

COMMUNITY PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TRAINING

Eureka
April 26th, 2010

Eureka

The City of Eureka is located in Humboldt County, Northern California, and is a small coastal town. Eureka is currently home to 25,000 personsⁱ, is 9.5 square miles of land (with an additional 5 water square miles)ⁱⁱ and has an average population density of 2,660 persons per square mile. Eureka remains a small town compared to many California Cities, and has also been growing significantly over the past 20 years. Despite the recent growth, Eureka is very architecturally and culturally historical, and has made an effort to preserve and rejuvenate the old historical downtown area. California state highway 101 cuts directly through downtown and old town Eureka posing many conflict with local traffic and pedestrians.

From 2003 to 2007 Eureka has had 28 pedestrian-auto collisions resulting in 19 injuries and 9 fatalities, many of which were along or near highway 101.ⁱⁱⁱ Community members in Eureka are concerned with driver and pedestrian behavior and are interested in creating a united community education campaign that addresses pedestrian safety from multi-disciplinary and tailored approaches.

Process & Instigating factor

The City of Eureka was selected as a training site for a variety of factors. Namely, data from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) has ranked the City of Eureka as number 2 for total fatalities and injuries involving pedestrians and number 3 for total crashes involving alcohol (compared to cities of similar size).^{iv}

In addition to the OTS ranking, the City of Eureka has a talented group of professionals already working together to improve safety on Eureka's roadways. Being a fairly small jurisdiction, the City, County, and community based organization staff are able to work closely with one another on a regular basis. These existing relationships were evident throughout the planning process and helped to get everyone on board from the beginning in developing the workshop and planning processes. The partners are clearly committed to a Eureka-specific pedestrian safety movement, and this workshop provided a platform from which they can move forward.

Existing Conditions (data)

Pedestrian collision data analyzed by age categories identifies populations that may be at greater risk of pedestrian collision. From years 2003-2007, fatality rates are the highest for adults aged 40-45 (see Figure 1); there is also a spike in fatality rates for older adults aged 75-79. Severe injury rates for 2003-2007 were highest those aged 15-30, followed by a slight decrease and a subsequent rise in adults aged 45-54 (see Figure 2). This data shows that while pedestrian safety is a concern for all age groups, mid-aged adults are at the highest risk for fatality and younger adults are at the highest risk for injury in Eureka.

Figure 1

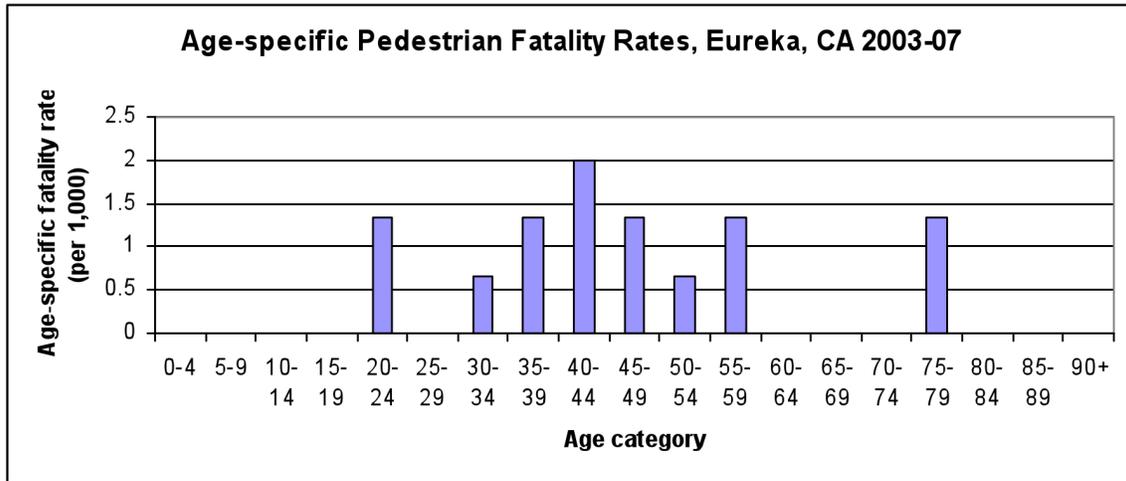
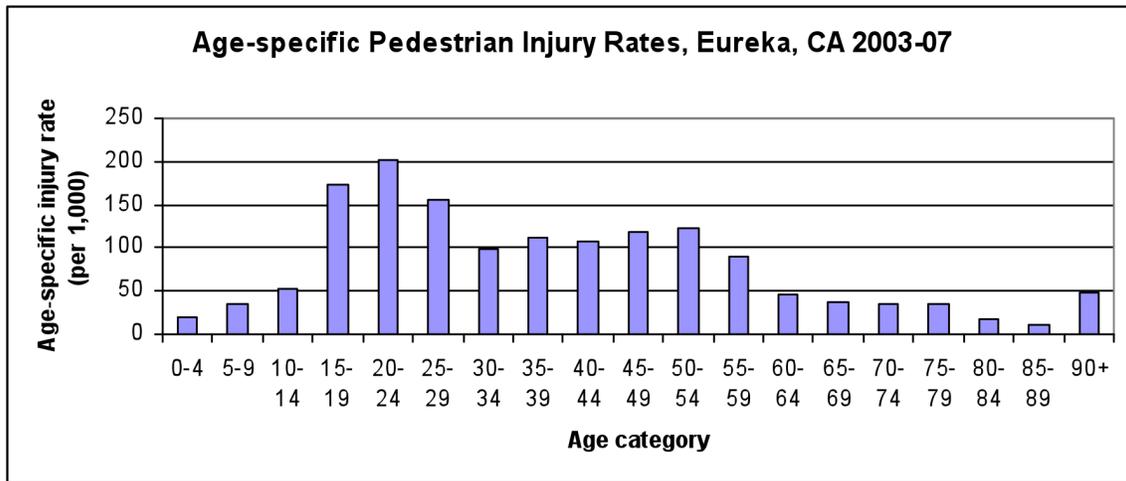


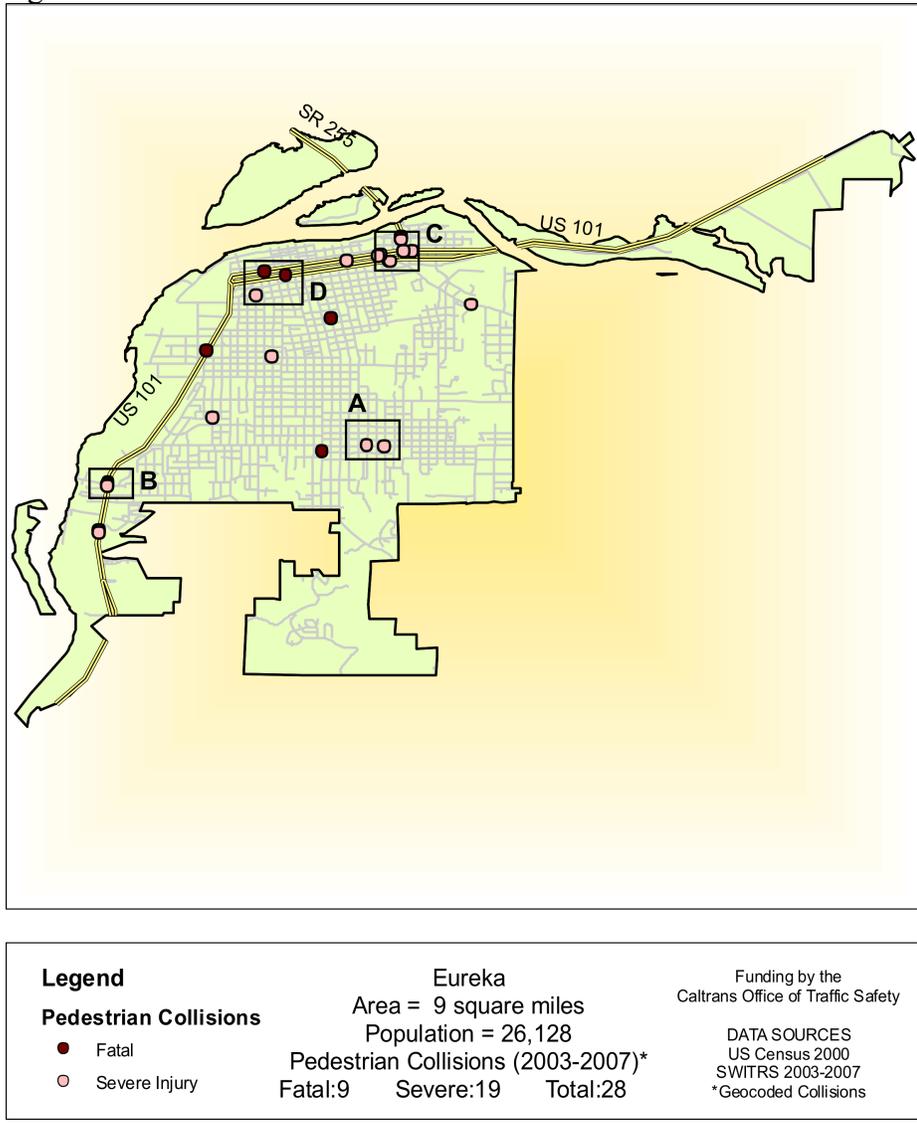
Figure 2



Areas that have been highlighted as of particular concern to pedestrians in Eureka from the geocoded analysis include: (see map below in Figure 3)

- A) L St and Harris St
- B) Redwood Hwy and Truesdale St
- C) R St and 4th St
- D) W 5th ST and D St

Figure 3



Community Involvement

Persons who were actively involved in making the Eureka training a success include:

- Jen Rice, Co-Director, Natural Resources Services Division of Redwood Community Action Agency
- Sheila Parrot, City of Eureka Engineering Department, Traffic/Signals Division
- Dawn Artedge, Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services
- Dan Moody, City of Eureka, Traffic Operations
- Ralph Martinelli, Chief, District 1 Traffic Safety Office, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Gary Whitmer, Sr. Traffic Officer, Eureka Police Department

Media & Outreach

The Eureka planning team conducted extensive outreach to the local community. Flyers were posted at local grocery stores, libraries, and community centers. The flyer was also

sent out to several email lists that included community based organizations, community leaders, and professionals. Public Services Announcements were sent to over ten local newspapers and radio and television stations. Targeted outreach was conducted to local merchants, senior centers, the fire department, social services and schools in the area. The event was posted on the public health community calendars and the City's news webpage: <http://www.ci.eureka.ca.gov/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=267&TargetID=1>.

Training Day

The Eureka Community Pedestrian Safety Training took place on the evening (5-9 pm) of Monday April 26th at the Wharfinger Building #1 Marina Way, Eureka, CA. Participants began arriving about 4:50 pm, and the workshop commenced at 5:10 pm. The workshop was conducted in English, and approximately 30 persons were in attendance. Many of the participants represented both community resident and city/county professional. Several members of the Transportation Safety Commission were also present.

Michael Knight, Assistant City Manager-Operations, introduced the workshop and Councilmember Linda Atkins on behalf of the City.

Several of the local professionals spoke during the presentation in their area of expertise. Sheila Parrot, City of Eureka Engineering Department spoke on behalf of many of the engineering countermeasure currently in place in Eureka. Ralph Martinelli, Caltrans spoke about recent work on and around Highway 101. Gary Whitmer, Sr. Traffic Officer, Eureka Police Department spoke about the gravity of pedestrian safety in Eureka and the current enforcement and education efforts the police department is working on. And lastly, Jen Rice, Redwood Community Action Agency and Dorina Espinoza, Health Education Specialist, Public Health Department engaged participants by sharing some of the existing community efforts and work that is being done and how participants can become involved.

Unfortunately, rainy weather prohibited the participants from taking a walk assessment as part of the workshop. However, this allowed for ample time for in depth small group work and a lengthier large group discussion of next steps and priorities.

Identified priorities*

Participants broke out into three small groups to identify priorities. Two of the small groups had a focus on developing an educational message/campaign, and one group was focused on design issues. All of the groups identified innovative strategies to improve pedestrian safety in Eureka. After the small group work and larger group discussion the priorities that rose to the top and reflected the sentiment of all the groups included:

- A community-wide educational campaign unique to Eureka. The campaign can include targeted messaging with photos of locals. Flags, banners, flyers can be used and posted, hung, and distributed at targeted locations in Eureka.

* For full list of identified priorities see final report.

- Community crossing guards at targeted locations. Community residents can partner with local Safe Routes to Schools efforts and senior volunteers to work on a larger scale community crossing guard program.
- Expand existing and develop new partnerships with players such as: Public Health, Caltrans, Transportation Safety Commission, HumPAL, and Schools.

The overall sentiment of the group was to establish one message, with a few target populations (message can be tailored). The messaging structure and the momentum garnered in this workshop shall be housed in the framework of the Transportation Safety Commission in partnership with the Safe Routes to School Task Force, both with upcoming meetings. Many of the participants present and the workshop made the commitment to continue working on the pedestrian safety messaging movement.

Evaluation

Results from the evaluation of the Eureka Community Pedestrian Safety Training were overwhelmingly positive. A total of 13 evaluations were collected and tabulated.

General & knowledge/skills gained

The majority (92 percent) of respondents stated that the training workshop met their expectations and were satisfied with the quality of the training. When asked about the most valuable learning of the day respondents identified specific learning's such as "Community coordination", developing a strategy that is "Uniquely Eureka", and "Connecting with new people interested in pedestrian safety".

Many of our attendees were both community residents and local professionals with a substantial knowledge base in pedestrian safety. The evaluations illustrated that the majority of participants reported that they acquired new knowledge about pedestrian safety best practices (69 percent), a new understanding about the rules of the road for pedestrians (62 percent), and that their behavior as a pedestrian is likely to change after the training (62 percent). While these numbers do represent the majority of participants, it is likely that the existing professional knowledge has impacted a true gain in pedestrian safety knowledge during the course of this training.

However, 100 percent of participants reported that they have an increase in confidence to work with other community members on pedestrian safety priorities, the training provided participants with new skills to promote pedestrian safety, and that the pedestrian priorities reflect the needs of the community, and they are committed to continuing to promote safe walking and pedestrian safety in their community. 82 percent of the respondents also stated that they are now more familiar with the community professionals to contact regarding further work on pedestrian safety.

Logistics

92 percent of attendees felt that there was an adequate length of time for the training and all of the participants felt that the location was good for the training. One participant noted, "the beginning slide show was too long. The energy and focus was best in small

groups”, while another was disappointed that it was raining because and stated: “I missed the walk - would've really liked to have done that”

Presenters

Participants felt unanimously (100 percent) that the presenters were knowledgeable and that there was adequate time provided for discussion. 92 percent felt that the training was tailored to meet the needs of the community. There was some sentiment that a couple of small breaks would have been good to break up the presentation, but that the presenter was comfortable and created a casual environment.

Complementary efforts

Humboldt Partnership for Active Living (HumPAL), www.humpal.org/

- HumPAL is a coalition of individuals and organizations with a common interest in improving Humboldt County residents' opportunities to integrate and increase physical activity into their daily lives. There are several programs that HumPAL supports including Safe Routes to Schools, Healthy Communities trainings, and Healthy Policy.

Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA), <http://www.rcaa.org/>

- The RCAA is a locally based, private non-profit organization that provides a wide range of services to low and moderate-income residents of Humboldt County. The RCAA staffs and works very closely with HumPAL.

Lessons Learned

- Flexibility to adapt during the workshop is extremely important. The Eureka workshop had unfortunate rainy weather, deterring the group from the walk assessment. Fortunately, the group had much to discuss in small groups, but having flexibility in the schedule as well as flexible facilitators can make for a successful workshop regardless of unexpected changes. In the event of not being able to go on the walk assessment, it is helpful to have knowledge of challenging pedestrian locations that the group is likely familiar with to discuss. Or alternatively, the group can share in more detail, concerns and interests that have brought them to this workshop and interested in pedestrian safety.
- The evaluations suggest that the small group time was the most valuable. This will be considered in subsequent workshop, because the Eureka workshop had much more time allocated to the small group discussions due to the walk assessment rainout.
- Extensive engagement with local professionals during the planning stage makes for an extremely tailored and city-personalized presentation. This is important when reaching out to a new audience, as it ensures that the presentation materials reflect the existing conditions and experiences local residents know and face on a daily basis.

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 Population Estimates, <http://factfinder.census.gov>

ⁱⁱ City of Santa Barbara website. http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Business/Demographic/City_Area/

ⁱⁱⁱ SWITRS, 2003-2007

^{iv} California Office of Traffic Safety Rankings. www.ots.ca.gov