



SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT

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December 18, 2020

Marcia "Marcie" Ellis, Chair
Traffic Matters
Action Committee for Oak Creek Canyon

Dear Marcia,

It was a pleasure meeting with you to discuss concerns in Oak Creek Canyon. We appreciate your efforts and the fact that you have requested input from Sedona Fire District (SFD) regarding our concerns and how we might work together to improve the safety of our visitors and residents.

Several things can either increase or reduce the time it takes the SFD to respond to an emergency. Response times can have an impact on the outcome of an emergency and in serious calls, such as heart attacks and strokes, may even directly affect a patient's ability to survive. One component of our overall response time that is beyond our control is traffic.

Traffic affects the effectiveness of our response in several ways and while it is a challenge in many areas of the district, the conditions in Oak Creek Canyon present the most significant impact. The additional guardrails have contributed to more pedestrians walking down the roadway, there is a lack of compliance with parking restrictions, and it is common for vehicles to park partially within at least one lane of traffic and often on both sides of the road blocking both north and southbound lanes.

Another dangerous situation the traffic and congestion would compound is a wildland fire. One example is a fire below the switchbacks that spreads quickly enough to either affect the vehicles on the highway above with flames or create smoke conditions that lead to a crash. For the safety of emergency responders and the public, we support and encourage a "capacity study" in order to develop and implement a valid determination of the numbers of vehicles and persons that can safely evacuate should a fire occur in the Canyon. If conducted by appropriate land management and traffic engineers, it should also help identify conditions that impede response.

Once again, thank you for allowing us to voice our concerns.

Respectfully,

Jon Trautwein
Fire Chief
Sedona Fire District

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