

SAFE TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC COMMITTEE
MONTHLY Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 20, 2024, 6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting Online or By Telephone Dial (888) 475-4499 to Join the Meeting. Enter Meeting ID: 845 2933 7865, Press # Online: Go to <https://zoom.us/j/84529337865>

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL - Welcome - STAT Chairperson Pat Kramer

Pat Kramer, STAT Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were: Pat Kramer, chair; Jon von Gunten, cochair; George Arakel and Susan Denning, STAT members. Quorum was reached.

Also attending were:

- LAPD Traffic Officer Sal Venegas
- Laura Chapin, Shadow Hills
- Vachik Telimyan, resident
- Ross Herman, STNC VP

2. Motion to approve minutes from July 23, 2024, meeting.

(Jon moved/Susan seconded) the motion to approve the STAT meeting minutes of July 23, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Chairperson's Message:

Pat gave an update on her meeting with Urban Forestry to remove remaining agriperms around the Sunland Blvd. trees by Ralphs Supermarket and also across the street. We have removed Agriperms from 74 trees in Sunland. Pat arranged for a city group to finish rescuing remaining agriperms-afflicted trees using power tools.

They were also going to investigate the chopping down of two trees by Great Caesars, 6723 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, CA. Owner of Caesar's was unrepentant for butchering two trees. Has been contacted by city forestry officials. It was informally agreed upon that we should de-agriperms and rescue those two trees.

Pat also mentioned that she had been asked to serve on the Community Forest Advisory Committee at the CD7 Alternate. She submitted her résumé to CD7 as requested, but received an unusually prompt refusal saying that CD7 is "not hiring" for that unpaid, volunteer position.

4. LAPD Traffic Stats:

LAPD Traffic Officer Sal Venegas delivered an excellent statistical report including: Two known traffic fatalities: On August 3 at 5 p.m. involved a 72 years-old driver and a 30-year-old driver. The elderly man was pulling out of Tujunga Canyon Blvd. and was struck on Foothill Blvd. No citation was given as the driver committed no violation. Pat spoke about the dangers of merging from that parking lot onto Tujunga Canyon Blvd. The other was on La Tuna Cyn on July 18. Two previous fatalities this year involved pedestrians killed on Foothill by Wyngate and Foothill and Woodward, both in January.

- Traffic Div gets averages 500 -600 citations/month in Foothill Division.
- Officer. Venegas spends much time educating drivers around schools. He says most schools have "traffic valet drop-off," yet parents still do U-turns and ignore stop signs.

- It was agreed that while some drivers cannot control their own criminal driving, all drivers will suffer after the City constricts lanes and streets to save human lives."
- In terms of traffic, Foothill Div. is the safest LAPD Div. in the Valley. Last year, Foothill Div. had 18 fatalities, this year 10. Four were in S-T: 27 January; 25 February on Foothill & Woodward; 18 July, and 3 August.
- No special or concentrated efforts are coming to S-T because other areas in San Fernando Valley are much worse off.
- The division's DUIs inched up from 57 to 59, with none in S-T. Most were in Pacoima and Arleta, resulting in DUI check points and special enforcements. LAPD tracks DUI-related accidents, then enforce accordingly.
- Vehicle vs. pedestrian collisions are down 44%. Bicycle vs. vehicle collisions are down.
- He receives the most residents' calls from La Tuna Canyon, where people complain about unsafe traffic light settings. At La Tuna/Wildwood intersection, Venegas says too many people completely ignore common-sense safety.
- In S-T, he writes 20 citations in a few hours, all at 15mph or more above limit. Dispelling stereotypes, Venegas reported he has recently given speeding citations to ladies in their 70s and 80s!
- California's newish AB43 empowers street engineers to disregard prevailing street speeds and lower speed limits as much as needed, based on accident statistics. Previously, speed limits could be reduced only 5mph below the last prevailing speed found by survey.
- The word "jaywalking" was removed from the rule book, but it's still a citation if driver must stop. Traffic officers hand out personal safety lights and bright clothing to homeless for their safety.
- Susan noted that homeless are using Foothill's center lane to park and move their shopping carts. Venegas hasn't seen it.
- Jon heard of a no-show driving school that gave a cert without giving lessons or education. Venegas has not heard of such, but it's DMV-related and should be reported to their fraud department.
- Longtime resident Vachik Telimyan attended because he saw us announced on Facebook. He notes that high-density construction adds 2 cars per apartment. Not only does that add many more people, but the traffic density makes them irritated at each other. Cities narrowing streets exacerbates the mater.
- Tricky LAMC 21954-A says a pedestrian "owns" the road if he's crossed two lanes of an unmarked crosswalk. We need more details on this.

Meeting with LAPD officials following National Night Out.

NNO was well attended this year. Pat met LAPD Deputy Chief Ruby Flores who was very helpful. Pat also met the new Lady of Lourdes principal, Timothy Ballaret who said he would try to encourage students to attend our tree waterings as a credit project. She thanked LAPD for coming and Officer Venegas for bringing his bike for kids to sit on!

5. Updates from CD7, LADOT, CA High Speed Rail.

Nothing from CD7. HSR continues progressing.

6.Public Comments.

Pat commented that we need a traffic town hall, separate from STNC's town hall, where we can hear public input and disseminate new and misunderstood traffic laws. With all of the events already scheduled, January would be the earliest we can do it.

Susan observed that those who need the education the most won't come.

We are never informed in advance about street engineering changes. Consensus is that LA DOT cares little about public input, so won't inform us of anything. For example, bike-lanes and bollards were presented at a public meeting, strenuously hated, but installed anyway, causing great danger, confusion and traffic jams during a fire evacuation.

7.Committee Reports.

George says that Tujunga Canyon Place is too dangerous for him to drive.

Pat suggests a weeding event some evening.

8. Schedule next STAT meeting: the "Special" September meeting will be held on Sept. 17, 2024, a week earlier than scheduled, as Pat was to be unavailable on scheduled date.

9. Meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Minutes by Jon von Gunten