

## WASHINGTON

# Cape Horn Corridor Traffic Safety Project

### ▶ AT-A-GLANCE

▶ **Project Characteristics**  
Collaborative  
Engineering, Enforcement and  
Education

▶ **Program Areas**  
Community/Corridor Traffic  
Safety Programs

▶ **Targeted Populations**  
Local residents, tourists,  
commercial vehicle operators,  
bicyclists, pedestrians

▶ **Type of Jurisdiction**  
State Route

▶ **Jurisdiction Size**  
half of the state's population

▶ **Funding**  
Section 402:  
Enforcement - \$36,000 (OT)  
Equipment - \$27,000  
Education - \$32,000  
Engineering - \$100,000  
Total: \$195,000

▶ **Contact**  
Monica A. Petersen-Smith  
WA Traffic Safety Commission  
P.O. Box 40944  
Olympia, WA 98504-0944  
(360) 664-3192  
[mpetersen@wtsc.wa.gov](mailto:mpetersen@wtsc.wa.gov)

## Problem Identification

A 15.3 mile stretch of State Route 14 (SR14) in southwest Washington was officially designated a traffic safety corridor because of its unusually high crash rates and crash types. Compared to other state highways and similar highways in the same region of the state, SR14 reported a high rate of Exceeding Safe Speeds, Over the Centerline, Driving Under the Influence (DUI), and Operating Defective Equipment, which are the leading contributing causes of collisions on the corridor. Exceeding Safe Speed crashes occur at a rate 86 percent higher than on similar highways in the region and 104 percent higher than on Washington highways, making it the leading contributing cause of fatal and disabling crashes on the corridor. Over the Centerline crashes occur at a rate 375 percent higher than on similar highways in the region and 740 percent higher than on Washington highways. DUI crashes occur at a rate 13 percent higher than on similar highways in the region and 40 percent higher than on Washington highways. Operating Defective Equipment crashes occur at a rate 40 percent higher than on similar highways in the region and 108 percent higher than on Washington highway.

## Goals and Objectives

The goal of the *Cape Horn Traffic Safety Corridor Project* is to increase traffic safety along SR14 and reduce the number of deaths, injuries and property damage resulting from traffic crashes, by using low-cost, near-term solutions that focus on engineering, education and enforcement efforts.

## Strategies and Activities

Because of major financial, environmental and/or social impacts, most problem corridors cannot be improved through roadway construction alone. The *Cape Horn Traffic Safety Corridor Project's* strategy for improving its problem corridors is a multi-disciplinary effort involving highway and traffic engineering, enforcement and educational efforts. The project implemented the following strategies to achieve its goal:

- Designated a stretch of SR14, as a traffic safety corridor.
- Created a partnership between the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Washington State Patrol, the County Sheriff, and a local Steering Committee.
- Designated three subcommittees to focus on Enforcement, Engineering, and Education.

**Enforcement.** The Washington State Patrol and County Sheriff are collaborating on strategies to target enforcement of collision-causing violations. This multi-agency effort includes implementing emphasis patrols that focus on:

- Excessive speeding, aggressive driving, illegal passing
- Slow moving vehicles
- Operating vehicle with defective equipment
- Operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol

In addition, the enforcement sub-committee drafted and sent a letter to WSDOT requesting a change to the WSDOT Motor Carrier Rule for commercial vehicles traveling on SR14 that exceed 9 feet in width. The request recommended that such vehicles be accompanied by three escort vehicles containing professionals who are familiar with the route to alert other motorists to the presence of an over-dimensional load.

**Engineering.** WSDOT initiated engineering fixes such as:

- Installed corridor project signage
- Improved alignment of two of the most difficult curves
- Installed centerline rumble strips throughout the corridor
- Installed signs to highlight areas of concern
- Installed road condition warnings using a Highway Advisory Radio System
- Improved pedestrian warning information for drivers at the Beacon Rock State Park

**Education.** The education sub-group, in coordination with Education Service District 112, increased public awareness by reinforcing safe driving habits, such as:

- Distributed safe driving materials, that included a safe driving brochure at local public events
- Implemented a public awareness campaign that included press releases resulting in numerous articles about the project being published in local papers, a billboard containing a traffic safety message and brochure throughout the local area and asked businesses to display materials in their establishments
- Launched a speaker's bureau that targets young drivers and community groups

## Results

The *Cape Horn Corridor Traffic Safety Project* has not only been successful in building community relationships and inter-agency collaboration, but also in making State Route 14 safer for motorists and passengers. The following results were reported in completed corridor sections around the state:

- Reduced the total number of collisions by nine percent
- Reduced the total number of injuries by 10 percent
- Reduced alcohol-related collisions by 21 percent, and fatal/disabling collisions by 30 percent

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission will evaluate the *Cape Horn Corridor Traffic Safety Project* for effectiveness approximately 18 to 24 months into the project. However, preliminary data indicates a 37 percent reduction in injury collision compared to the same time last year.