor is a valuable forum. She sat visibly at a corner in Glendale, and saw that her presence slowed traffic. Should be a reward for turning in hit n run drivers. AARP and insurance companies should help with road safety programs.

Cindy Cleghorn – Longtime S-T and Neighborhood Council activist. Grateful for this committee. Long needed. Curious how will it relate to Land Use Committee when new developments or street changes come along.

Suggests painting white bicycle images in road. Stripe more intersections, do it better and renew striping often. Partner with other groups. She is helping CD7 get funding.

Jon von Gunten – STNC Rep to LAPD Neighborhood Watch. Criminal drivers is a *constant* complaint at every N/W meeting, more than any other complaint. HOW can we facilitate LAPD taking reports? Heard from two sources that fake traffic schools exist where students/families pay for a sign-off and never take classes. Cannabis has increased patient load in Colorado's emergency rooms, per Northwestern U study. We should set up sub-committees on government relations. LADOT projects, school projects, LAPD lobbying, etc.

**5. Establish STAT Committee & Subcommittees:** Those present who made a commitment to serve on this committee included: Pat, Nina, Jerry, Hrant, Jennifer, John and Jon plus Lydia Grant, who could not make it to the meeting. Proposed subcommittees:

- Business Signage – Hrant & John C. (& potentially Lydia to help with the schools)
- Education – Jennifer & Lydia
- Police Enforcement – Nina, Jerry & Jon
- Land Use-oriented Traffic Issues – Cindy
- Neighborhood Watch/Surveillance – Jon, Babs, Hrant (& possibly Doc)
- LADOT, CD7 and State Legislature – Pat, Lydia & Jennifer
- Bicycle Safety – Babs & ?
- Street Racing – Aaron S.?

**6. Public Comment:**

- Gerry read letter by Mark Mathis complaining of illegal behavior at red lights. Mathis seldom sees a police car except around Sunland Park. Mathis suggested red-light cameras, which LA discontinued a few years ago.
- Cindy Cleghorn suggested filing Community Impact Statements on the different issues to provide backup for getting action taken. She talked about traffic and noise studies now being done for the proposed car wash on Foothill in Tujunga.
- Pat asked everyone who has an interest in the CA High Speed Rail's impact to try to attend the Nov 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting in downtown LA, location to be announced and to share this info with neighbors.
- Cindy announced the Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> Verdugo Hills Golf Course hearing downtown.

**7. Next STAT meeting:** Nov 27<sup>th</sup> at the Library at 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**8. Meeting Adjourned** 7:50 p.m.

-Minutes by Jon von Gunten-