

**PROJECT FINAL REPORT**  
**No. SA9805**  
**Traffic Safety Communities Network in Santa Clara County**  
**May 31, 2000**

**Credits and Disclaimer**

The Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) in Santa Clara County is a coalition coordinated through the Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System/Public Health Department. This project is a part of the California Traffic Safety Program and was made possible through the support the State of California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State of California or the National Highway and Safety Administration.

**Project Personnel**

The (1.0 FTE) Program Coordinator managed the day-to-day operations of the collaborative, including supervision of staff and consultants, maintaining and strengthening the membership base, coordinating planning and evaluation, problem-solving/conflict resolution, leadership and resource development, marketing/media advocacy, monitoring action plans, establishing mini-grants, developing partnerships, and preparing special studies and issuing findings. Also, the coordinator administered budgets, negotiated contract agreements, submitted quarterly reports to OTS, represented the project at meetings and public events, and maintained liaison with stakeholders and other *Safe Communities* sites and OTS grantees.

The Health Education Associate (0.5FTE) was responsible for staffing the action work groups, coordinating meetings, facilitating group process, assisting in needs assessment and survey research, community outreach, developing the TSCN Newsletter and other public information materials, and providing technical assistance.

The Advanced Clerk Typist (0.5 FTE) provided support for various assignments required for the efficient management of the project, including the scheduling of meetings and community activities, taking and typing meeting minutes, ordering supplies and materials, record-keeping, updating databases, assisting with special event coordination, and preparing and sending out mailings, newsletters and other correspondence.

**Goals and Objectives**

**Goals:**

1. **To reduce Santa Clara County traffic related fatalities and injuries as a portion of the county's total fatalities and injuries (eg. falls, burns, violence) 0.5% from the calendar 1998 base year total to be determined.**

Data unavailable at this time.

2. **To reduce Santa Clara County traffic related fatalities and injuries 5% from the calendar 1996 base year total of 12,502 to 11,877 by December 31, 1999.**

Data unavailable at this time.

**Objectives:**

1. **To complete a comprehensive injury assessment of motor vehicle and other unintentional injuries in the Santa Clara County/Cities area by April 30, 1998.**

The Santa Clara County (SCC) Data Management and Statistics Unit developed a draft of preliminary statistics of motor vehicle and other unintentional injuries by March 1998 using SWITRS 1996, along with mortality and hospital discharge databases from the Public Health Department. After the receipt of the 1996-97 SWITRS databases from CHP in June 1998, Data Management and Statistics decoded SWITRS databases by September 1998. Hence, this allowed the unit greater access to stratifying requested data for SCC by several traffic areas. In addition, the unit attained figures on traffic safety practices of high school and middle school students with the development of the Public Health Department's countywide, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey – 1999 (YRBS). Information included teenage alcohol consumption and driving, and bicycle/motorcycle helmet use.

Due to the lag in data collection and entry into several county and state databases, TSCN has been unable to receive statistics on a timely manner. However, the Data Management and Statistics Unit continues to provide TSCN with the most updated statistics available on traffic issues and unintentional injuries on an as needed basis. Furthermore, the Data Assessment Work Group identified the need for a comprehensive injury surveillance of traffic issues countywide. Hence, a survey was developed to determine methods and software used in each city for traffic data collection, mapping, and analysis. Surveys were distributed to all law enforcement and traffic engineering departments. The Work Group aims to standardize protocols for traffic safety data management and mapping systems, including citations and collision databases.

2. **To complete a Safe Community best practices assessment for each of the Santa Clara County cities in the project and the unincorporated county area by April 30, 1998.**

Due to the delayed hiring of TSCN staff (February 1998), the Safe Communities best practices countywide assessment was not completed until July 1998. Dr. Daniel Perales, Associate Professor at San Jose State University, was contracted by TSCN to develop the survey tool and analyze the results. The survey identified gaps in current best practice activities among several agencies: law enforcement, traffic engineering, and community, health, school, and safety organizations.

3. **To convene a Countywide Traffic Safe Community Network; establish ad hoc city task forces as needed, beginning in November 1997, on-going periodically throughout the grant period.**

During the first year, six TSCN committees were formed to conduct master planning: Steering, Assessment/Data, City Partnerships, Community Mini-Grants, Outreach and Education, and Policy. Committees were responsible for identifying priority areas, developing partnerships among agencies and community groups, and creating a strategic plan to reduce traffic safety problems within the county.

Examining traffic safety problems ranging from child passenger safety to aggressive driving, TSCN conducted a needs assessment of "best practices" being implemented in the county at the time. The TSCN committees used the results to identify intervention priorities. In January 1999, the TSCN entered into a multi-year implementation phase. With the completion of the coalition's strategic planning, the original committees were replaced by action-oriented Work Groups based on the priorities of the Network: Data Analysis, Alcohol and Impaired Driving, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety, Red Light/Stop Sign Running, and Child Passenger Safety.

With the help of the SCC District Attorney's Office, the Red Sign Running Work Group consisting of law enforcement and traffic engineers, participated in a "first ever" meeting with traffic commissioners in March 2000. The focus was to inform the traffic commissioners about the upcoming Stop Red Light Running Partnership Program and the use of red light indicators (rat boxes,) to enhance enforcement. Both the traffic judges and members of the Red Light Running Work Group recognized the need and benefit for continued meetings among these agencies.

4. **To develop an Action Plan for promoting Traffic Safe Community objectives during the following year in Santa Clara County/Cities, by December 31, 1998.**

Using results of the best practices needs assessment, the planning committees formulated goals, objectives, and action plans by the end of 1998. During the implementation phase and the creation of the work groups in 1999, additional objectives and goals were added to the action plan, based on feasible priorities.

5. **To develop a community mini-grant program to disseminate funding to cities for traffic safety activities by September 30, 1998.**

Request for applications for TSCN community mini-grants were disseminated to over 400 agencies in the county in September 1998. Reviewers of the submitted grant proposals represented the California Department of Health Services, Contra Costa County, NHTSA, and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. On December 4, 1998, twelve (12) grants were awarded to organizations representing communities throughout the county. Grant awards ranged from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

With the assistance of Jack Champlin from NHTSA Region IX and Dana Lidster from OTS, the TSCN was awarded a budget augmentation to allow the Network to fund an additional five (5) applicants in March 1999. Pre-operational meetings were held for all grant recipients to inform them about OTS grant procedures and requirements and to begin processing Service Agreements.

**6. To award community mini-grant funds to recipients by December 31, 1998.**

Upon completion of the formalized Service Agreement contracts with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the community mini-grant recipients received reimbursement for their projects as the Department's Finance Unit processed their invoices. A total of \$251,552 was budgeted for mini-grantees during the project.

**7. To promote the spread of the Best Practice activities through meetings and other communications, leading to the upgrading of model Safe Community programs in individual cities by December 31, 1999.**

In April 1998 and in September 1999, TSCN hosted two Safe Communities Workshops, presented by NHTSA Region IX staff. The focus of the workshops included best practice guidelines, and useful tools and approaches for program management, assessment, and evaluation.

Throughout the grant period, the Best Practices for a Safe Community booklet from NHTSA was used as an educational tool for outreach. During the planning phase, NHTSA's best practices were discussed at committee and full Network meetings to help prioritize feasible traffic safety activities for the coalition. In addition, NHTSA's guidelines served as the basis for the best practice assessment of Santa Clara County's current traffic safety activities in July 1998. Subsequently, TSCN tailored Best Practices to fit the needs of SCC, as formulated in the TSCN Action Plan in December 1998.

Both the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and the Child Passenger Safety Work Groups researched recent best practices in these traffic safety areas and incorporated them into surveys designed to determine what agencies, schools, and government departments were implementing best practice projects.

Presentations on TSCN best practices and NHTSA's Safe Communities model were made to the City Managers Association and the SCC Police Chiefs.

**8. To coordinate with other OTS grants in Santa Clara County to maximize the impact and spread of the activity in Santa Clara County, from March 1998 through December 1999.**

Throughout the grant cycle, TSCN staff have been in regular contact with Debbie Loomis at the San Diego Safe Communities 2000 project. Discussions involved countywide planning, outreach, project activities, and request for applications/grant information.

In addition, TSCN staff maintained regular contact with Ann Horton and Mozell Zarit from the Department of Health Services EPIC/Safe Communities Project. DHS continues to be a tremendous support to TSCN by providing materials and information. DHS also facilitated the monthly Safe Communities telephone conference calls, which provided an effective way to learn about other traffic safety projects and discuss common barriers/opportunities in program planning and implementation.

Also, from September 1998 to April 1999, TSCN worked closely with Alexian Brothers Hospital and the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) in the planning, development, and implementation of the successful "Every 15 Minutes" program at high schools in Santa Clara County.

9. **To promote interest of the project through a calendar of Traffic Safety Awareness activities and a newsletter to city and county participants and partners, bi-monthly beginning in November 1998.**

TSCN calendar of events were produced and distributed monthly at meetings and via mail since April 1998. Although developments of the TSCN Newsletter began in November 1998, the Steering Committee voted to postpone dissemination until the Action Plan was completed. However, due to technical difficulties (delayed delivery of the publishing software), the newsletter was not completed and mailed until mid-April 1999, along with monthly event calendars. The bi-monthly newsletters contained information on projects funded by TSCN mini-grants, events and conferences, recent traffic safety information, and Network updates. Topics included the Stop Red Light Running countywide program, pedestrian safety, and the "youthquake".

10. **To evaluate the project impact by establishing surveillance systems and reporting on the project activities on a quarterly basis, (January, 1998 through December, 1999).**

Minutes from each committee, work group, steering, and full Network meetings were taken since the development of the coalition to document discussions, events, and activities. Summaries of these minutes were reported at the quarterly full Network meetings. A quarterly synopsis describing the status of the TSCN committees/work groups have also been distributed to members at the full Network meetings.

Mainly using SWITRS data, the Data Management and Statistics Unit of the SCC Public Health Department provided TSCN with the most recent data available to monitor the traffic-related occurrences in the county.

Written reports on TSCN's progress were submitted to OTS on a quarterly basis.

11. **To fax OTS (916-262-2960) at least two weeks in advance, a short description of any new traffic safety event or program. Address the fax to the Public Information Officer and the OTS Program Coordinator (Dana Lidster).**

Throughout the grant period, TSCN has participated or initiated the following media events and/or programs:

- May 1998 – Buckle Up America! Week Seatbelt Checkpoints
- August 1998 – "Traffic Safety Day" with the San Jose Clash Soccer Team
- December 1998 – "Lights On For Life" Campaign

- May 1999 – Media event to provide awareness of local statistics on motor vehicle-related injuries/fatalities and the TSCN mini-grant funded projects
- February 2000 – High media profiled child car seat inspection event. TSCN participated with other SAFE KIDS members.
- March 2000 – Initiation of the Stop Red Light Running Partnership 5-month campaign, which began with a press conference and a 3-day countywide kickoff

## **Methodology**

Historically, traffic safety like violence prevention has had little public health sector or community-level involvement in Santa Clara County. The project's traffic-safety initiative based on NHTSA's Safe Communities model represented a first-of-its-kind effort to extend public health, law enforcement, traffic engineering, and community planning principles into a relatively new prevention arena.

The county's sprawling traffic injury problems were recognized as too large, too complex, and resources too limited for any one agency, jurisdiction, sector, or group to solve alone. The full diversity of stakeholders and perspectives were included in developing TSCN's multi-faceted approach for positioning and addressing traffic safety within the context of the entire violence and intentional/unintentional injury prevention effort.

Derived from the "best practices" partnership model NHTSA, the TSCN methodology promotes a "bottom up" collaborative process for reducing, preventing, and controlling traffic-related fatalities, injuries and economic costs. The first year of project operation was dedicated to reviewing available data and surveying multiple jurisdictions and communities. Several key environmental influences were considered: physical, cultural and socio-economic factors; individual and group behavior; public policy; technology; and, professional roles. During Phase I, the following six primary problem/gap areas were identified:

- Fragmented injury data collection and analysis
- Absence of an integrated and comprehensive injury control system
- Planning and service delivery gaps, as well as duplication of efforts
- An underdeveloped constituency for supporting the ongoing implementation of "best practices" and "spectrum of prevention" activities, including community-based organizations serving and representing the county's diverse multicultural sectors
- Lack of a collaborative infrastructure for resource pooling, cross-disciplinary training, information sharing, action planning, marketing, advocacy, and energizing linkages among diverse agencies, jurisdictions, communities, funders, and organizational sectors
- Policy development, evaluation, and funding limitations

After assessing community assets/gap areas and ensuring that the complete scope and magnitude of the problem was defined, the TSCN Steering Committee developed a Phase II data-driven action plan that recommended priority countermeasure and prevention interventions.

TSCN's core leadership includes representatives from the "Six E's of Traffic Safety" -- engineering, enforcement, education, emergency medical services, economic analysis, and evaluation. Co-chaired by County Supervisor James T. Beall and Public Health Officer Martin Fenstersheib, MD, the focus of the project during both phases was directed towards adopting and

customizing NHTSA's Safe Community model for improving traffic safety and the quality of community life.

During that initial development phase, six TSCN committees were convened to conduct integrated assessment and planning activities. They were Steering, Assessment/Data, City Partnerships, Community Mini-Grants, Outreach and Education, and Policy. They examined an array of traffic safety problems and conducted a needs assessment of "best practices" being implemented at the time. Surveys were distributed to agencies, community-based organizations, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, traffic engineers, and advocacy groups. The committees analyzed the data and applied the results in order to identify priority concerns to be addressed, including:

- Data Analysis
- Alcohol and Impaired Driving
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
- Stop Sign/Red Light Running and Aggressive Driving
- Child Passenger Safety

In January 1999, TSCN formulated its goals and objectives and developed an action plan. Five action-oriented Work Groups replaced the original assessment and planning committees, and they met regularly to champion the implementation of the action plan countywide. In addition, members, volunteers, and Public Health staff by working together under the TSCN umbrella nurtured community-wide involvement, diversity, and "collective intelligence."

To further the implementation of the action plan, an extensive mini-grant program was established which became the centerpiece of TSCN's community-responsive planning and prevention efforts. Moreover, the program proved to be an ideal mechanism for fostering multicultural initiatives and cross-disciplinary relationships. Seventeen local agency and community-based grantees operated programs within diverse geographic areas and organizational settings. Designed to support "best practices" start-up and expansion efforts as well as strengthen community-level involvement, the one-year mini-grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$25,000 each.

In order for solutions to be put in place for the long haul, a dynamic partnership among diverse stakeholders must be maintained and strengthened. Currently, TSCN consists of over four dozen participating organizations and institutions from the public and private sector, including traditional and non-traditional partners. Although many members have been associated with TSCN since its inception, new agencies and groups have joined since the action planning process was completed. Membership recruitment is furthered through the combination of mini-grants, high-visibility activities, training programs, publicizing of community events, media coverage, and the distribution of TSCN's bi-monthly newsletter.

In addition to the traffic safety activities implemented by the Work Groups and mini-grantees, another important achievement is role of TSCN' in generating networking opportunities among an array of community leaders, key officials, agencies, jurisdictions, professionals, and other groups. Ongoing cross-disciplinary communication, problem solving, and resource sharing further exemplify this facilitation process.

Also, TSCN collaborates and trains together with other *Safe Community* projects and OTS grantees throughout the county, state and nation. Only through multi-level federal, state, and

local government cooperation can the *Safe Community* initiative expect to sustain an influential presence within large metropolitan areas.

Historically, public health, traffic safety, and funding groups have worked separately, and at times, duplicitously. While it is not that unusual today to find public health staff assigned fulltime to violence and child abuse prevention within several of California's metropolitan counties, it is extremely rare to find staff addressing the major cause of unintentional injury -- motor vehicle crashes. Yet, in less than two years, TSCN has become a viable catalyst for advancing an inclusive coalition-building process among diverse stakeholders dedicated to reaching a larger common audience and creating a traffic safe community.

## **Results**

To date, TSCN achieved several important results, including:

- Promoted cooperative development of an action plan, aimed at prevention, problem solving, and advocacy.
- Established a mini-grant program for fostering broad-based involvement and "best practice" capacity building in the action plan priority areas.
- Developed an ongoing structure and process for gaining a better understanding of approaches, resources, and mechanisms available.
- Disseminated information, technical assistance, and resources to participants, the community, and the media.
- Planned and implemented a countywide Stop Red Light Running Partnership Program to target five high risk/volume intersections with intensive zero-tolerance enforcement and community education activities over a five-month period.
- Initiated planning for the potential implementation of actual DUI court trials at local high schools designed to reduce underage drinking and juvenile DUI countywide. The high-visibility project would provide a clear lesson in justice and about the serious consequences associated with alcohol/other drug impaired driving, underage drinking, and illegal alcohol sales.
- Initiated planning for conducting a Place of Last Drink Survey (POLD) aimed at identifying high-risk environments for drinking and driving to help public agencies and community coalitions focus their prevention and intervention efforts. The POLD study will query adjudicated DUI offenders as they enroll in first-time offender or multiple offender classes.
- In October 1999, TSCN was nominated for the International Safe Communities Transportation and Safety Partnership Award -- a program sponsored by the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO), NHTSA, and the 5th Annual World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control.

## **Implementation Schedule**

See attached.

## **Documentation**

See attached.



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**Objectives:**

1. **To complete a comprehensive injury assessment of motor vehicle and other unintentional injuries in the Santa Clara County/Cities area by April 30, 1998.**

The Santa Clara County (SCC) Data Management and Statistics Unit developed a draft of preliminary statistics of motor vehicle and other unintentional injuries by March 1998 using SWITRS 1996, along with mortality and hospital discharge databases from the Public Health Department. After the receipt of the 1996-97 SWITRS databases from CHP in June 1998, Data Management and Statistics decoded SWITRS databases by September 1998. Hence, this allowed the unit greater access to stratifying requested data for SCC by several traffic areas. In addition, the unit attained figures on traffic safety practices of high school and middle school students with the development of the Public Health Department's countywide, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey – 1999 (YRBS). Information included teenage alcohol consumption and driving, and bicycle/motorcycle helmet use.

Due to the lag in data collection and entry into several county and state databases, TSCN has been unable to receive statistics on a timely manner. However, the Data Management and Statistics Unit continues to provide TSCN with the most updated statistics available on traffic issues and unintentional injuries on an as needed basis. Furthermore, the Data Assessment Work Group identified the need for a comprehensive injury surveillance of traffic issues countywide. Hence, a survey was developed to determine methods and software used in each city for traffic data collection, mapping, and analysis. Surveys were distributed to all law enforcement and traffic engineering departments. The Work Group aims to standardize protocols for traffic safety data management and mapping systems, including citations and collision databases.

2. **To complete a Safe Community best practices assessment for each of the Santa Clara County cities in the project and the unincorporated county area by April 30, 1998.**

Due to the delayed hiring of TSCN staff (February 1998), the Safe Communities best practices countywide assessment was not completed until July 1998. Dr. Daniel Perales, Associate Professor at San Jose State University, was contracted by TSCN to develop the survey tool and analyze the results. The survey identified gaps in current best practice activities among several agencies: law enforcement, traffic engineering, and community, health, school, and safety organizations.

3. **To convene a Countywide Traffic Safe Community Network; establish ad hoc city task forces as needed, beginning in November 1997, on-going periodically throughout the grant period.**

**PROJECT FINAL REPORT**  
**No. SA9805**  
**Traffic Safety Communities Network in Santa Clara County**  
**May 31, 2000**

**Credits and Disclaimer**

The Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) in Santa Clara County is a coalition coordinated through the Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System/Public Health Department. This project is a part of the California Traffic Safety Program and was made possible through the support the State of California Office of Traffic Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State of California or the National Highway and Safety Administration.

**Project Personnel**

The (1.0 FTE) Program Coordinator managed the day-to-day operations of the collaborative, including supervision of staff and consultants, maintaining and strengthening the membership base, coordinating planning and evaluation, problem-solving/conflict resolution, leadership and resource development, marketing/media advocacy, monitoring action plans, establishing mini-grants, developing partnerships, and preparing special studies and issuing findings. Also, the coordinator administered budgets, negotiated contract agreements, submitted quarterly reports to OTS, represented the project at meetings and public events, and maintained liaison with stakeholders and other *Safe Communities* sites and OTS grantees.

The Health Education Associate (0.5FTE) was responsible for staffing the action work groups, coordinating meetings, facilitating group process, assisting in needs assessment and survey research, community outreach, developing the TSCN Newsletter and other public information materials, and providing technical assistance.

The Advanced Clerk Typist (0.5 FTE) provided support for various assignments required for the efficient management of the project, including the scheduling of meetings and community activities, taking and typing meeting minutes, ordering supplies and materials, record-keeping, updating databases, assisting with special event coordination, and preparing and sending out mailings, newsletters and other correspondence.

**Goals and Objectives**

**Goals:**

1. **To reduce Santa Clara County traffic related fatalities and injuries as a portion of the county's total fatalities and injuries (eg. falls, burns, violence) 0.5% from the calendar 1998 base year total to be determined.**

Data unavailable at this time.

2. **To reduce Santa Clara County traffic related fatalities and injuries 5% from the calendar 1996 base year total of 12,502 to 11,877 by December 31, 1999.**