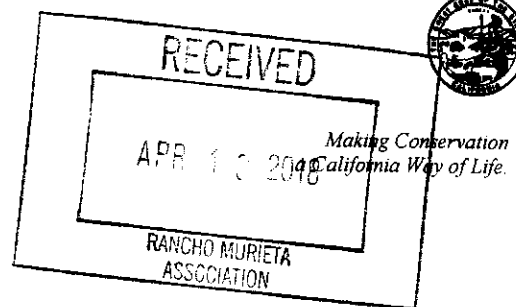


DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 3**

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April 9, 2018

Mr. Greg Vorster
PCAM, CCAM General Manager
7191 Murieta Parkway
Rancho Murieta, CA 95683

Dear Mr. Vorster:

Thank you for your February 27, 2018 letter regarding your concerns related to the collisions and speeds on Highway 16 in the Rancho Murieta community.

A Traffic Safety Investigation was performed in February, 2018 for the segment of Highway 16 between Dillard Road (near Sloughouse) and Ione Road.

The investigation found a concentration of collisions in the segment between Murieta Parkway and Murieta South. This segment is currently striped for no passing and has a centerline rumble strip. Records show several rear-end collisions in the westbound direction approaching Murieta Parkway and several hit deer collisions (or movements to avoid hitting deer).

In the segment between Kiefer Blvd. and Murieta Parkway, no concentrations of collisions were found and the overall collision rate was below average for similar roadways statewide. This segment has standard shoulder widths, centerline and shoulder rumble strips and passing zones which are appropriately striped per sight distance standards. Maintenance crews trimmed back a tree in this segment last fall to increase sight distance for the passing zone just west of Lone Pine Drive. Collision records also do not show any patterns or concentrations of passing related collisions in this segment, so removing the passing zones cannot be justified.

We are currently in the process of initiating a project to trim several trees, clear brush and shrubs, to improve sight distance for westbound drivers approaching the signal at Murieta Parkway and to potentially reduce deer hits in the area. It is anticipated this work will be completed before the beginning of summer, weather permitting. We are also in the process of initiating a project to relocate the flashing beacon on the signal ahead sign for better visibility for the eastbound approach to Murieta Parkway. It is anticipated this work will be completed in 2020.

No other improvements are currently being considered at this time. It is recommended that the Murieta resident contact CHP and ask for increased patrols to help reduce unsafe passing or speeding as these are enforcement issues.

Speed limits in the state of California are set in accordance to the California Vehicle Code (CVC) and we are bound by the law to determine speed limits accordingly. In general, all highways in

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the state are, by law, either 55 mph if they are a 2-lane undivided, or 65 mph if multi-lane or divided. We are prohibited from lowering a speed limit below the 55/65 mph limits, as stated above, without the support of an Engineering & Traffic Survey (E&TS).

The E&TS establishes the 85th percentile speed that the motoring public travels a particular section of roadway when in free flow conditions. Free flow conditions are when vehicles are not obstructed/restricted by other vehicles or conditions, typically during weekday off-peak hours.

Once the survey is concluded, we analyze all the data and determine the 85th percentile speed. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other entities have determined that the 85th percentile speed is the speed that vehicles travel the safest at and is the standard for setting speeds throughout the United States.


In addition, without a valid E&TS, law enforcement is prohibited from monitoring, stopping and citing individuals using radar/lidar equipment.

To artificially lower the speed limit below the determined 85th percentile can actually have counter intuitive results. While one might suspect that the lower speed limit is safer, it has the opposite effect. Some drivers may see the lower limit and slow down, other drivers instead may remain at the speed the roadway is most comfortably driven at. Speed differentials increase accident rates and other incidents.

Furthermore, CVC section 40802 Speed Traps, prohibits the state from setting any speed limit that is not justified by an E&TS.

You may contact Mr. Fernando Rivera, our Traffic Safety Branch Chief at (530) 741-5712 to discuss this further. Also, feel free to contact me any time to discuss your concerns or items of mutual interest.

Sincerely,


AMARJEET S. BENIPAL
District Director

c: Tom Berryhill – State Senator
Ken Cooley – Assembly Member
Sue Frost – Sacramento County Supervisor
Darryl Chambers, Caltrans