Caltrans Safety Roadside Rest Area System Improvement Team

Enhancing Highway Safety and Serving the Public:

A Recommendation for Improving California's Safety Roadside Rest Area System

This report presents the recommendations of the Caltrans Safety Roadside Rest Area System Improvement Team.

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Prepared for
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
Office of State Landscape Architecture

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Spring 1999, Caltrans convened a task force to develop a vision and recommendations for improving California's Safety Roadside Rest Area System. The Safety Roadside Rest Area System Improvement Team included representatives of the travelling public, commercial truckers, senior citizens, key state agencies, and Caltrans' staff responsible for the safety roadside rest area system. The team addressed a range of issues:

- *Significant increases in safety roadside rest area usage;*
- *Lack of a comprehensive master plan update since 1985;*
- *Inadequate facilities capacity (especially rest rooms) and need for maintenance upgrades at many rest areas;*
- *Perceived low level of priority and staffing for rest areas; and*
- *Impacts related to truck usage of the safety rest areas.*

Caltrans asked the team to develop a **blueprint** that would ensure that the safety rest area system provides the greatest possible safety benefits to the public as an integral part of the highway system. The team's efforts are especially critical given projections that California's population will increase by up to 50% in the next few decades, changing the distribution and type of traffic using the highway system. As documented in its final report, the team developed a comprehensive set of recommendations to ensure that California's safety roadside rest area system enhances the safety and comfort of California's driving public:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Raise the Priority of the Safety Rest Areas System as Integral to Highway Safety**
2. **Develop an Updated Safety Roadside Rest Area System Master Plan**
3. **Rescind the Mandatory Privatization Policy**
4. **Expand and Formalize Public and Private Partnerships**
5. **Conduct Ongoing Evaluation of Rest Area System Performance**
6. **Investigate In-Route Truck Parking Capacity Issues**
7. **Maintain Ongoing Stakeholder Involvement**
8. **Update Safety Roadside Rest Area Design Standards and Guidelines**

TEAM MEMBERS

External Representatives

American Association of Retired Persons

Automobile Club of Southern California

California Department of Mental Health

California Department of Rehabilitation

California Commission on Aging

California Division of Tourism

California Highway Patrol

California Roundtable on Parks, Recreation and Tourism

California State Automobile Association

California Trucking Association

Collier Interpretive Information Center Agency

Federal Highway Administration

Parents Against Tired Truckers

Traveler Center Services

Caltrans Representatives

District Rest Area Coordinators

Landscape Architecture

Maintenance

Engineering Service Center

Transportation Planning

Transportation System Information

Traffic Operations

Ken Steele, Retired District Director

Ralph Carhart, Team Leader, Office of State Landscape Architecture

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the recommendations of the Caltrans Safety Roadside Rest Area System Improvement Team. The team included organizations representing the travelling public, commercial truckers, senior citizens, Caltrans' staff responsible for the safety rest areas, and several state agencies who play a role in the safety rest areas.

Caltrans convened the team in January 1999 to develop a vision and recommendation for improving California's Safety Roadside Rest Area System. Caltrans charged the team with addressing a range of pressing issues:

- Significant increases in safety roadside rest area usage;
- Lack of a comprehensive master plan update since 1985;
- Inadequate facilities capacity (especially rest rooms) and need for maintenance upgrades at many rest areas;
- Perceived low level of priority and staffing for rest areas; and
- Conflicts related to truck usage of the safety rest areas.

Caltrans asked the team to develop a blueprint that would ensure that the safety rest area system provides the greatest possible safety benefits to the public as integral part of the highway system. The team's efforts are especially critical given projections that California's population will increase by up to 50% in the next decades, changing the distribution and type of traffic using the highway system.

Safety Roadside Rest Area Improvement Team

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Traveler Center Services

Caltrans Representatives

Rest Area Coordinators (all districts)

Office of State Landscape Architecture

Maintenance

Engineering Service Center

Traffic Operations

Traffic Planning

Traffic Information

Ken Steele, Retired District Director

Ralph Carhart, Team Leader, Office of State Landscape Architecture

Team members met five times during the spring of 1999 to identify issues, develop goals, and draft recommendations. These recommendations are intended for consideration by Caltrans management and the California Transportation Commission as they develop an updated policy framework for the safety roadside rest area system. After this introduction, this report includes four sections: background; issues; a future vision for the Safety Roadside Rest Area System; and goals and recommendations

II. BACKGROUND

Since 1963, Caltrans has been responsible for maintaining a system of safety roadside rest areas on the state highway system. The department developed a statewide master plan in 1962, which included 269 safety rest area units at roughly 30-mile spacing. Caltrans revised the plan in 1968 to increase the system to 278 units and again in 1974 to reduce the system to 162 units and increase the spacing to 60-mile intervals.

By 1985, the department had constructed 91 units. At that time, however, Caltrans revised the plan to a total of 104 units due to revenue constraints. Additionally, the California Transportation Commission required that the 13 remaining units be developed by the private sector with minimal state cost (the "privatization" policy).

III. ISSUES

The team has identified six key challenges to maintaining and enhancing the California rest area system's contribution to highway safety:

- Highway Accidents Due to Driver Fatigue
- Outdated Safety Rest Area Master Plan
- Ineffectiveness of the Privatization Policy
- Public Perceptions of Safety Rest Areas
- Management and Operations
- Truck Parking

Highway Accidents Due to Driver Fatigue

California's recreational, commuter, and commercial drivers are subject to increasing levels of fatigue while driving. According to estimates of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), almost 1,400 fatal crashes per year nationally were related to drowsiness/fatigue from 1989 through 1993. NHTSA estimates 100,000 crashes per year of all types are fatigue-related. A report by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program estimates that motorists' use of safety roadside rest areas have reduced accidents by 3.7%, representing a benefit to society of $148 million.

Increasing average hours worked per week and longer commutes contribute to impacts of fatigue, which include fatalities, injuries, property damage, and time lost due to accident-related congestion. Drowsy drivers are more likely to strike vehicles parked on roadway shoulders, have poor control of lane position, and drive faster. The only effective counter-measure for the traffic safety impact of sleep deprivation is adequate sleep. Rest areas address safety issues related to sleep deprivation in two ways: allowing tired drivers to sleep and allowing a safe and quick change of drivers.

> *Rest areas must be safe, secure, and accessible. We need to have adequate rest areas to continue our statewide accident reduction efforts. California's rest areas have tremendous use levels, and we need to ensure they continue serving the public's essential needs.*
>
> *Team Member Alan Wolochuk, California Highway Patrol*

Improvement team members from the American Association of Retired Persons and California's automobile clubs stress the importance of providing sufficient and appropriately spaced rest areas to meet the growing need. Their team representatives recommend that Caltrans ensure that safety rest areas have adequate local and system capacity to support driver education about fatigue related issues.

> *AARP's "55 Alive" defensive driving courses stress the importance of taking frequent breaks on long drives. We need to ensure that seniors have safe, clean opportunities to take breaks wherever they are on the State Highway system.*
>
> *Team Member Dick Crooks, American Association of Retired Persons*

Outdated Master Plan

California's safety rest area system master plan has not been comprehensively updated since 1976. In 1985, the CTC adopted the "Revised Initial System" master plan, which was premised on the demonstration of a joint economic development model, requiring private participation in safety rest area development. The majority of rest areas are between 25 and 35 years old. Facilities have become antiquated and design and features of the facilities often do not meet current needs. Many sites are physically constrained and cannot accommodate enlargement.

Since the last master plan update in 1976, a gap has developed between user needs and the system's capacity and amenities. The usage of the system has increased to approximately 100 million users per year from an estimated 35-50 million users in 1976, increasing demand for amenities and parking spaces. At the same time, land use development has shifted to ex-urban areas, which conflicts with the assumptions of the master plan. Some rest areas are located to provide motorists an opportunity to orient themselves before entering an urban area, which may become less possible given the dispersion of growth patterns.

Additionally, the profile of rest area users and their vehicles has shifted in ways that reduce the functionality of rest areas as originally designed. While data are not complete, changes have occurred in the mix of passenger vehicles, recreational vehicles, and buses using the safety roadside rest areas. There have also been changes in truck dimensions, average vehicle occupancy, and demographic profile of rest area patrons.

> *Truckers are heavy users of rest areas. This need for rest areas will only increase as California gains 15 million new residents in the coming years.*
>
> *Team Member Stan Randolph, California Trucking Association*

Most importantly, the existing master plan does not address projected changes in rest area usage. In the next twenty years, California's population is projected to increase by 15 million persons, a 50% increase. The location of this growth will most likely be in rural and ex-urban areas not anticipated by the master plan. Demographics will also change significantly, for example, in the number of older drivers, as will average occupancy per vehicle and vehicle mix. Commercial traffic will also change due to new policies, in particular NAFTA.

Ineffectiveness of Privatization Policy

In 1985, the CTC endorsed a policy to develop 13 additional rest areas through public-private joint development. Since that time, Caltrans has tried more than eight times to develop rest areas jointly with the private sector. Due to a variety of factors, each attempt failed. To date, the barriers to joint development have included local opposition to "subsidized" competition; lack of economic viability; and opposition from other state and local agencies. Caltrans has expended significant energy and resources in efforts to implement the privatization policy, with no results. In the 15 years since the privatization policy was adopted, none of the additionally planned rest areas have been built, and four safety rest areas have been closed.

A major obstacle to privatization continues to be the federal prohibition of commercial activity within access-controlled highways, including pedestrian access to and from the right of way adjacent to rest areas. The current CTC policy requires Caltrans to solicit private partners for the development of new or relocated rest areas. If there are no private bids, Caltrans may build the facility. However, the bidding process is very lengthy, uses scarce transportation resources, and delays the improvement of services to the public. This process discourages potential relocation of facilities to sites that are better able to accommodate traffic capacity. Previous experience suggests that the privatization approach has a low probability of leading to the development of a rest area system that meets California's current and future needs. Meanwhile the system falls short of providing adequate stopping opportunities.

Cleanliness, Maintenance, and Safety

To achieve the greatest safety benefit from rest areas, Caltrans needs to ensure that travelers are comfortable using them, based on their perception of rest areas as safe and clean. Despite the increase in usage over the last 20 years, some members of the public may avoid using rest areas due to maintenance problems and aging facilities.

> *Driver fatigue is a major concern to my organization, and we need safe rest areas that are free of disruptive activities and nuisances and where people feel personally secure.*
>
> *Team Member Dan Beal, Automobile Club of Southern California*

Caltrans has made significant advancements in the maintenance of the rest areas over the last 12 years. Much of the improvement has resulted from a highly successful partnership between Caltrans, the Departments of Mental Health and Rehabilitation, and Rehabilitation Facilities that employ persons with disabilities. This partnership has allowed the department to contract to receive maintenance services through an innovative program that provides entry-level job opportunities for people with disabilities. The partnership has grown incrementally, largely through the individual efforts of staff members from both departments. Members of the improvement team agree that rest areas are much cleaner as a result of this program.

> *The partnership with Rehabilitation Facilities to maintain safety rest stops has benefited California by providing the travelling public with safer and cleaner rest stops and by providing Californians with disabilities employment opportunities and career options.*
>
> *Edie Covent, State Department of Mental Health*

Management and Operations

Rest areas are the responsibility of several Caltrans programs. Divided responsibility presently results in slow responses to problems and a lack of focused attention to management of the rest areas. An associated issue is a sense within the organization that rest areas are a low-level priority. The rest areas are sometimes seen as merely an amenity provided to the public. This overlooks their critical role in supporting highway safety.

Truck Parking

Due to increasing local restrictions on truck parking and new commercial truck stops, more truckers are seeking to use rest areas to sleep on long trips. The truck-parking capacity at most rest areas, especially at night, is routinely exceeded. Overnight truck parking frequently overflows to unpaved portions of the rest areas and to rest area ramps and nearby roadway shoulders. On major rural routes where there are no rest areas or where rest areas are full, trucks often are parked overnight along the roadway shoulders and interchange ramps. Stopping opportunities along routes approaching major urban centers and the international border are particularly scarce. The lack of in-route stopping/resting opportunities near urban areas is believed to be putting more truckers into the morning commute and adding to traffic congestion.

IV. VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SAFETY ROADSIDE REST AREA SYSTEM

The rest area improvement team identified several elements for a vision of the future of rest areas. The team's overall vision is:

> *The California Safety Roadside Rest Area System is a well-planned and maintained system of attractive and safe places where drivers restore their energy and driving alertness, while gathering information and learning about California's natural and cultural resources.*

These vision points are described more fully below:

ESSENTIAL TO HIGHWAY SAFETY

Rest areas are central to Caltrans' efforts to ensure traffic safety, providing clean, safe, and comfortable places for drivers to combat driver fatigue and plan their trips safely. Because they are attractive and useful, rest areas are effective in meeting their basic goal: encouraging motorists to use a safe location off the roadway to take a break so they are safer and more alert on our roads.

SAFE, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE, AND ATTRACTIVE

Motorists have confidence that rest areas are open, convenient and safe. They are "enticed off the road" by the amenities and beauty of the rest areas, which are welcoming to families with children, and are easy to use for everyone, regardless of age, disability or language. The rest areas are safe, secure and pleasant, with lighting and other features that make them truly "24-hour" facilities.

Through adequate funding, careful maintenance, and innovative design, the rest areas are high-quality environments that showcase Caltrans' first-class system of highways. The rest areas provide picnic tables, benches, and inviting lawns that help motorists to rest and relax during long trips.

COORDINATED AND BALANCED SYSTEM

The rest areas are part of a system of stopping opportunities, which includes truck stops, visitor centers, vista points and other public facilities. The system provides rest areas where they are needed most, while taking advantage of locations where the goals of several partners can be achieved simultaneously.

Maintainable and Sustainable

The rest areas are designed with their long-term use in mind. They are easy to maintain, so they are always inviting places to stop and unwind. Innovative equipment and materials make them "vandal-free" while supporting a welcoming ambiance.

Information Centers

Travelers use the rest area to learn about local history and businesses, parks and recreation areas, and traffic and roadway conditions. Public information reflects the rest area's location, whether at California's border, near a natural treasure, or on the outskirts of a large, complex urban freeway system.

Reflective of State and Regional Themes

While there is a consistent, high-quality design concept, the rest areas match their historical, cultural, and environmental surroundings. Desert motifs, innovative energy technologies, and Native American history are all possible themes for individual rest area design.

Environmentally Sound

The rest areas are showcases of resource conservation and environmentally appropriate management. Landscape architecture and energy technologies reinforce the State of California's commitment to environmental quality.

Supportive of Economic Health

By orienting travelers to local businesses, the rest areas support the State's economic health. They also play a pivotal role in reducing the economic losses associated with traffic accidents.

Focus for Partnerships and Multiple Uses

The rest areas are the focal point of partnerships between Caltrans and other public agencies and private sector interests. Partnerships increase the number of "eyes on the street"—people whose presence adds a sense of security and who can help to prevent or respond to problems.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Safety Roadside Rest Area Improvement Team recommends the adoption of goals and actions in eight areas:

1. Raise the Priority of the Safety Rest Areas System as Integral to Highway Safety
2. Develop an Updated Roadside Rest Area System Master Plan
3. Rescind the Mandatory Privatization Policy
4. Expand and Formalize Public and Private Partnerships
5. Conduct Ongoing Evaluation of Rest Area System Performance
6. Investigate In-Route Truck Parking Capacity Issues
7. Maintain Ongoing Stakeholder Involvement
8. Update Safety Roadside Rest Area Design Standards and Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION 1: Raise the Priority of the Safety Rest Areas System as Integral to Highway Safety

Goal

Raise the priority of the safety roadside rest areas within Caltrans.

Actions

1.1 Increase the priority and focus given to the planning, design, maintenance, and operation of the safety rest area system as an integral component of Caltrans highway traffic safety system. Provide information to Caltrans headquarters and district managers on the linkage between safety rest areas and highway safety and opportunities to use rest areas as a way to improve the public's perception of the department. Plan and operate the safety rest area system to enhance highway safety.

1.2 Assign a single-focal-point manager to oversee the safety roadside rest areas in each district. This manager should have direct authority and contracting ability to operate and maintain the safety rest areas. This will ensure regular and timely management of the safety rest areas by staff with the appropriate authority to act quickly to ensure that safety rest areas meet the public's need for clean and safe rest areas. Ensure ongoing communications between the unit assigned day-to-day management responsibilities and

units with planning and design responsibilities. Rest area managers will also coordinate public input regarding the operations and management of the rest areas.

1.3 Conduct public outreach on the issue of fatigue-related traffic accidents and the availability of safety rest areas. Develop information on incidence of fatigue-related accidents.

1.4 Conduct ongoing planning for the safety rest area system in coordination with regular highway transportation planning processes at the state and regional level. This will ensure traffic safety by ensuring that safety rest area capacity and designs are updated in tandem with traffic growth, highway changes and expansions. Planning for the safety rest area system should be coordinated with highway corridor planning, construction and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop an Updated Master Plan

Goal

Develop an updated master plan for the statewide safety rest area system to ensure the system is able to address current and projected needs (within eight months of adoption of these recommendations). Establish an ongoing master planning process with a regular update cycle.

Actions

2.1 Gather all data and projections necessary for completing a master plan. This will include:

- *Current user profiles, assessments, and preferences*: Demographic profile of current users; traveler assessment of rest area deficiencies and preferred services and amenities; perceptions of highway users who do not currently use rest areas; analysis of user-group needs, e.g., persons with disabilities, seniors, auto clubs, truckers, tour bus operators, recreational users, business persons.
- *Imminent statutory and regulatory changes:* Develop master plan options for imminent or likely policy changes affecting safety roadside rest areas.
- *Future user need estimates*: Demographic and user need projections of travelers.
- *Current traffic data*: Rest area vehicle counts, average vehicle occupancy, average length of stay, origin-destination studies, vehicle mix by time of day and time of year [including all multi-axle vehicles (trucks, recreational vehicles, buses)].
- *Future traffic projections*: 5-, 10, 20- and 40-year projections of urban and traffic growth.
- *Best practices*: Survey other states for "state of the art" designs and concepts. Include users' views of best rest area features in other states as part of ongoing research.
- *Relevant materials from corridor studies.*

2.2 Update the safety roadside rest area system master plan. Establish projections of system and user needs and develop a phased plan of rehabilitation, expansion, replacement and new construction to meet these needs. Develop needs projections for 5-, 10-, 20- and 40-year planning horizons. Evaluate the existing system and identify incremental options for improvement, including expanding existing facilities in place. Include stakeholder input and review. The master plan process will serve to:

- *Address current and future user needs:* Develop master plan to address user group needs as identified by the efforts described under 2.1 above.
- *Address different highway types*: Assess the differences in rest area needs for highway types: rural (population under 5,000), urban (5,000-50,000), urbanized (over 50,000); interstate, primary, conventional, and expressway. Within each highway type assess needs of specific routes, e.g., international border crossings, routes of economic significance.
- *Develop spacing parameters*: Develop spacing parameters to achieve optimal stopping interval for rest areas serving different route types.
- *Establish sizing guidelines*: Develop guidelines for the optimal size of rest areas based on the spacing parameters and physical constraints. Consider traffic flow, pedestrian needs, aesthetic and environmental considerations, utilities and wastewater disposal.
- *Highlight security issues*: Create options that will increase user safety.
- *Establish infrastructure needs and costs:* Identify right-of-way needed to build the entire system, using 30-40 year timeframes. Identify costs associated with right of way, new construction and renovation/expansion of existing sites.
- *Identify partnership opportunities*: Identify opportunities for developing interagency and private-sector partnerships to increase rest area security and informational resources for the public. Partnerships can increase security by creating an "official presence" at rest areas. Build on current examples, e.g., California Highway Patrol-Caltrans joint operational agreement, Rehabilitation Facilities, vending, tourism and economic development activities, and Adopt-A-Rest Area.
  - *Develop outreach guidelines:* Outline process options for rest area designers, e.g., maintaining contact with local agencies and organizations to gauge interest in partnering.
  - *Identify potential partners*: Identify and gather input from potential partners on options for shared use of rest areas. Other possible public partners include agencies in the areas of natural resources, tourism, parks and recreation, economic development, safety (brake check centers), and trade (ports of entry). A special emphasis should be interstate entry points, which can serve both states and serve as to welcome people to California.
- *Ensure coordination of stopping opportunities*: Consider other roadside facilities, both public and private, to ensure a coordinated system of "stopping opportunities," e.g., vista points, truck stops, towns, parks, etc.

- *Leverage the experience and capacity of the Welcome Center Program:* Work with the Division of Tourism's Welcome Center program to include these facilities as another option for stopping. Leverage these facilities, some of which are underutilized. This program has experience with privatization. Also there is an opportunity to shift some tourists to using Welcome Centers, reducing demand at safety roadside rest areas.
- *Address operations*: Include an operations component to the master plan to provide guidance for ongoing management of rest areas. Include standards for externally controlled facilities, e.g., CHP communication "nerve centers", telephones, vending machines.

2.3 Establish a regular update cycle for the safety roadside rest area system master plan.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Rescind the Mandatory Privatization Policy

Goal

Increase the flexibility of the state to implement cost-effective and timely improvements to the safety roadside rest area system. Work with private and public sectors where feasible to improve the safety rest area system (see Recommendations 4 and 6).

Actions

3.1 Rescind the current CTC policy requiring the solicitation of private sector involvement in the development of new or relocated rest areas. Establish a new policy that allows Caltrans to build rest areas in areas identified as high priority in the updated master plan.

3.2 Establish a new policy that encourages but does not require private sector participation in developing rest areas. The policy should indicate that Caltrans will work with private sector when opportunities arise.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Expand and Formalize Public and Private Partnerships

Goal

Enhance the maintenance and security of rest areas through expanded collaboration with public and private organizations.

Actions

4.1 Establish a process for evaluating potential cooperative partnerships. Include clear criteria that potential partnership proposals must meet to be approved. Build on the contractual model developed by the Welcome Center program.

4.2 Streamline and strengthen the relationship between Caltrans maintenance and Rehabilitation Facilities. Consider establishing an official liaison and a memorandum of understanding between Caltrans and the Department of Rehabilitation. This will help to ensure that the Caltrans maintains this beneficial partnership which has dramatically improved the maintenance of the rest areas.

4.3 Consider site-specific expansion of duties performed by rehabilitation services personnel, in some cases to establish 24-hour rest area maintenance and security.

4.4 Pursue opportunities for other interagency and private partnerships (as identified in the updated master plan) to increase rest area security and informational resources for the public.

4.5 Involve local and regional stakeholders in the Project Study Report (PSR) process to gather community preferences and to identify partnership opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Conduct Ongoing Evaluation of Rest Area System Performance

Goal

Provide timely data on the performance of the safety roadside rest area system.

Action

5.1 Develop a performance measurement system that captures data on the core results, outcomes, and public benefits expected from the safety roadside rest area system. Core areas of performance include reduction of highway accidents and fatalities; customer satisfaction; and level of service.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Investigate In-Route Truck Parking Capacity Issues

Goal

Identify and develop safe in-route parking facilities meeting truckers' needs while being compatible with local/regional land uses and commercial opportunities.

Action

6.1 Convene a Caltrans task force to address the issue of truck parking. Invite stakeholders, including local agencies and truck stop developers/operators, to provide input to the study. Address both current issues concerning lack of capacity and long-term concerns. Develop options for resolving the issues. Consider innovative approaches, e.g., public-private partnerships to facilitate land acquisition for private development of facilities. Charge the task force with identifying the public benefits and costs of any recommended approaches to increasing truck parking. Involve existing Caltrans programs working with truck issues. Key issues for potential study include:

- *Truck parking:* Comparisons of parking opportunities and demand, including truck parking in municipalities, private facilities, and rest areas and including geographical and time-of-day break-downs.
- *Truck traffic patterns*: Staging patterns for entering urbanized areas.
- *Exploring dual use options*: Use of park-and-ride facilities and other facilities for night truck parking and dual use of rest area auto parking for night truck parking.

- *Alternative truck parking opportunities*: Truck stops, vista points, brake check, weigh stations, ports of entry, rest areas, CHP truck inspection facilities.
- *Facilities within urbanized cores*: Identifying options for reducing trucking impact on urban traffic due to lack of urban stopping/staging opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Maintain Ongoing Stakeholder Involvement

Goal

Obtain customer input on efforts to improve the safety roadside rest area system.

Actions

7.1 Maintain ongoing communication with statewide groups on implementation of steps to improve rest areas.

7.2 Ensure local communities and stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute to planning at the district level. Encourage district rest area improvement teams.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Update Design Standards and Guidelines

Goal

Update rest area design standards and guidelines to reflect current and projected user needs.

Actions

8.1 Establish a team to provide information to update the Highway Design Manual, the Project Development Manual and other manuals. Develop a regular update process to ensure design guidelines respond to changing circumstances. Include Caltrans design, maintenance and operations staff and external stakeholders. Ensure that development of standards is open to input from user groups.

8.2 Create a "design checklist" of elements to be addressed in developing each rest area site. Develop models for architectural and site planning layouts. Create a consistent underlying architectural design for California, while allowing regional variation. Key issues requiring attention include:

- Rehabilitation of Existing Facilities
- Continuity of Service During Construction
- Master Site Plan, Geometrics, Wastewater Disposal and Right of Way
- Safety, Security, and Facilities for Rest Area Management and Law Enforcement
- Maintainability and Facilities for Maintenance Crews
- Facilities for Permitted Activities (Business Enterprise Program, Newspapers, etc.)
- Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
- Signs, Public Information, Telephones and Language Needs

QUESTION	WILKIE EB	WILKIE WB	COALINGA NB	COALINGA SB	WESTLEY NB	ALISO NB	BUCKMAN SP	Totals	Percentage
Should the State fund and operate a system of rest areas?								348	
yes	72	92	61	27	47	27	16	342	98%
no	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	2%
Should rest areas be privately funded and operated?								329	
yes	2	8	4	7	8	4	4	37	11%
no	65	79	58	21	37	22	10	292	89%
Are there enough rest areas in California?								345	
yes	34	20	27	13	14	11	6	125	36%
no	38	68	39	15	32	17	11	220	64%
Should they be closer together?								347	
yes	37	68	36	14	35	17	18	225	65%
no	35	21	27	14	10	9	6	122	35%
Do you prefer stopping in a rest area or a commercial facility to take a break from driving?								328	
rest area	58	79	8	19	38	20	15	237	72%
commercial facility	11	13	54	2	5	5	1	91	28%
How long do you stay at a rest area?								352	
under 5 minutes	0	8	0	0	0	1	0	9	3%
5 to 10 minutes	13	17	16	2	13	4	3	68	19%
11 to 15 minutes	11	15	14	6	13	5	5	69	20%
16 to 20 minutes	16	11	6	4	6	5	2	50	14%
21 to 30 minutes	13	20	14	4	10	7	2	70	20%
31 to 45 minutes	1	1	2	1	2	0	0	7	2%
46 to 60 minutes	9	6	3	2	5	3	0	28	8%
61 to 139 minutes	2	3	0	3	2	0	1	11	3%
2 to 3 hours	0	2	1	1	4	2	2	12	3%
more than 3 hours, but less than 5 hours	0	1	3	0	2	0	1	7	2%
more than 5 hours	1	5	5	3	5	1	1	21	6%
In what type of vehicle are you traveling today:								349	
car	43	67	42	15	21	18	8	214	61%
car/trailer	4	2	4	0	3	0	0	13	4%
RV	2	8	2	2	5	1	3	23	7%
bus	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0%
truck/trailer	9	16	17	10	19	9	5	85	24%
motorcycle	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	4%
How far have you traveled today?								349	
0 to 50 miles	2	10	2	1	1	14	2	32	9%
51 to 100 miles	11	39	3	0	3	13	7	76	22%
101 to 200 miles	29	16	21	10	18	7	3	104	30%
201 to 300 miles	21	11	18	11	15	1	1	78	22%
301 to 400 miles	6	5	13	2	8	0	4	38	11%
401 to 500 miles	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	7	2%
more than 500 miles		5	5	3	0	1	0	14	4%
How much further will you go today?								316	
0 to 50 miles	8	3	4	2	6	8	1	32	10%
51 to 100 miles	23	6	7	2	11	3	6	58	18%
101 to 200 miles	9	39	34	17	11	9	3	122	39%
201 to 300 miles	11	26	9	6	4	2	2	60	19%
301 to 400 miles	4	7	2	0	1	1	4	19	6%
401 to 500 miles	3	3	2	0	4	3	0	15	5%
more than 500 miles	5	1	2	0	2	0	0	10	3%

Caltrans Safety Roadside Rest Area 1999 User Survey Results

QUESTION	WILKIE EB	WILKIE WB	COALINGA NB	COALINGA SB	WESTLEY NB	ALISO NB	BUCKMAN SP	Totals	Percentage
Do rest areas have enough parking spaces?									
Truckers:								81	
yes	1	5	9	6	8	3	3	35	43%
no	8	9	8	4	9	6	2	46	57%
All others:								287	
yes	51	59	46	14	45	15	12	242	84%
no	13	16	5	4	4	3	0	45	16%
Should rest areas include a place for truckers to sleep and perhaps spend the night in their trucks?									
Truckers:								84	
yes	9	14	16	8	17	8	5	77	92%
no	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	7	8%
All others:								253	
yes	54	61	42	14	21	16	10	218	86%
no	8	11	5	4	4	3	0	35	14%
Should there be separate rest areas for truck/trailers?									
Truckers:								92	
yes	4	11	12	4	12	8	3	54	59%
no	5	3	4	6	17	1	2	38	41%
All others:								269	
yes	32	51	21	8	14	12	6	144	54%
no	29	39	24	8	13	7	5	125	46%
Do you feel safe in the rest area during daytime?								349	
yes	70	91	63	28	49	27	17	345	99%
no	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	4	1%
Do you feel safe in the rest area at night?								305	
yes	37	41	32	16	30	13	9	178	58%
no	27	37	27	7	11	13	5	127	42%
Should there be a special emergency telephone line available in each rest area?								350	
yes	70	88	61	27	49	28	17	340	97%
no	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	10	3%
Should there be security people in each rest area?								336	
yes	39	44	42	18	21	20	13	197	59%
no	32	42	19	10	26	7	3	139	41%
Should there be a manager/host at each rest area to assist visitors?								341	
yes	28	29	28	12	14	13	9	133	39%
no	44	59	36	15	31	15	8	208	61%
Are rest area information displays adequate?								350	
yes	67	79	63	25	45	25	16	320	91%
no	6	12	3	2	4	3	0	30	9%
Should there be vending machines at all rest areas?								282	
yes	62	0	62	23	38	24	14	223	79%
no	10	24	6	5	8	3	3	59	21%

Caltrans

California Department of Transportation

Rest Area User Survey

Should the State fund and operate a system of rest areas?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should rest areas be privately funded and operated?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Are there enough rest areas in California?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should they be closer together?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Do you prefer stopping in a... ❑ rest area, or in a... ❑ commercial facility to take a break from driving?

How long do you stay at a rest area? ____ hours ____ minutes

In what type of vehicle are you traveling today?.... ❑ car, ❑ car/trailer, ❑ RV, ❑ bus, ❑ truck/trailer

How far have you traveled today? ____ miles How much further will you go today? ____ miles

Do rest areas have enough parking spaces?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should rest areas include a place for truckers to sleep and perhaps spend the night in their trucks?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should there be separate rest areas for truck/trailers?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Do you feel safe in the rest area during daytime? ❑ Yes ❑ No ..... at night? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should there be a special emergency telephone line available in each rest area? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should there be security people in each rest area? ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should there be a manager/host at each rest area to assist visitors?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Are rest area information displays adequate?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Should there be vending machines at all rest areas?..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Please use the other side to add any comments you would like Caltrans to consider?

***THANK YOU** for completing this survey. Your opinions and comments are highly valued. They will be used by Caltrans to plan improvements to the Safety Roadside Rest Area System.*