Designing Positive Protection Systems for Work Zones

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Learning Objectives for This Module

- Define terms associated with positive protection and attributes.
- Provide alternatives to positive protection and assist designers in considering whether they are appropriate for site conditions.
- Describe barrier crashworthiness concepts and performance characteristics.
- Distinguish between various types of barrier systems.
- Discuss criteria for selecting appropriate work zone positive protection systems for site conditions.
- Discuss the decision making process on whether positive protection should be incorporated in the work zone design.

What is Work Zone Positive Protection?



Source: FHWA

Work Zone Hardware Barrier Systems that:

- Decelerates, stops or safely redirects errant vehicles from entering work area.
- Reduces risk of serious injury or death to occupants of errant vehicles.
- Successfully passed crash test standards for site conditions where barrier system is installed.

Positive Protection vs Drums, Cones, & Barricades

Positive Protection

- Physical containment or redirection of errant vehicles
- Relatively expensive
- Repositioning usually requires lifting equipment
- Requires considerable width for device and room for deflection.

Drums, Barricades, & Cones

- Visually guide road users
- Relatively inexpensive
- Quick to reposition as work progresses
- Requires only width of device



Barrier vs Channelizer Devices

Barrier

- Crash-tested to provide positive protection
- Requires end treatments
- Often heavy and difficult to move

TL2 Barrier

Source: SafeRoads

Channelizer

- Crashworthy
- Used mainly on urban streets to:
 - Delineate travelled way
 - Designate road space allocated to nonmotorized traffic
 - Discourage bystanders from entering work areas
- Light weight and portable



Source: Wikimedia Commons/Jean Housen

Positive Protection Work Zone Benefits



- Can prevent traffic from reaching steep drop-offs or fixed objects close to the travelled way.
- Separates workers, pedestrians, or bicyclists from motorized vehicles.
- Separates traffic streams moving in opposite directions or different speeds.
- Can help shield partially completed work from traffic.

Negative Aspects of Positive Protection

- Barrier itself is a fixed object obstacle.
- Often significant deployment cost.
- Installation and removal time expose installers to traffic hazards.
- Some systems are difficult to reposition.
- Requires space that may narrow travel lanes which can reduce traffic capacity.
- Requires breaks in barrier runs to provide access to cross-roads and driveways.



Source: BenAveling/ Wikimedia Commons



Source: Des Moines Register

Typical Concrete Barrier Installation Process



Barrier Installation

Haymarket, Virginia - Precaster: Smith-Midland Corporation

Methods to Eliminate Need for Barrier Systems (Exposure Control Measures)

- Detour all traffic to another route.
- Use ramp closures or other system configuration changes to redirect a significant portion of the traffic to other routes.
- Complete the work at a time with lower traffic volumes.
- Use speed reduction techniques such as pilot cars, pace vehicles, point-to-point automated speed enforcement, or intensive police presence.
- Use temporary backfill or wedging material to eliminate abrupt vertical drop-offs.
- Remove roadside obstacles to increase the available clear zone.
- Revise construction method or work sequence to eliminate the need for positive protection.
- Combinations of the above.

Crashworthiness

Crashworthiness: NCHRP 350 & MASH

- 1993: NCHRP Report #350 standardizes crashworthiness testing procedures and acceptance criteria.
- 2009 & 2016: AASHTO Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) updates protocols and criteria.
 - Reflects changes in vehicle fleet, e.g. increased prevalence of SUVs
 - Updated criteria generally more stringent than NCHRP 350
- 2016: AASHTO/FHWA issue Joint Implementation Agreement for Implementing MASH (and phase out NCHRP 350 devices.)
- 2020: All newly manufactured temporary work zone devices, including portable barriers, must have been successfully tested to 2016 edition of MASH.
- 2020: Existing NCHRP 350 temporary work zone devices, including portable barriers can be used until they wear out.

MASH Test Levels

MASH Test Level	Test Vehicle(s)	Test Speed
TL-1	Automobile (2420 pounds) Pick-up Truck (5000 pounds)	31 mph
TL-2	Automobile (2420 pounds) Pick-up Truck (5000 pounds)	43 mph
TL-3	Automobile (2420 pounds) Pick-up Truck (5000 pounds)	62 mph
TL-4	Single unit truck (22,000 pounds)	56 mph
TL-5	Semi-tractor with van trailer (36,000 pounds)	50 mph
TL-6	Semi-tractor with tanker trailer (36,000 pounds)	50 mph

What's a Good Test Result?

Ideally:

- Redirect vehicle away from hazard within a narrow angle.
- Vehicle follows barrier and decelerates within a fairly short distance.
- Deceleration rates well within human tolerance and comfort levels.
- No hindrance to driver's recovery process.
- No impediments to interventions by first responders.

Barrier Deflection and Working Width

- Barriers deflect laterally when struck.
- Amount of deflection varies depending on barrier type, shape, and mass.
- Working Width: The distance between the traffic face of the barrier before impact and the farthest lateral position of any major part of the barrier after impact with a test vehicle.
- Must be kept clear of construction materials, equipment, etc. (except items actively being used).
- Can be reduced by anchoring barrier to road/bridge surface, but this can increase consequences of barrier strikes.

Anchored Barrier Performance

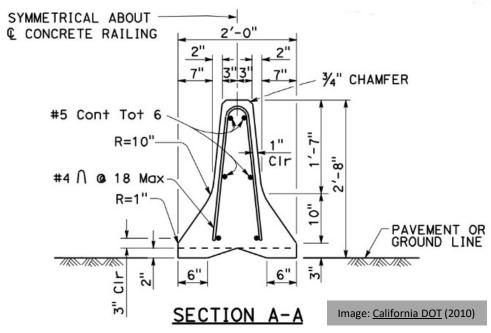


https://vimeo.com/116895165 start at 0:30

Barrier Types

Temporary Portable Concrete Barrier (TPCB)





- TPCB are the most widely used positive protection system.
- Numerous public domain & proprietary NCHRP 350 approved designs.
- Most systems have been updated to obtain MASH approval.
- Most designs crash tested and approved at TL-3, a few at TL-4
- Typical TPCB are 390 to 720 pounds per lineal foot depending on height, geometry, etc.
- Heavier systems are more resistant to movement when struck by trucks, but are more expensive to ship and install.

TPCB Successful Proprietary Design NCHRP 350

Test



video courtesy of J-J Hooks Co.

TPCB J-J Hooks Successful F-Shape MASH TL-3



Portable Steel Barrier Systems





Source: Barrier Systems, Inc.

- Most systems are proprietary.
- Non-proprietary system for temporary bridge rail.
- Some systems tested at TL-3, others at TL-4.
- Manufacturers claim a crew can install 1000 to 1500 lineal feet per hour.

Portable Steel Barrier Systems





e: Barrier Systems Inc

- Lighter than concrete, so more barrier can be hauled per truck load.
- Sections typically are 26 to 50 feet long, weighing 3000 to 3300 lb (60 to 115 lb/ft.)
- May be available for rental in some markets.

Portable Steel Barrier System Crash Tests



Video courtesy of Hill & Smith Inc

Water-Filled Barrier Systems



FROM THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPE

Source: Traffix Devices Source: WikiMedia Comm

- Plastic shells moved empty and filled with water at the site.
- When empty, they are light enough to be picked up by 1 or 2 people without lifting equipment.
- Proprietary systems available with TL-1, TL-2, and TL-3 acceptances.
- TL-3 systems have internal/external steel reinforcement.
- Some systems can serve as their own end treatments.
- Usually drained onto pavement for repositioning/removal.
- Can also be filled with sand for long-term deployment.

Low-Profile Barriers





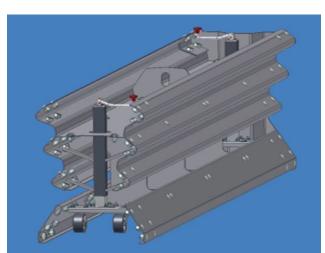
Source: Klam & Ivey, Texas DOT system

- Less than 24" tall
- · Improves visibility of traffic approaching from side streets and driveways compared to other barrier types.
- Crash tested to TL-2.
- Low deflection.
- Relatively easy and inexpensive to install.

Moveable Barrier



Source: Anonymous/WikiMedia Commons



Source: Trinity Highway Products, LLC



Source: <u>Eekim</u>/WikiMedia Commons



Source: Barrier Systems, Inc.

- Specialty systems for rapid barrier repositioning.
- All systems are proprietary.
- Concrete system mainly used on roads with heavy directional commuter flows.
- More expensive than standard concrete barriers.

Mobile Barrier System



Source : Mobile Barriers, LLC

- · Worker protection device to shield workforce from live traffic.
- Used primarily on short duration maintenance projects.

Group Discussion

All other things being equal, which barrier types would be most suitable for each of the following applications:

- Long-term reconstruction of a rural freeway with high volumes of heavy truck traffic?
- A 45-mph suburban arterial with many commercial driveways?
- An urban freeway bridge deck replacement that must be completed in one weekend?
- A bridge deck replacement on a long-span urban freeway bridge with heavy flows into downtown in the morning, and heavy flows away from downtown in the afternoon?
- Emergency repairs on a remote two-lane rural highway with no availability of skilled workers or heavy lifting equipment?

End Treatments and Transitions

Why specify crashworthy end treatments?





Source: DeChant Consulting Services

Chevrolet Lumina vs Blunt End of Concrete Barrier

Impact Attenuators



Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: WikiMedia Commons



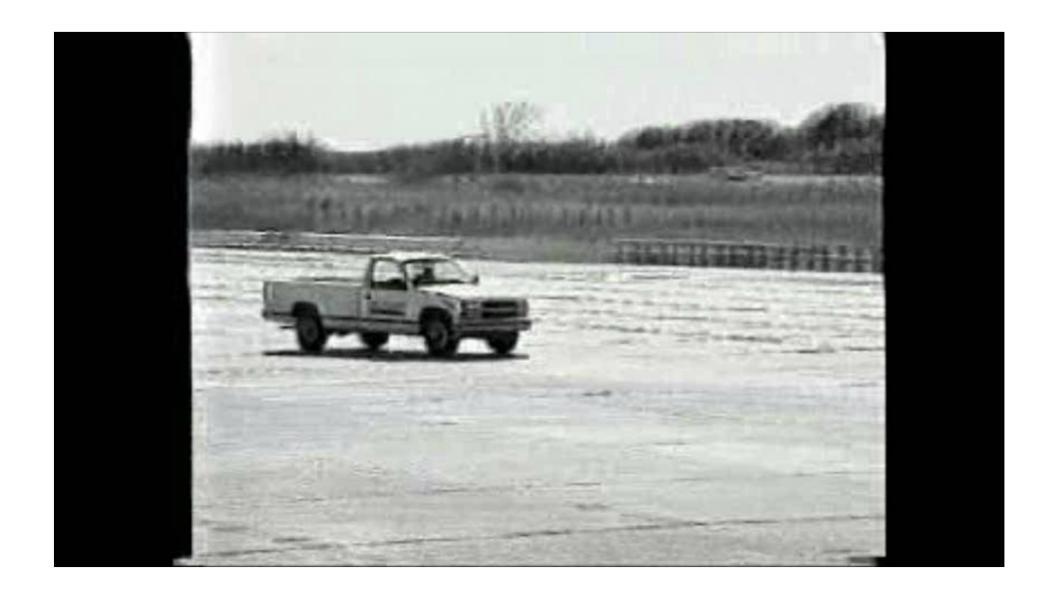
Source: Energy Absorption Systems, Inc.



Source: Wikimedia Commons/JPC

- Attenuator length varies based on operating speed
- Attenuator angle should match most likely direction of approaching (errant) vehicles

Sand Barrel Crash Test



QuadGuard®

- Proprietary "Family" of devices
- QuadGuard® CZ mounted on 3/8" steel plate
- Requires bolts w/ adhesive to anchor system to concrete or asphalt pad
- CZ model crash tested currently to MASH
- FHWA Eligibility Letter
 CC-112B



QuadGuard® M10 Shown

Flared End Treatments



Source: Wisconsin DOT

Flared system terminated beyond clear zone with adequate taper length.

Transitions



Non Crash Tested transition from steel to concrete barrier.

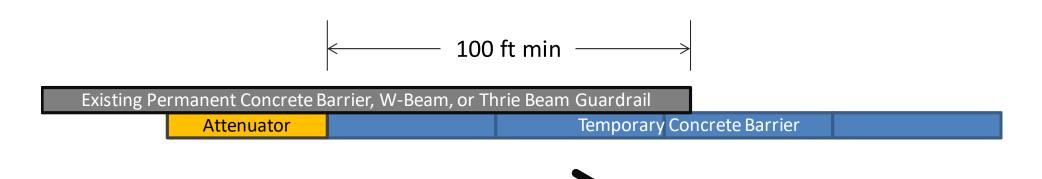
Specify Crashworthy Transitions



Source: University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Crashworthy transition from temporary PTCB to permanent barrier.

Upstream & Downstream Transitions



Attenuator required.



Attenuator not required.

TPCB – 5000# TL-3 Test with insufficient # of barrier sections needed for crashworthy anchorage



Barrier Accessories

Barrier Gates

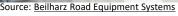


Source: Lindsay Corporation

- Provides emergency or worker access to opposite side of lengthy barrier runs.
- Proprietary system compatible with some barrier types.
- Can simplify stage/phase transitions in some cases.

Glare & Visibility Screens







ource: Coral Sales



Source: New Zealand Transport Agency

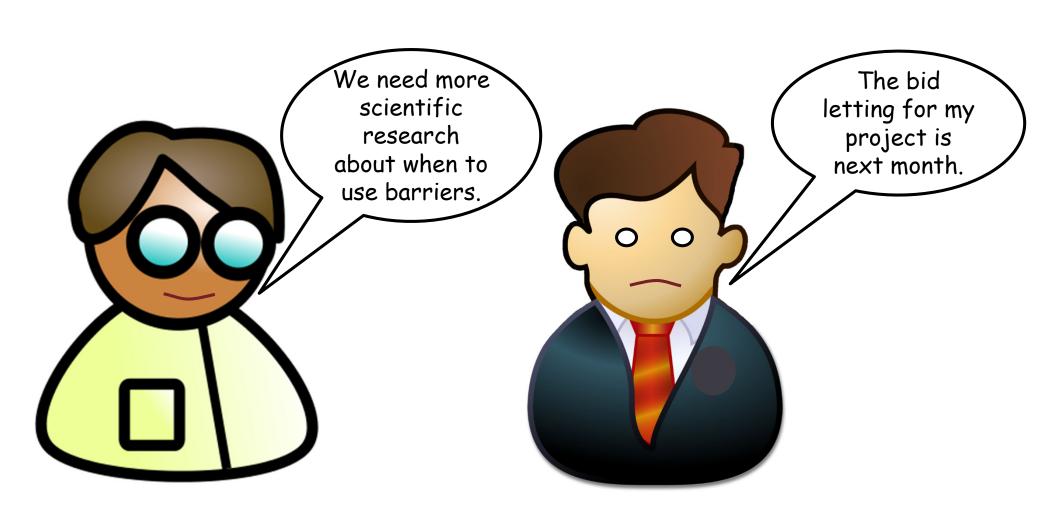
- Fiberglass Paddle If correctly positioned, can reduce glare from headlights and construction vehicles.
 - Visibility screens block view of construction to reduce driver distraction.
 - Currently no crash test protocol has been established.
 - Recommend not specifying questionable designs using plywood and water pipe.
 - Recommend specifying light, deformable materials, e.g. fabric on thin-wall tubing.
 - If traffic on one side: recommend specifying attachment on back side.
 - If traffic on both sides: recommend specifying breakaway fasteners on top of barrier.
 - Recommend specifying sight distance field verification required if used near ramp terminals or intersections.

Consider Drainage Around Barrier Systems

- Drainage is accomplished by having adequate slots (scuppers) built into barriers and at connection points.
- Stormwater flow is most often present near bottom of sag sections.
- If construction site is in an area prone to heavy rainfall, provide additional barrier set back from travel lanes for use as temporary rain storage area until water can be dissipated through barrier scuppers.
- If temporary ponding is still anticipated, specify appropriate MUTCD signage, e.g.:
 - SLIPPERY WHEN WET
 - ROAD MAY FLOOD
 - WET PVMT (on PCMS)

Barrier Design Process

When to Specify Barrier?



Recommended Design Approach

- Currently only limited scientific research has been completed on the risks of using (or not using) positive protection.
- It is not yet possible to establish numerical warrants that cover all situations.
- Many barrier deployment decisions require a degree of engineering judgment.
- The rationale for agency barrier use policies are often undocumented.



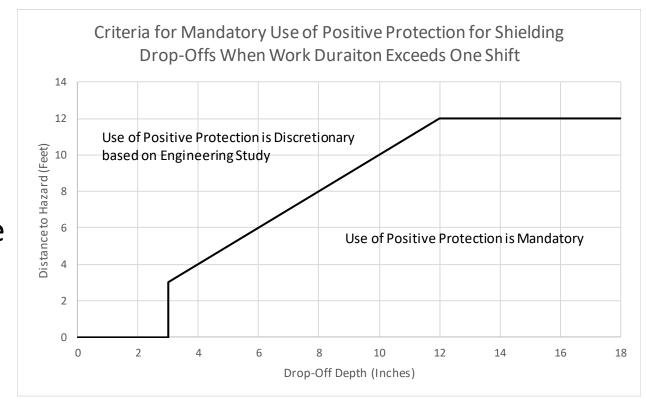
- Mandatory use of barriers in high-risk situations.
- Guided discretionary use of barriers based on site conditions.
- Independent review/appeal if designers/managers disagree about use (or non-use) of barriers for a specific site.

Recommended Design Process

- Gather site data (geometrics, traffic volume, etc.)
- Identify high-risk situations that point toward the mandatory use of barriers.
- Determine work area clear zone widths and evaluate vertical edge drops.
- Evaluate need to shield workers.
- Evaluate combined worker and edge drop shielding.
- Identify potential exposure control measures that could potentially eliminate need for positive protection. Note: this step can be considered in conjunction as part of earlier steps.
- Select and specify the most appropriate positive protection system, if positive protection is best available option.

Mandatory Use of Barrier – High Risk Sites Examples – Each agency establishes their own policy.

- Bridges without parapets.
- High-speed roadways with contraflow operation, significant traffic volume, and multi-day work duration.
- High-speed roadways with significant edge drops.



Example

Mandatory Use of Barrier – High Risk Sites Examples – Each agency establishes their own policy.

- High-speed roadways* with fixed objects at less than 50% of minimum clear zone width*.
- Sites with scaffolding or lifting equipment near* the travelled way.
- Sites with workers very close to high-speed roadways*, and no escape path*, such as in tunnels and on bridges.
- Waiver process suggested for sites where problem can be mitigated by exposure control methods without using barrier.

^{*}Conditions are established by agency and may differ for each project.

Step 1: Gather site data (geometrics, traffic volume, etc.)

Step 2: Determine clear zone width (distance to fixed objects)

Example: Vermont DOT*		
Roadway Type	Work Zone Speed	Distance from
	Limit (mph)	Travelled Way (ft)
State/US Routes	All	10
Interstates	30-40	13
	45-50	16
	55	23
	60-70	30
* Vermont follows the criteria in Table 9-1 of the AASHTO		
Roadside Design Guide.		

Step 3: Check distances to dropoffs



Source: Wisconsin DOT

•		
Agency	Criteria	
California	Drop-off depth > 6 inches, located within 8 feet of	
DOT	travel way; special engineering consideration for all	
Janua DOT	drop-offs > 2.5 feet.	
Iowa DOT	Drop-off depth > 10 inches, located with 10 feet of travel way.	
Maryland	Drop-off depth > 2.5 inches, located adjacent to	
DOT	travel way	
Minnesot	Optional for drop-off depth > 4 inches, if no wedge,	
a DOT	located adjacent to travel way, speed > 30 mph,	
	project duration > 3 days, length < 50 feet; if 12 inches, recommended.	
North	Drop-off depth > 5 inches located between travel	
Dakota	lanes, drop-off depth > 12 inches, located adjacent	
DOT	to travel way speed; when speed limit > 30 mph,	
	project duration > 7 days, work area length > 50 feet	
Ohio DOT	Drop-off depth > 5 inches located between travel	
	lanes, drop-off depth > 2 feet located within 30 feet	
	of travel way, overnight exposure	
Virginia	Drop-off depth > 12 inches located 4 to 5 feet from	
DOT	travel way	
Wisconsin	On freeways/expressways when drop-off expected >	
DOT	3 days and length > 100 feet drop-off > 6 inches	
	located 2 feet or less from travel way; drop-off > 12	
	inches located < 4 feet or less from travel way; drop-	
	off > 24 inches located < 12 feet or less from travel	
	way; or drop-off > 37 inches located < 20 feet or less	
	from travel way.	

Examples

Step 4: Evaluate need for barriers to protect workers*

Federal rule requires determination based on an engineering study.

Typical variables used in the engineering study:

- Project duration
- Distance from travelled way to workforce
- Traffic volume and speed
- Type of positive protection proposed and estimated cost.

Consideration of exposure control measures if decision is leading toward need for positive protection.

^{*}Required step on Federally-aided projects per 23 CFR 630 Subpart K, which was established in 2007.

Alternative Step 4: Experimental methodology for evaluating barriers to shield workers*

- Benefit/Cost method based on the value of statistical life (currently \$9.2 to \$9.8 million per fatality).
- Uses Roadside Safety Analysis Program (RSAP) version 3 software package.
- Variables in program besides cost of fatality include:
 - Barrier cost, project duration, active work area length, directional daily traffic volume, roadway daily traffic volume, lateral buffer space, and work zone traffic speed.

^{*}Derived from research done by TTI for Idaho DOT – RP228, Dec. 2014

Step 6: Identify situations justifying the use of barriers based on engineering judgment

Examples:

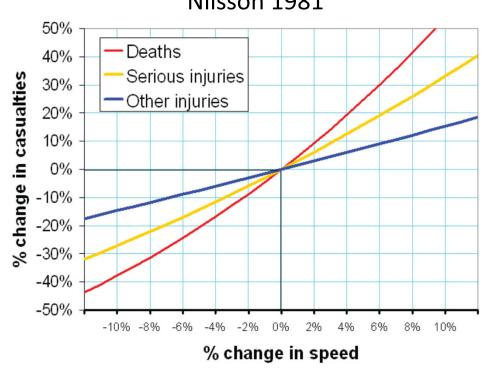
- Two-way traffic running on one side of what is ordinarily a divided freeway
- Substantial speed differential between adjacent lanes
- Non-motorized users in close proximity to high-speed traffic.
- Sites with severe non-conformance to geometric standards
- Sites with no worker escape path for (e.g. tunnels, long bridges, "urban canyons") and moderate to long work duration
- Sites with very high traffic speeds (e.g., 80 mph Texas freeways)

Step 7: Identify viable/potential exposure control measures

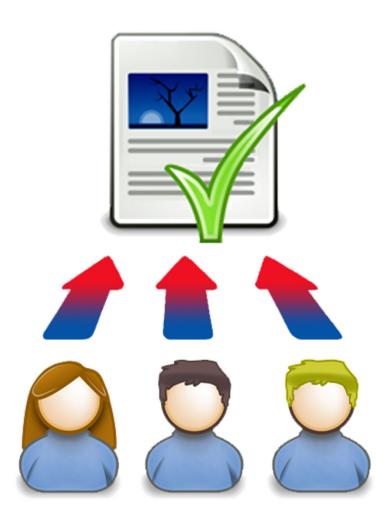
Examples:

- Full closure
- Speed reduction
- Increased lateral buffer space
- Hazard severity reduction
- Traffic volume reduction
- Hazard length reduction
- Hazard duration reduction
- Workforce size reduction

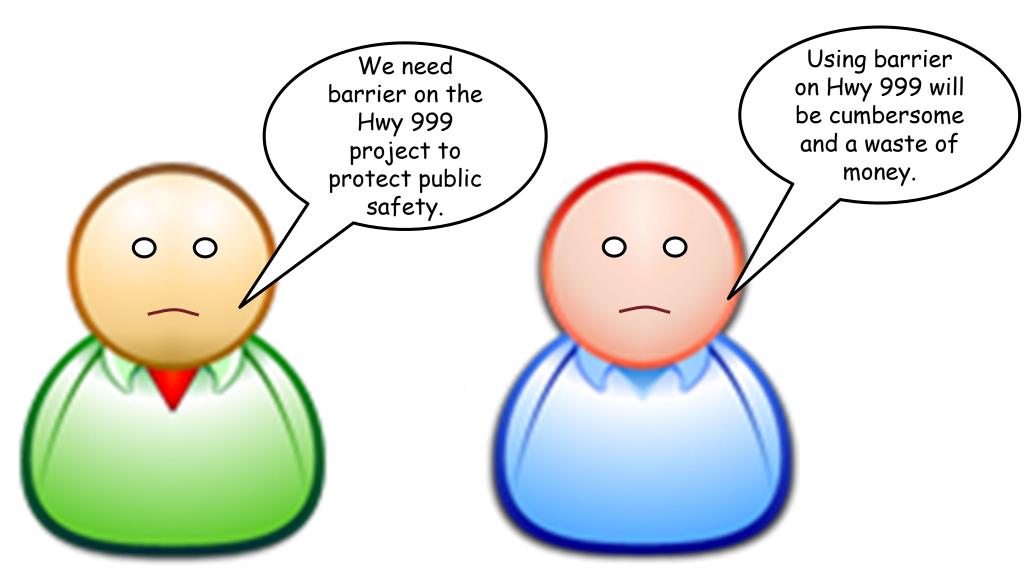
Effect of Speed on Casualty Risk Nilsson 1981

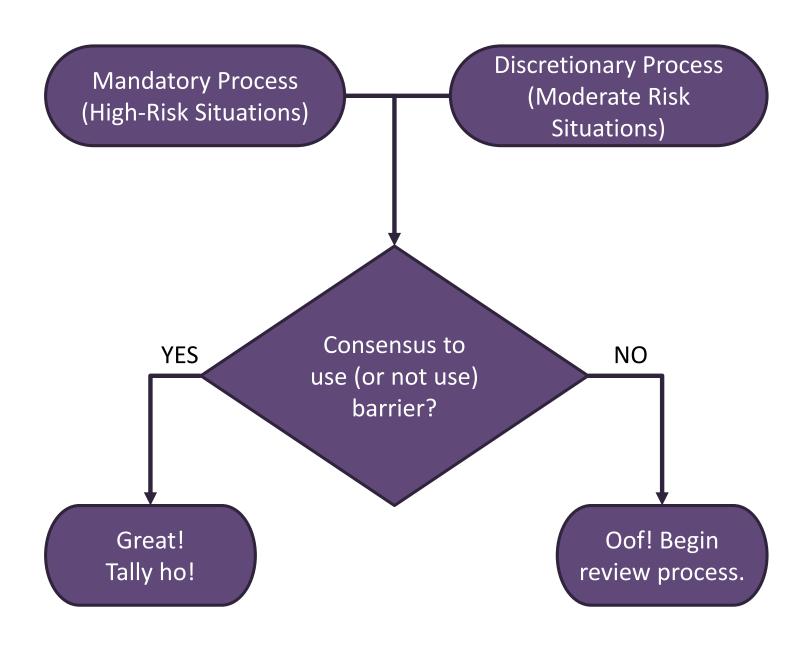


Step 8: Document Decisions



Appeal Process





Appeal Process

- Could be patterned on other successful agency review processes, such as design exceptions.
- Could include provisions for independent evaluation by a neutral party with positive protection expertise.

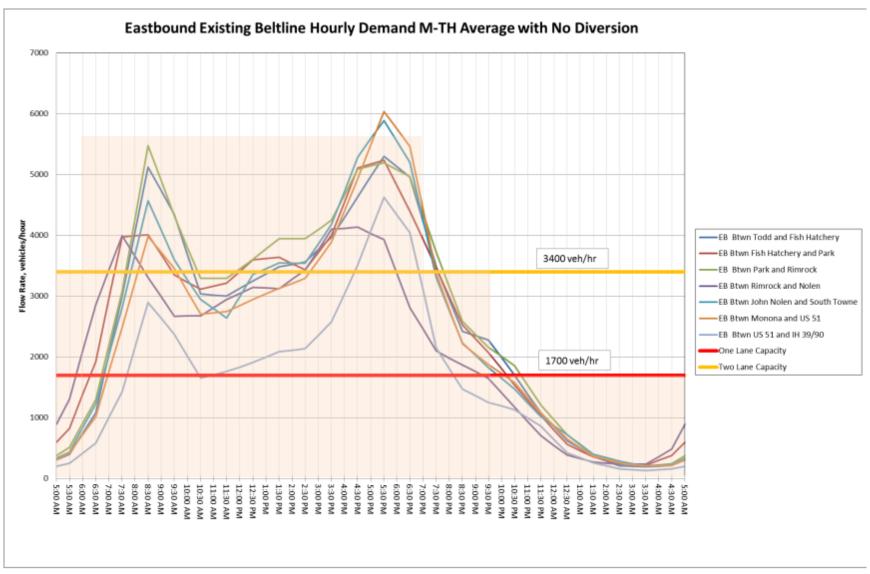
Discussion

- What are the implications of under-specifying positive protection systems?
- What are the implications of over-specifying positive protection systems?
- Have you observed situations where an alternative to barrier would have been safer and more cost-effective?
- Have there been situations where you felt your organization should have used (or not used) barriers? What did you do?

Small Group Workshop Exercises Madison, WI South Belt Line

- 8.2 mile preventive maintenance project
- 6 lane urban freeway with some auxiliary lanes
- Speed Limit is 55 mph
- 123,000 average daily traffic (ADT)
- State policy prohibits any edge drop-offs greater than 3 inches within 4 feet of driving lane without shielding by TPCB
- State policy allows a maximum 15-minute delay increase caused by work zone
- Maximum hourly volumes 6000 westbound vehicles per hour and 6000 eastbound vehicles per hour.

Madison South Belt Line Weekday Hourly Volume Data



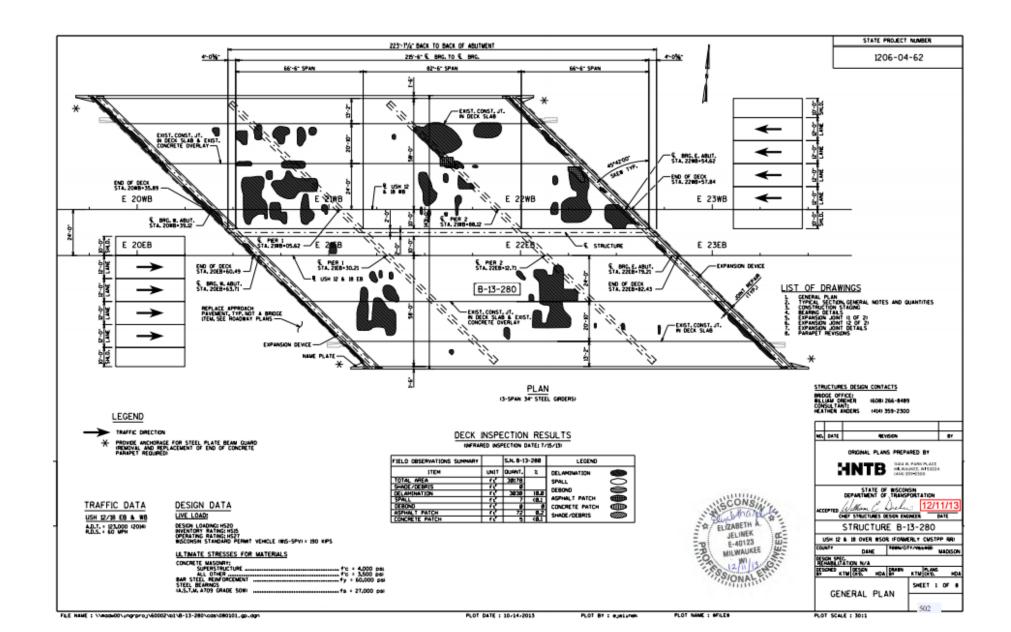
Workshop Exercise 1: Structure B 13-280



Source: Google Maps

- B 13-280 is 140 feet wide with a 4 foot wide concrete median barrier that separates 4 - 12 foot lanes and 2 - 10 foot wide shoulders in each direction.
- Bridge work will include removing old 1.5" concrete overlay, spall/delamination repairs to deck, new 1.5" concrete overlay, replacing expansion joints, replacing approach slabs on each end, and some bridge bearing assemblies.
- All John Nolan Drive ramps must remain open.

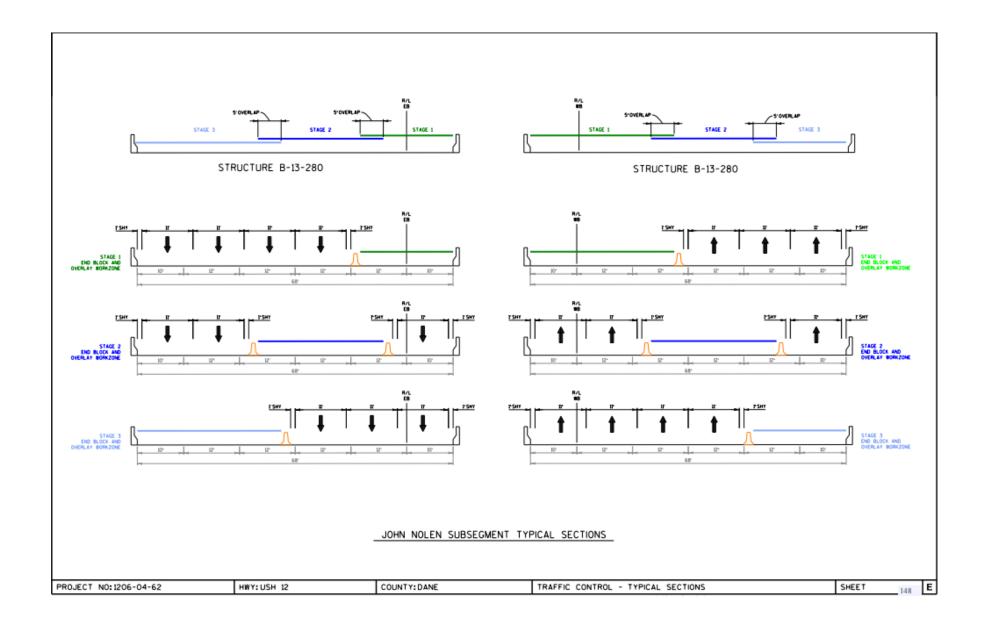
Workshop Exercise 1: Structure B-13-280



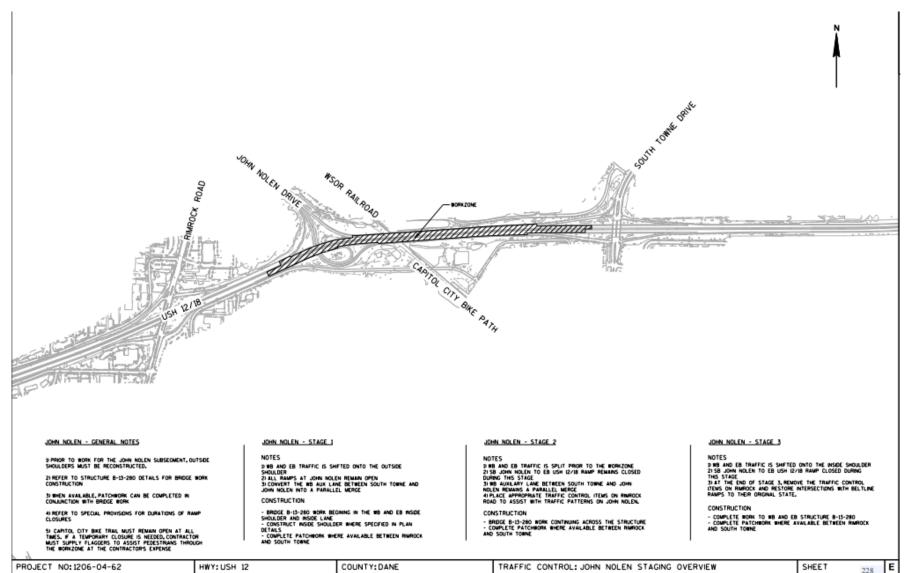
Exercise 1: Traffic Control Questions

- Number of lanes required open during rush hour periods?
- Can structure repair work only be done during off-peak periods with temporary traffic control devices (TTCDs)?
- If not, justify using positive protection (PP):
 - Drop offs?
 - Shield workers?
 - Separate opposing traffic?
 - Combination?
- Number of work zone stages required?
- If PP justified, develop possible staging plans. For exercise only develop cross section sketch showing lane widths and TCD/barrier placement on bridge for each stage.
- What type of PP would you use?

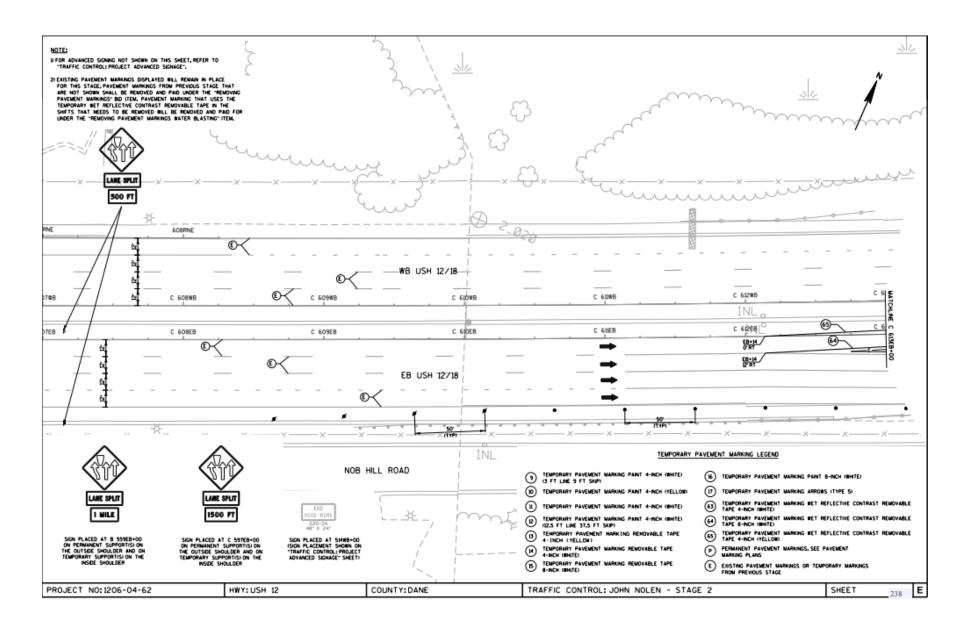
Exercise 1 Solution B 13-280



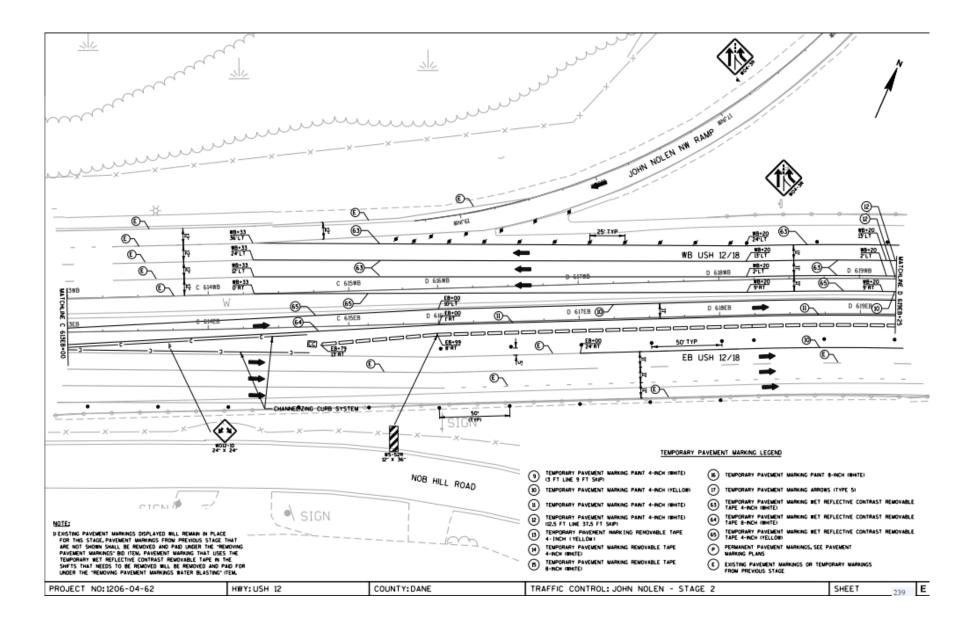
Exercise 1 Solution Work Zone Plan Overview



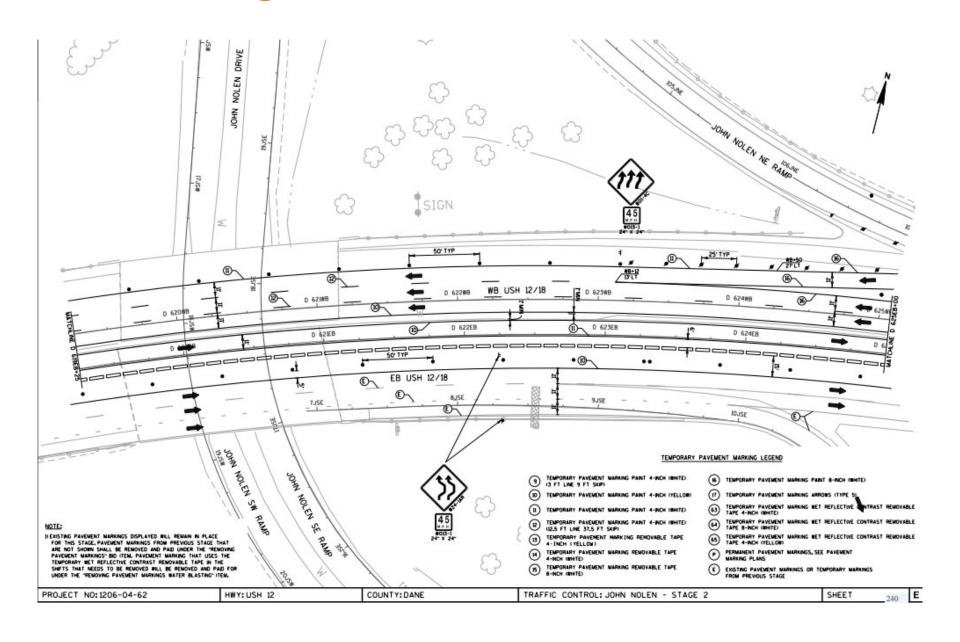
Solution Stage 2 Plan Sheet 1 for B 13-280



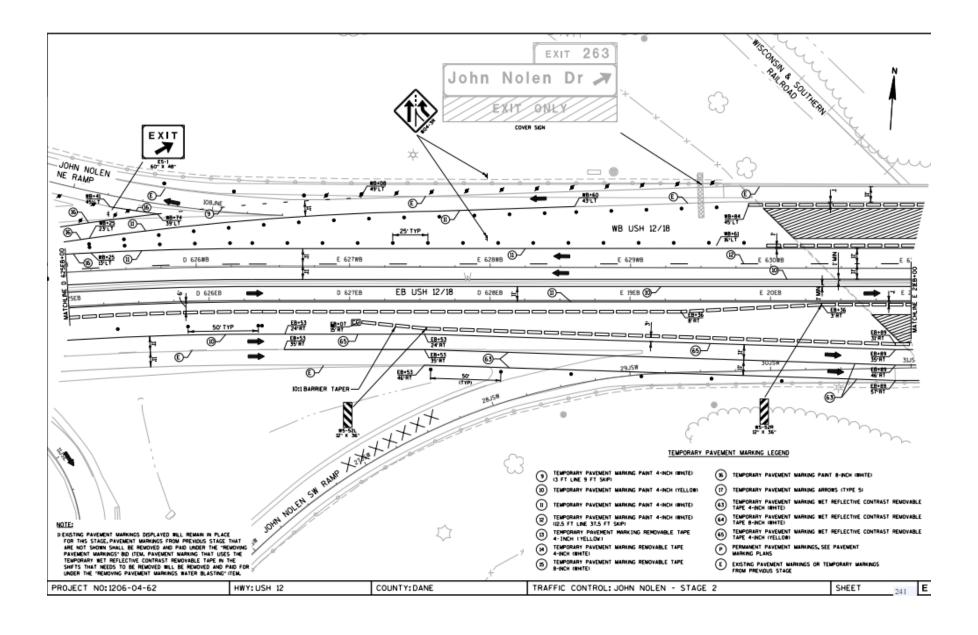
Solution Stage 2 Plan Sheet 2 for B 13-280



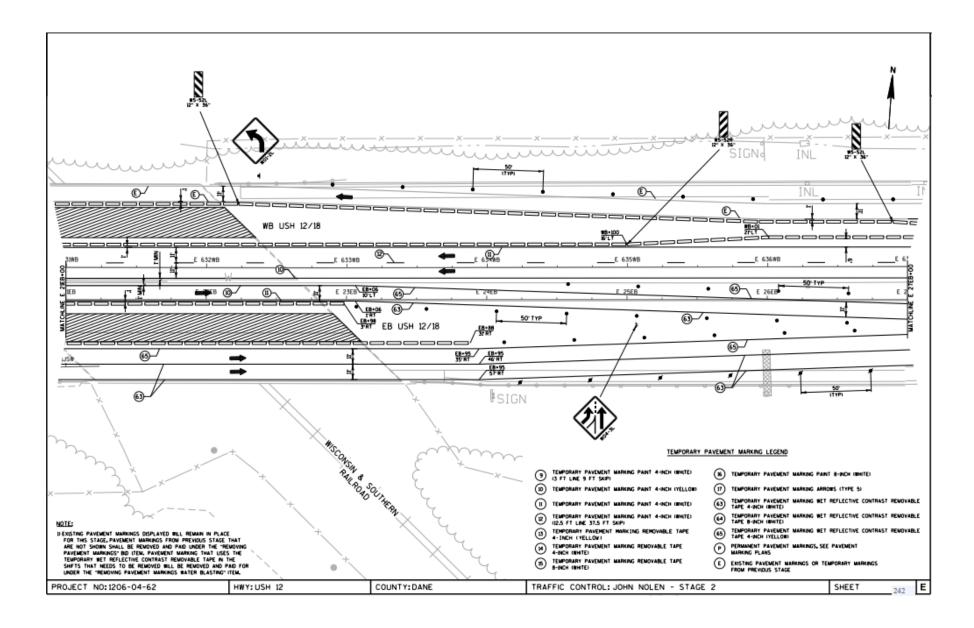
Solution Stage 2 Plan Sheet 3 for B 13-280



Solution Stage 2 Plan Sheet 4 for B 13-280



Solution Stage 2 Plan Sheet 5 for B 13-280

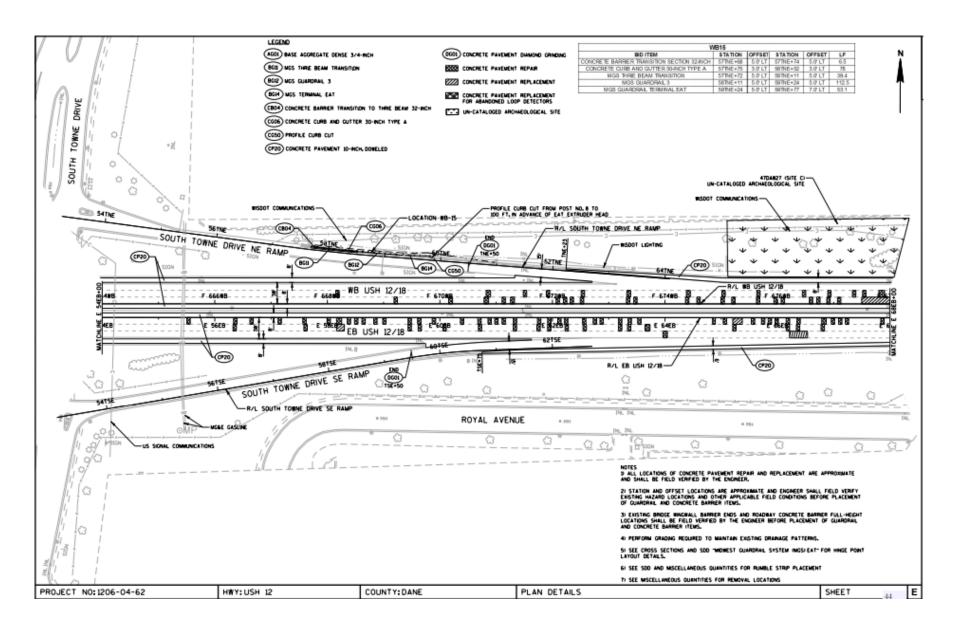


Workshop Exercise 2: Pavement Repairs



- Beltline highway eastbound and westbound lanes divided by a concrete median barrier that separates 2 - 12 foot lanes, 1- 14 foot lane (outside lane) and typically 2 -10 foot wide shoulders plus periodic varying width auxiliary lane in each direction.
- Repair work includes: reconstruct inside and outside shoulders, install outside guardrails, concrete pavement repairs, and pavement diamond grinding.
- All interchange ramps must remain open.

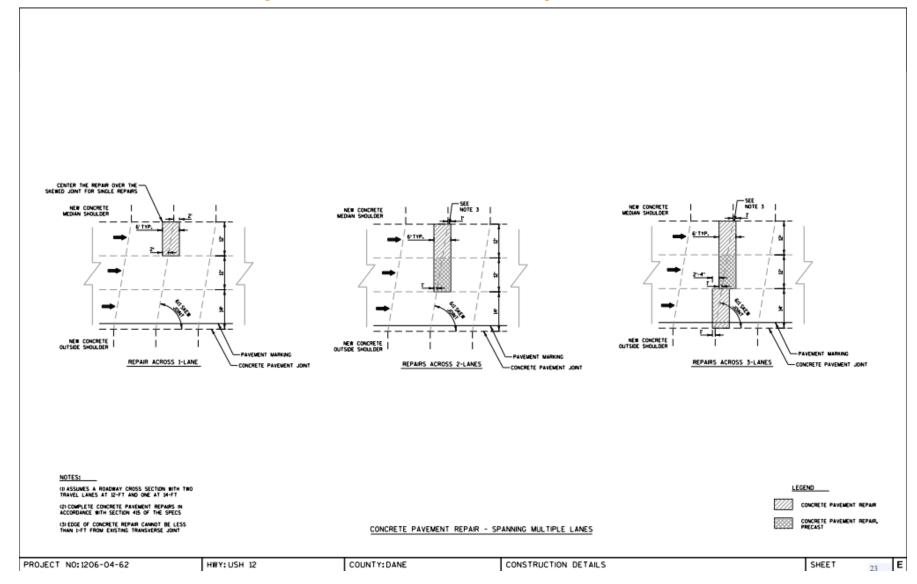
Workshop Exercise 2: Pavement Repairs



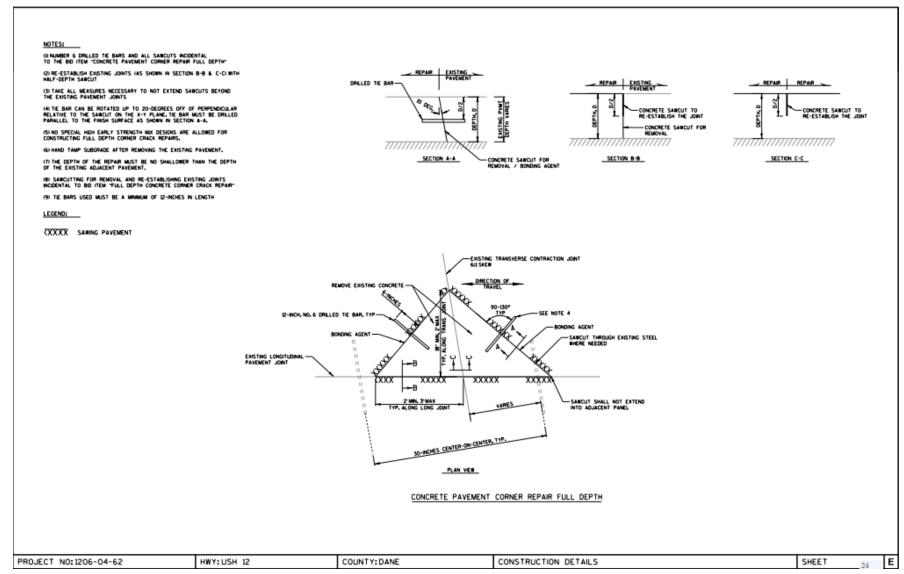
Traffic Control Questions for Pavement Repairs

- Number of lanes required to be open during rush hour periods?
- Is PP justified?
- Can pavement repair work only be done during off-peak periods?
- If so, when does it appear work can begin at night?
- What time must lane(s) be opened in the morning?
- What TTCD(s) do you recommend to separate workers from traffic?
- What construction repair technique(s) should be examined for possible use to accelerate completion?
- Number of work zone stages required?
- For exercise only develop cross section(s) showing lane widths and TTCD/barrier placement for work on inside lane(s) next to median barrier.

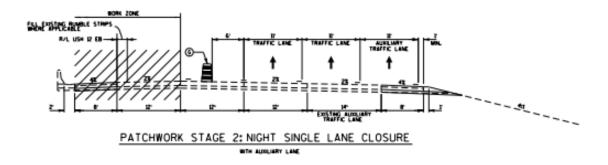
Workshop Exercise 2 Solution Pavement Repair w/Full Depth Concrete

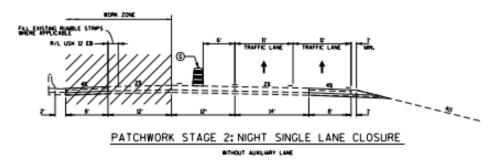


Workshop Exercise 2 Solution Pavement Repair w/Full Depth Concrete



Workshop Exercise 2– Solution Stage 2 - Inside Lane and Shoulder Closed



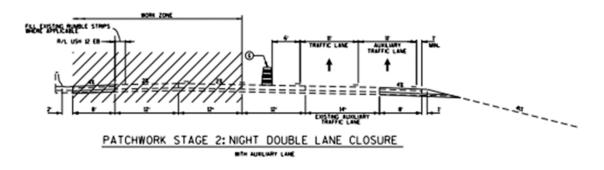


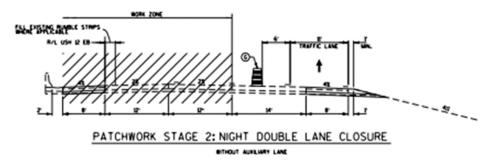
LEGEND

- (A) TEMPORARY PAVEMENT MARKING 4-NCH ITELLOW EDGELING
- (8) TEMPORARY PAVEMENT MARKING 4-INCH (MHTE DASHES)
- (E) TEMPORARY PAVEMENT WARKING 4-INCH INHTE EDCELINE
- (I) PROPOSED FINAL PAVEMENT MARKINGS
- (I) EXISTING PAVEMENT WARKING FROM PREVIOUS STACE
- PROPOSED PAVEMENT WARKINGS (SAME DAY EPOXY)
- (E) DRIMS AT 50'SPACING

TRAFFIC FLOR

Workshop Exercise 2: Solution Stage 2: Inside lane and shoulder closed



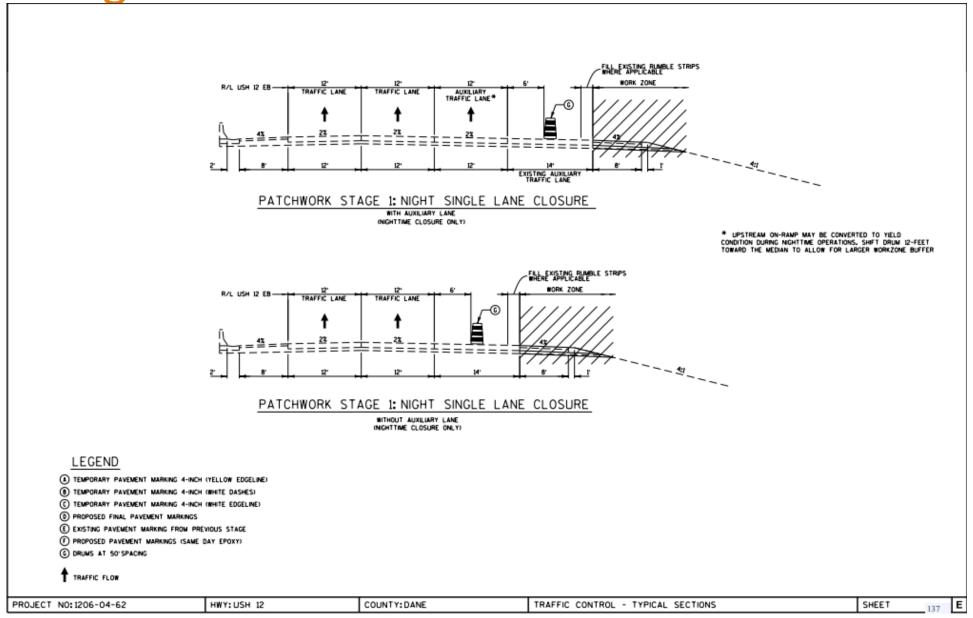


LEGEND

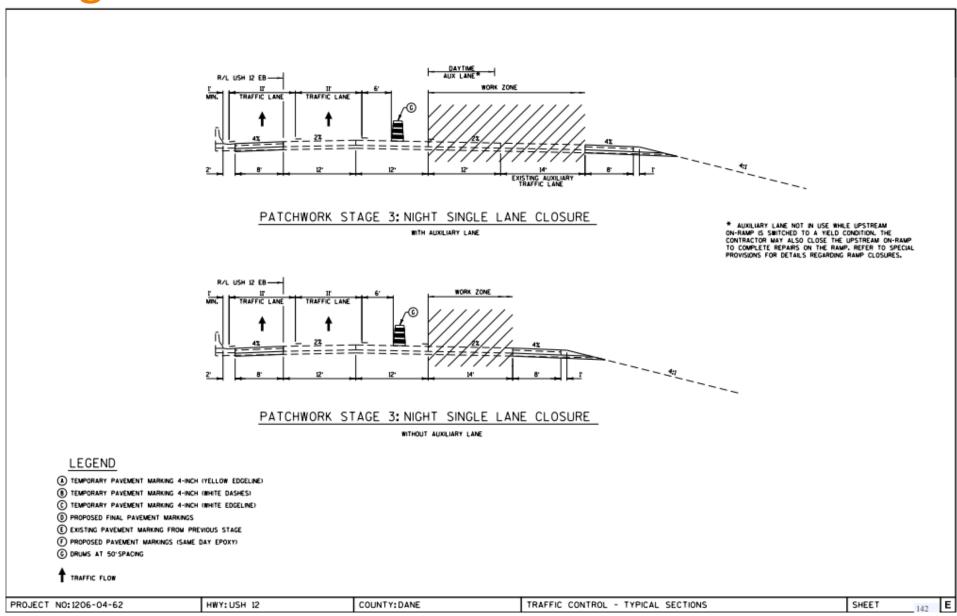
- 1 TEMPORARY PAVEMENT WARRING 4-INCH HELLOW EDGELING
- 1 TEMPORARY PAVENENT WARKING 4-INCH IDNITE DASHESI
- (E) TEMPORARY PAVEMENT MARKING 4-NCH IDNITE ESCELINES
- TROPOSED FINAL PAVENENT MARKINGS
- (E) EXISTING PAVEMENT WARKING FROM PREVIOUS STACE
- THOPOSED PAVENENT MARKINGS ISAME DAY EPORTS
- (6) DRUMS AT 50'SPACING

T TRAFFIC FLOW

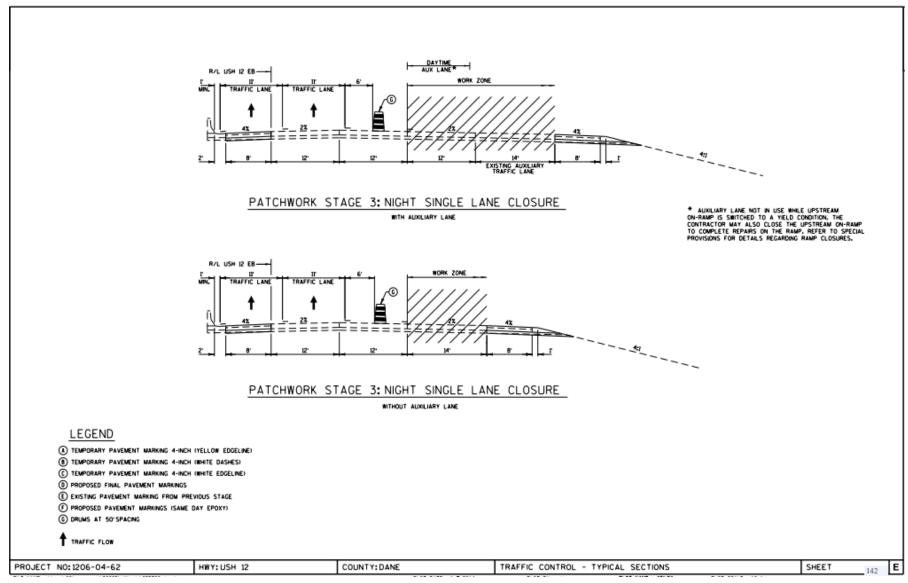
Workshop Exercise 2: Other Stage Solutions Stage 1: Outside lanes and shoulder closed



Workshop Exercise 2: Other Stage Solutions Stage 1: Outside lanes and shoulder closed



Workshop Exercise 2: Other Stage Solutions Stage 3: Shoulder & outside lane closed



Workshop Exercise 2 – Other Stage Solutions Stage 3 – Shoulder, Outside, & Center lane Closed

