

RAMONA CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY EVACUATION CONCERNS

HISTORY - The community of Ramona has experienced two devastating episodes where wildfires have caused loss of life and property.

The 2003 Cedar fire, the largest fire to ever burn in California, tragically killed 14 and destroyed thousands of structures. Evacuation efforts in Ramona resulted in roadway gridlock.

The 2007 Witchcreek fire, caused 2 deaths, and destroyed over a thousand residential structures. Evacuation efforts in Ramona resulted in roadway gridlock.

**THESE FACTORS REMAIN DAILY IN THE MINDS
OF EVERY RAMONIAN**

And finally, in the last week of March 2019 **NEWSCASTS** brought attention on various fire-risk communities within California revealed the following:

“...with reports related to evacuation routes problems – **Ramona has two few evacuation routes for their population.**”

“Ramona is listed 6th worst in California when it comes to population-to-evacuation route ratios.”

THESE ARTICLES WERE REMINDERS THAT THE ISSUE OF FIRE AND EVACUATIONS REMAINS FOR RAMONA.....

In the summer of 2018, the Ramona Community Planning Group (RCPG) began efforts to address community concerns regarding the historical roadway gridlock as identified above.

An AdHoc committee was formed to address SR-67 in particular as it affects daily mobility, safety and evacuation constrains, and the eventual need for a permanent solution to the SR-67 roadway limitations.

This paper focuses on the factors associated with the evacuation research and actions taken.

References were collected, and direct efforts were undertaken to gain San Diego County, CalTrans, and SANDAG attention regarding the Ramona community concerns.

**REFERENCES RELATING TO RAMONA CA
EVACUATION HISTORY/STUDIES/CONCLUSIONS:**

- A. CALIFORNIA FIRE SIEGE THE STORY
OCTOBER 21 – NOVEMBER 4, 2003 (Cedar Fire
Information Extractions)**

- B. The 2003 San Diego County Fire Siege Fire Safety
Review (as presented to the Governor’s Blue Ribbon
Fire Commission) – an analysis of the area response
to the Cedar Fire of 2003 (pages 10 to 21)**

- C. 2008 San Diego grand Jury Report: The Fire Next
Time – Will We Be Ready (May 29 2008)**

- D. THE FIRE OUTSIDE MY WINDOW (2013) by
Sandra Millers Younger (SEPARATE DOCUMENT)**

- E. AFTER ACTION REPORT-OCTOBER 2007
WILDFIRES CITY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSE:
SUMMARY OF 95 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- F. Ramona Community Planning Area
Community Protection and Evacuation Plan October
2005, revised January 2011 and May 2014**

- G. Valley Center Evacuation Route Study Final
Report August 2012**

- H. San Diego County Emergency Operations Plan –
September 2018 Annex Q, Evacuations**

I.

https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.10news.com/news/local-news/three-san-diego-areas-listed-as-worst-for-fleeing-a-wildfire%3f_amp=true

with reports related to evacuation routes problems – Ramona has two few evacuation routes for their population.

J. How we analyzed California's wildfire evacuation routes – Evacuations, April 27, 2019 = Ramona is listed 6th worst in California when it comes to population-to-evacuation route ratios

K. Ramona Community Planning Group letters of September 23, 2018 and March 20, 2019; and

L. County of San Diego, Department of Public Works, Transportation Division, Traffic Engineering Section email dated May 21, 2019

M. Many Fire-Prone California towns don't plan for evacuations... (PARADISE, CALIFORNIA AP)

N. READY, SET, GO Your Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide

This list of references is, by no means, all encompassing BUT it does serve as a representative sampling for an overall review.

Almost all focus on the management of information and facilities, or failures thereof.

Only one reference: San Diego County Emergency Operations Plan – September 2018, Annex Q -, Evacuations addresses generic factors regarding key evacuation principles and actual roads capacities needs to be established as a core factor in any area evacuation plan....

This document, on page 8 under "...principles (that) should be considered when making evacuation decisions: **“Reduce the number of people who must evacuate and the distance they must travel to seek safe refuge.”**

Next, this document on page 16, cites a KEY FORMULA FOR DETERMINING EVACUATION TIMES...

$$\text{Evacuation Times} = \frac{\text{Evacuation Population Average}}{\text{Vehicle Occupancy} \times \text{Roadway capacity}}$$

Roughly, **and very unscientifically**, applying this formula to some very general Ramona factors, such as the generally accepted population figures used for Ramona as about 31,000 (with about 10,000 being in

the San Diego Country Estates), and estimating that the 'average vehicle occupancy would be two, then the upper figure would be about 15,555.

So what is the estimated road capacity, for say Highway-67??

So let us say that the Highway-67 length from Highland Valley/Dye Road intersection to Poway Road is 6 ½ miles or 34,320 feet. And then let us say that the average vehicle length is 16 feet and include a space of 9 feet per vehicle, for a total space per vehicle of 25 feet... That means that Highway-67 can only accommodate 1,373 vehicles...

Even if we consider that Highway-67 has about 20% double lanes, which would add about 6,864 feet of traffic lanes for vehicles; this would only add about 275 more standing still vehicles for a total of about 1,648 vehicles....

15,555

Thus the 'evacuation time' would be $\frac{15,555}{1,648}$ or

9.44 hours

With these very rough figures it is clear that SR-67 cannot come near to any vehicle evacuation needs for the Ramona Community.

AND this information represents the most basic, **AND UNARGUEABLE**, an unscientific application of the County formula; but it begs the actual application by Certified Traffic Engineers!! What is the true evacuation capacity of SR-67?, of Hwy-78?, and how long would it take to evacuate Ramona?

And what about the cited principle: **“Reduce the number of people who must evacuate and the distance they must travel to seek safe refuge.”**

The Ramona Community Planning Group is approaching the issue in two ways....

First, with the recognition that we have **‘CURRENT ROADWAY FACTORS’** that must be recognized and mitigated as much as possible to lower LIFE SAFETY RISKS...

Secondly, to do everything possible to resolve, in the nearest time-frame, the long-standing **FUTURE ROADWAY INADEQUACIES** that has a daily negative impact on the citizens of Ramona in the areas of mobility, safety and evacuations...

Both efforts can be best served, we believe, by the diligent pursuit of factual, scientific, evidence based

information regarding the current roadway inadequacies.....

Efforts towards the first area - 'CURRENT ROADWAY FACTORS' that must be recognized and mitigated as much as possible to lower LIFE SAFETY RISKS – **are proving somewhat successful.**

The continued presence by various Planning Group members at both the SANDAG Transportation Committee and at the SANDAG meetings has heightened concerns, we believe, regarding the Ramona roadway constraints..

In addition, various conversations with CalTrans has led to their hosting a recent Table-Top exercise, confirming their dedication to resolving, everywhere possible in a near term fashion, some of the Ramona concerns...

For example, they recognized the necessity for SR-67 to develop, in emergency situations, a three lane vehicle capacity and in this regard are looking at expanding a ½ mile section to ensure this goal is possible.

The attendees at the recent Table-Top exercise exhibited the attention and dedication that exists among all parties – CHP, Cal-FIRE, PIO, CALTRANS, and others to ensure that any evacuation decisions for Ramona will receive the best support possible.

Continued dialog between the RCPG and CALTRANS will only improve both the current and future opportunities to resolve the SR-67 concerns.

In this regard, the Ramona Community Planning Groups has sent two letters seeking “the completed results from any scientific studies or traffic modeling programs that have been done regarding the peak vehicle traffic capacity per time frame for SR-67 and Hwy 78, Highland Valley Road and Wildcat Canyon Road.”, one to CALTRANS and the other to the County of San Diego.

ON May 21st, 2019 the RCPG received an email from the County of San Diego, Department of Public Works, Transportation Division, Traffic Engineering Section and signed by Mr. Richard Chin.

It states: "...we have been unable to locate any specific past studies or traffic modeling assessing the peak vehicle traffic flow capacity for SR-67, Hwy-78, Highland Valley Road, or Wildcat Canyon Road"

No response has been received from CALTRANS as yet but this is being researched.

The continued pursuit of any and all such studies will be continued by the RCPG as they will serve as a basis for justifying all requests for enhancing the capacity of SR-67...

to address both the 'CURRENT ROADWAY FACTORS',

as well as the 'FUTURE ROADWAY INADEQUACIES'

FACTS, AND ONLY FACTS CAN WIN THE DAY!!