

SAFE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Of the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

25 January 2022

Special guest was LAPD Valley Traffic Div. Officer Joel Flores! Send him your *factual* reports of flagrant/dangerous traffic violations at 30658@lapd.online or 818-644-8142.

1. **Call to order:** 6:04PM. Quorum achieved (5 members) with Pat Kramer, Jon von Gunten, Roger Swart, Gerry Sherman and George Arakel. (17 participants in all).

2. Introductions:

Pat Kramer, chairperson, former Region 1 Rep for Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council, and has been involved since the previous traffic committee.

Jon von Gunten, cochair, Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council Member, former Neighborhood Watch Rep, now Region 3 Rep and LAPD volunteer.

Roger Swart has been an S-T resident since 1959, manages community Facebook sites and regularly disseminates news about Neighborhood Watch.

Jerry Sherman, STAT committee since inception, C-PAB. Feels improving traffic safety on Foothill will greatly improving our community and its image.

George Arakel, concerned primarily about speeding on Tujunga Canyon Blvd. and residential streets south of Foothill.

Gerald Sherman, a 14-year member of C-PAB.

We welcomed eight guests:

- Cindy Cleghorn, STNC board member and its past president.
- Cynthia Petrovic, 30-year resident of Sunland who came for a parking problem. She painted the DOT box with the Egyptian hieroglyphs!
- Xiomara Durán, tree enthusiast. Has helped Pat in a census of Foothill trees in preparation for more tree events.
- Gigi Carrasco, student VHHS
- Kassandra Cebrero, student VHHS
- Priscilla Jin, student VHHS
- Tyler Johnson, student VHHS
- LAPD Traffic Officer Joel Flores.
- Plus Leny Freeman, moderator.

3. **Motion to Approve Minutes.** (Swart/Von Gunten) moved to approve the minutes of the October & November 2021 STAT meetings: The minutes were read and approved unanimously.

4. **Program: LAPD Valley Traffic Officer Joel Flores** has 28.5 years in LAPD, 14 in Foothill, and will be with us at least another 18 months. His first point was that he needs to hear from local residents about local traffic trouble spots, so he knows where to patrol!

We have been told by CD7 that two digital traffic speed-display signs were reportedly installed in S-T, one near the Shell station, at Foothill/Apperson westbound thanks to the efforts of CD7. No info on whether or where the others are located.

Flores says he loves working our corridor because nearly everyone here appreciates law enforcement. Even so, Foothill has always had a problem with young speeders and our scofflaw drivers put every life at risk.

He says Valley Traffic and Community Traffic Safety Unit are so shorthanded that he is often called to work outside Foothill. Obviously, scarcity of officers reduces our police coverage and encourages crime.

Another barrier is that he can no longer use with lights and sirens to pursue a speeding violator. City of LA says that since speeding is only an infraction, Traffic shouldn't pursue and risk an accident. A bright spot is that courts now accept trained officers' reports of "estimated speed" as fact.

The traffic death of Artie Moore at Foothill and Newhome was explored. Moore, a longtime Foothill leader and Riverwood resident died after a 28-yr. old male proceeding eastbound on Foothill failed to stop at a red light. He hit Moore's vehicle that was parked at the light. Both incurred head trauma. Moore later died.

Already this year, Foothill Station has 19 fatalities, two in S-T. Pat enumerated two local traffic deaths in 2021 and also 2019. Flores will seek to get us stats for 2020.

Pat has requested backup help for Officer Flores, but none seems imminent due to short-staffing. Already in 2022, the Foothill/Hillhaven intersection has two collisions caused by speed.

Report minor crimes & accidents: <https://www.lapdonline.org/file-a-police-report/>
LAPD responds to accidents that may involve DUI, city property or major injury.

- 5. Public Comment: Cynthia Petrovic:** Reports a parking situation in her neighborhood's narrow streets behind Sunland Ralphs, where parking is limited to one side. One man with several cars is the central problem. He's uncooperative about moving them from others' driveways, gets into shouting matches, and revs engines to intimidate. Two residents wrote letters to Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Cesar Contreras, but Contreras has been transferred. Parking Enforcement has been useless, as he just moves his cars an inch to dodge the parking ticket. One unregistered car was towed, as its license was for a different vehicle. Pat suggested calling DOT, which helped Pat with an obnoxious parker. Petrovic is considering a restraining order and has spoken with Foothill Station's Neighborhood Prosecutor Mark Ross. She thinks more and better signage may help because it reduced homeless and camper problems. Petrovic left at 6:28

Cindy Cleghorn announced the board vacancies on STNC.

6. Committee Reports:

Jon von Gunten reported Neighborhood Watch news: Foothill Capt Smith said in two meetings that SLO Contreras was yanked out of his 6-year position in Sunland by order of Councilwoman Monica Rodríguez to LA Police Chief Moore. She

stipulated he couldn't work in her District. Smith said Contreras committed no discourtesy or mistake. The reason eludes him, Contreras and the community. Removing a SLO disrupts years of community knowledge the SLO has acquired. Local troublemakers' personalities, arrest histories and outstanding warrants, LAPD's allies, criminal vs. helpful homeless, blighted addresses, hiding places and stashes cannot be readily relayed to a replacement.

Leny Freeman reports unprovoked threats and aggression toward him in Sunland Park in which his sideview mirror was broken off.

George Arakel said that CD7's Delilah is helping him with a stop sign on Elmhurst.

7. **Adjournment:** Pat adjourned the meeting at 7:23.

Minutes by Jon von Gunten
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council
Region 3 Rep
LAPD Volunteer Community Patrol