

1. INTRODUCTION



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1. Hoopa Culture

The Hupa people (*Natinixwe* - pronounced Nah-tin-o-whey) have lived along the Trinity River in Northern California for over 10,000 years. Located in the Hoopa Valley (*Natinook*), the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation is the largest Indian Reservation in California, encompassing twelve square miles of rugged timberland and the Hoopa Valley.

Since becoming federally-recognized in 1876, the Hoopa Valley Tribe has successfully set into motion a plan for its future including cultural implementation, governmental stability, financial security, and a prosperous membership. Recent accomplishments include the certification of the Hoopa Valley Aggregate and Concrete Plant and the inauguration of the Hoopa Modular Building Enterprise in furthering the mission of the Tribe.

The Hupa people have always been, and will always be within the arms of the mountains that surround the beautiful Hoopa Valley. A common interpretation among the Hupa languages says that “Hoopa is where the Trails Return.”

Population

According to the US Census for 2000, the total population of Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation is 2,633, of which 84.7 percent are Native American most of which are from the Hoopa Valley Tribe (*Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000*, U.S. Census Bureau).



It is said that Hoopa is where the Trails Return.





Highway 96 is the principal road within the Hoopa.

2. State Highway 96

California State Highway 96 bisects the Reservation in a general north-south direction, following the meandering Trinity River. Highway 96 is both the principal road within the Valley and chief access route to areas outside the Reservation. This stretch of highway presents a number of operational concerns related to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicle operators on and near the Reservation. In the last 10 years, 163 accidents, including several fatalities, have occurred on Highway 96 through Hoopa.

Traffic Volumes

Caltrans monitors Highway 96 traffic volumes by Post Mile from the southern limit of the Hoopa Reservation to the northern limit. Current data available is from 2004.



Vicinity Map

2004 Caltrans Traffic Volumes¹

Post Mile	Highway 96	Back		AADT*	Ahead		AADT*
		Peak Hour	Peak. Mo.		Peak Hour	Peak. Mo.	
10.95	South Limits Hoopa	380	4,000	3,700	350	3700	3400
12.83	North Limits Hoopa	240	2,600	2,400	220	2800	2400

¹ 2004 Traffic Volumes, California Department of Transportation

*Average Annual Daily Traffic

Traffic Collisions

Traffic collision data collected from Caltrans along State Highway 96 from 2000 to 2003 for Post Mile 10.95 (south limits of Hoopa Reservation) to Post Mile 12.83 (north limits) revealed a total of 28 accidents. Of these 28 accidents, there were 2 fatalities and 11 injuries. Traffic collisions from 2000-2004 are mapped for sections of Highway 96 encompassed by the study area (Appendix A).

During the period between 1996-2000, Caltrans reported a total of 31 collisions, with 1 fatality and 18 injuries. During the 1991-1996 period (as reported in the 1996-2001 Hoopa Valley Transportation Plan) a total of 132 collisions were reported.

In the 1991-1996 Reservation Transportation Plan, fifteen percent of reported collisions involved drivers that had been drinking or were under the influence of drugs. 1996-2000 data indicated this figure to be 19 percent. No other major patterns emerge from a review of this data.

Critical Injury Cluster Sites

In 2001, the Tribe's Injury & Violence Prevention Program identified critical injury cluster sites within the Hoopa Valley:

1. Highway 96 near the Seven Tribes Trading Post - Two single motor vehicle v. pedestrian fatality, one double motor vehicle v. pedestrian fatality, and one motor vehicle v. bicycle collisions resulting in serious injury. Contributing factors included motor vehicle speeds at or above 55 miles per hour with only gravel shoulders for pedestrian or bicycle use; area of congestion children playing, pedestrian and bicycle traffic; lack of lighting and warning of children playing.





Stick games © Marlette Grant-
Jackson 2003

2. Highway 96 at Trinity River Bridge - North and southbound motor vehicles involved in rear end and broadside collisions resulting in two known fatalities and injuries; numerous serious collisions on approaches to the Bridge from adjacent intersections. Contributing factors include excessive speed; congestion at intersections on both ends of the Bridge (River Road and Tish Tang Road); poor sightline from Tish Tang Road; no lighting and no turning lanes.
3. Highway 96 through downtown Hoopa from old Club Hoopa to Laura's Kitchen - Both Caltrans data and anecdotal evidence indicate numerous motor vehicle v. pedestrian collisions resulting in 3 known fatalities. Contributing factors include excessive speed; high pedestrian traffic on both sides of the Highway; inadequate lighting; business access points on both sides with no access or cross controls.

All of these cluster sites are along Highway 96 and within the jurisdiction of Caltrans, District 1.

3. Environmental Justice Grant: Context Sensitive Planning Program

In 2002, on behalf of the Hoopa Valley Tribe, the Local Government Commission submitted a grant proposal to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) under the Environmental Justice: Context Sensitive Planning for Communities Grant Program. A grant was awarded in 2003 becoming the first for a Native American Tribe in California. Implementation began in November 2004.

Context sensitive planning considers and is responsive to local community needs and circumstances. The grant provided funds to conduct planning to improve transportation mobility, access, equity and quality of life.

The grant-funded project consists of working with tribal leaders, Tribal Roads Department and Planning Departments and residents and businesses in the Reservation through an intensive design charrette (workshop) process, resulting in a plan to improve the safety of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

The purpose of the grant-funded project was to involve the community in crafting design solutions to traffic safety problems, specifically the "critical injury cluster sites" along Highway 96, while supporting existing community development efforts. The project is consistent with economic development, tourism planning, and injury prevention programs and other efforts to improve the quality of life currently underway in the Hoopa Valley.

An approximate 1/2-mile stretch of State Highway 96 from Pine Creek Road through the downtown area to Hostler Field Road was the focus of the study.

Without a vision there is no dream.

Without a plan there is no hope.

Without a team there is no achievement.



In this view, the study area extends from Pine Creek Road (south of the Trinity River Bridge) to Hostler Field Road.

