Overview of the Work Zone Design Process
Learning Objectives

• Review work zone terminology and design elements
• Discuss TMP’s
• Review design resources
• Discuss fundamental principles
• Consider design issues
• Examine project constructability and staging
Work Zone Terminology
Work Zone Elements

- Downstream Taper
- Buffer Area
- WORK AREA
  - set aside for workers, equipment, and material storage
- BUFFER AREA (recommended)
  - provides protection for traffic and workers
- TRANSITION AREA
  - moves traffic out of its normal path
- Shoulder Taper
- ADVANCE WARNING AREA
  - tells traffic what to expect ahead
Example Lane Closure

- Single lane closure
  - 2 lane divided highway
Example Lane Closure

- Advance signing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed Limit (mph)</th>
<th>Sign Spacing (ft)</th>
<th>Merging Taper for 12' lane (ft)</th>
<th>Buffer (ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>570</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>645</td>
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# Example Lane Closure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Speed Limit (MPH)</th>
<th>Sign Spacing (ft)</th>
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<th>Merging Taper (ft) for 12’ lane</th>
<th>Buffer (ft)</th>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2640</td>
<td><strong>660</strong></td>
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</tr>
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\[
L = W \times S
\]

\[
W = 12 \text{ ft}
\]

\[
S = 55 \text{ mph}
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\[
L = 12 \times 55
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\[
L = 660 \text{ ft}
\]
Example Lane Closure

- **Buffer space**
## Example Lane Closure

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<td>495</td>
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</table>

### Buffer Lengths

A buffer area is recommended to separate traffic from the work area or oncoming vehicles and provide recovery space for an errant vehicle. The buffer area should not include any work activity nor storage of equipment, vehicles or material.

#### Suggested Buffer Lengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed (mph)</th>
<th>Length (ft)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>155</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td>495</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>570</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>645</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A lateral buffer area may also be used. Its width should be based on conditions at the work site.
Challenges for Designers

- What can you do if the site does not have enough space for the recommended buffer and taper lengths?
- How do horizontal and vertical curves affect the layout?
Transportation Management Plans
Background

• 2004: Federal Work Zone Safety & Mobility Rule established to help manage traffic and safety issues on federally-funded highway projects.

• 2007: Deadline for state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to establish a work zone planning process – producing a Transportation Management Plan (TMP).

• 2016: TMP process generally considered “best practice” for all significant projects, regardless of funding.
Goals of WZ Safety & Mobility Rule

**Project-Level**
- Consider safety and mobility issues for all users as early as possible.
- Assure consistent, systematic consideration of construction traffic and safety impacts.
- Manage and mitigate impacts.

**Agency-Wide Programmatic**
- Monitor and assess impacts of individual work zones and the construction program as a whole.
- Establish a data-driven process for long-term improvements to work zone policies and procedures.
TMP Content Varies with Project Complexity

**Typical Elements**
- Temporary Traffic Control (Maintenance of Traffic) Plan
- Traffic Operations Plan
- Traffic Incident Management Plan
- Public Information & Outreach Plan
Why Do TMPs?

• TMP helps agency, contractor and first responders prepare for traffic issues unique to each site/project.

• TMP process has been successful in:
  • Improving travel conditions
  • Creating a better safety environment
  • Reducing complaints from the public.
Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) or Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) Plans

- A plan for safe and expeditious traffic movement and workforce safety
- How/when traffic is maintained during construction
- Sometimes not given proper time or attention
- Switches/stage changes often the most complicated and dangerous times
Designer Responsibility to Translate the TMP into the PS&E

• Plan Sheet Drawings
• Specifications
  • Standard Construction Specifications
  • Special Provisions
• Estimated Quantities and Method of Payment
Temporary Traffic Control Plan Components

- Traffic Staging/Phases
- Diversion/detour alignments
- Tapers and lane drops
- Pedestrian accommodations
- Temporary Traffic control (signals, sign type, sign location)
- Need for flaggers, etc.
- Illumination and warning lights
- Temporary Portable Concrete Barrier locations
- Pavement marking, drums, cones, and other channelization devices
- Policies for removal of signs, etc.
- Arrangements for worker parking
- Notes such as handling of signs that are not in use
- Permanent signs removed and temporary storage
Some Factors to Consider

- Traffic speeds.
- Estimated traffic volumes, vehicle types, and direction of travel.
- Required number of travel lanes.
- Temporary traffic control layouts including signing, marking, channelization devices, traffic signals, traffic delineators, barriers, and detours.
- Restrictions on work periods such as rush hours, holidays, special events, nights, weekends.
- Characteristics of adjacent highway segments.
- Requirements for partial completion and opening sections to traffic.
- Available maneuvering space for traffic.
- Requirements for installing, maintaining, moving, or removing traffic control devices.
- Turns or cross movements required by traffic.
Conditions Requiring Special Attention

• High volume or high speed traffic.
• Rush hour or seasonal traffic patterns.
• Heavy use by pedestrians.
• Changing work conditions or other conditions that would be confusing to the traveling public.
• Hazards due to nighttime operations.
• Complex detours or traffic patterns.
• Closely spaced intersections, interchanges, or other decision points.
Non-Contractual Considerations

- Contractor role in public outreach, if any
- Special agreements reached with other agencies relating to traffic control or traffic management (including pedestrians and transit)
- Crash reporting requirements
- Any special guidance on traffic management for the project engineer
TTC Plan Components - Overview Sheet
Work Zone Typical Sections

TRAFFIC CONTROL STAGE 18 - DAYTIME
APPLETON AVENUE
3000 SOUTH TO 54TH ST
CAPITAL DRIVE TO N 62ND STREET

TRAFFIC CONTROL STAGE 18 - NIGHTTIME
APPLETON AVENUE
3000 SOUTH TO 54TH ST
CAPITAL DRIVE TO N 62ND STREET
Detail Sheets – Temporary Traffic Control Signing & Marking

GENERAL TRAFFIC CONTROL NOTES

THE EXACT LOCATION AND SPACING OF ALL SIGNS AND DEVICES SHALL BE ADJUSTED TO FIT FIELD CONDITIONS AS APPROVED BY THE ENGINEER.

ALL SIGNS INAPPROPRIATE TO THE STATUS OF THE CONTROL ZONE INCLUDING PRE-EXISTING SIGNS IN THE VICINITY SHALL BE CONFORMED OR REMOVED AS SPECIFIED IN THE PLANS AND/OR THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS OR AS DIRECTED BY THE ENGINEER.

ALL SIGNS ARE 48" X 48" UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

"NO EXIT" SIGNS AND THE SAME AS "M" SIGNS EXCEPT THE BACKGROUND IS MAROON.

TEMPORARY STOP SIGNS SHALL BE SUPPORTED ON WOOD POSTS, OR AS DIRECTED BY ENGINEER.

LEGEND

TYPE B WARNING WITHOUT SIGN
M/ STEADY BURN TYPE D LIGHT
F/ FLEXIBLE TUBULAR WARNER POST & BASE
7/ TYPE F FLASHING WARNING LIGHT

TYPICAL SECTION – STAGE 1
Existing Directional Signage & Work Zone Guide Signs
Fixed Message Sign Details

NOTES:
1. All signs have been located in the field. Plans require installation.
2. Signs are to be fabricated in accordance with plans. All items shall be set in a manner to avoid damage to existing signs, where no posts are provided. Signs are required to be acceptable by the appropriate authority.
3. Signs shall be in accordance with the design for traffic control signs fixed messages.
4. Signs shall have a reflective strip to be used under the Federal Traffic Control Signs fixed message.
5. Signs shall be black on reflective material. All signs shall be set in accordance with the design for traffic control signs fixed messages.
6. Signs shall be in accordance with the design for traffic control signs fixed messages.
7. Signs shall be in accordance with the design for traffic control signs fixed messages.
8. Signs shall be in accordance with the design for traffic control signs fixed messages.
Construction Ingress and Egress
Design Resources
## Designer Resources

### National
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- AASHTO Roadside Design Guide
- NCHRP 581 (Design of Construction WZ’s on High Speed Highways)
- FHWA Work Zone Safety Grant materials available from National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse at [www.workzonesafety.org](http://www.workzonesafety.org)

### State-Specific
- Standard Detail Drawings
- Standard Specifications
- Materials Manuals
- Construction Manuals
MUTCD

• Contains standards and guidance for design, installation, and maintenance of traffic control devices in work zones.
• Lists approved Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) devices (cones, drums, barricades, signs, etc.)
• Includes 46+ Typical Application Drawings illustrating various work zone traffic control layouts (mainly for smaller projects).
• Emphasizes the importance of accommodating all road users (including pedestrians, bikes, transit, motor vehicles, motorcycles, heavy trucks).
Temporary Traffic Control Devices and Techniques

• Signs
• Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS)
• Barricades
• Cones
• Drums
• Vertical Panels
• Tubular Markers
• Pavement Marking
• Signals

• Flaggers
• Automated Flagger Assist Devices (AFADs)
• Positive Protection Devices (Barriers)
• Crash Attenuators
• Lighting
Figure 6F-7. Channelizing Devices

**DRUM**
- Facing traffic
- 18 inches MIN.
- 4 to 6 inches
- 36 inches MIN.
- Night and/or freeway
  - High-speed roadway (≥ 45 mph)
  - Day and low-speed roadway (≤ 40 mph)

**TUBULAR MARKERS**
- 2 inches
- 3 inches
- 2 to 6 inches
- 3 inches
- 28 inches MIN.
- 2 inches
- 18 inches MIN.
- Night and/or freeway
  - High-speed roadway (≥ 45 mph)
  - Day and low-speed roadway (≤ 40 mph)

**VERTICAL PANEL**
- 8 to 12 inches
- 24 inches MIN.
- 36 inches MIN.
- 36 inches MAX.

**CONES**
- More than 36 inches
- Night and/or freeway
  - High-speed roadway (≥ 45 mph)
  - Day and low-speed roadway (≤ 40 mph)

**TYPE 1 BARRICADE**
- 8 to 12 inches
- 36 inches MIN.
- 24 inches MIN.

**TYPE 2 BARRICADE**
- 8 to 12 inches
- 36 inches MIN.
- 24 inches MIN.

**TYPE 3 BARRICADE**
- 5 ft MIN.
- 8 to 12 inches
- 4 ft MIN.

**DIRECTION INDICATOR BARRICADE**
- 24 inches
- 12 inches
- 8 inches

* Warning lights (optional)

** Rail stripe widths shall be 6 inches, except that 4-inch wide stripes may be used if rail lengths are less than 36 inches. The sides of barricades facing traffic shall have retroreflective rail faces.
MUTCD Signage “Menu”
Unique or Special Situation Signs

What are your options if the sign you need/want is not on the MUTCD “menu”?
Mounting Height

Figure 6F-1. Height and Lateral Location of Signs—Typical Installations

A - RURAL AREA

B - RURAL AREA WITH ADVISORY SPEED PLAQUE

C - BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, OR RESIDENTIAL AREA

D - BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, OR RESIDENTIAL AREA (WITHOUT CURB)

Figure 6F-2. Methods of Mounting Signs Other Than on Posts

Orange Flag (optional)

8 ft MIN. (see Section 6F.62)

1 ft MIN. above the traveled way

High-Level Warning Device (Flag Tree)

PORTABLE AND TEMPORARY MOUNTINGS

1 ft MIN. above the traveled way

Flasher (optional)

BARRICADES
Specifying Crashworthy Devices

In the old days, Type III barricades were “sturdy.” This is the result.

Figure 6.20. Vehicle after Test 3.
Crashworthy Devices

NCHRP Reports 350 (Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features)
NCHRP 553 (Crashworthy Work-Zone Traffic Control Devices)
AASHTO Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH)

Cones, Barrels & Delineators

- Lightweight devices (<100 lb)
- Good crash history
- Vendors self-certify
- *If used, lights must be firmly attached to drums.*

Barricades & Sign Supports

- Subtle design features affect crashworthiness
- Freeways: Level 3 crash test required – 62 mph
- Several generic designs tested to NCHRP 350 criteria
- MASH tests required in future
Approved Portable Mounting Systems

- Sign Board
- Up to 40 lb
- Specific Post Design

Figure 9.8. Details of the strong dual-upright sign support system with sign panel mounted at a height of 1.5 m (5 ft).
Crash Testing Necessary to Validate Crashworthy Performance

90° Test Of Michigan Standard Sign

Redesigned with Stiffer Uprights
Crashworthy Temporary Sign Supports

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBb44Kkan8g
Untested Devices
Where To Find Crashworthy Systems:

FHWA Policy and Guidance Center
Countermeasures that reduce crash severity

https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/countermeasures/reduce_crash_severity/
Other Devices

Barriers, Longitudinal Barricades & Crash Cushions

- Extensive crash testing required
- *Proper installation is essential*

Trailer-Mounted Equipment

- Crash testing currently not required
- Delineate
- Shield where possible
- Remove when not needed
Agency Standard Detail Drawings (SDDs)

- Mainline closures & detour signing
- Advance warning signs
- Signing for moving operations
- Signing for lane closures with barriers
- Ramp construction staging

- Single lane crossover with barrier
- Two lane closure
- Exit and entrance ramp closure
- Intersection within single lane closure
- Shoulder closure
- Temporary bypass, etc.
Common Traffic Management Techniques

- One-Lane, Two-Way Traffic Control
- Lane constriction
- Intermittent closure
- Lane closure
- Two-way operation on one-side of a divided highway
- Using shoulder, or portion of shoulder, as a driving lane(s)
- Construct temporary bypass lane(s)
- Diverting a portion of the traffic
- Full road closure with all traffic diverted
Typical Apps
ATSSA TTC Quality Guide

Quality Guidelines for Temporary Traffic Control Devices and Features

Acceptable

Marginal

Unacceptable
PCMS Principles

- Two phases maximum
- Understandable in either order
-Readable at highway speed
-MUTCD-compliant messages and abbreviations

Screen 1: Problem & Location
Screen 2: Desired Action
NCHRP 581:
Design of Construction Work Zones on High-Speed Highways

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Design Controls and Principles
Chapter 3: Conceptual Design and Planning of Work Zones
Chapter 4: Roadway Design
Chapter 5: Roadside Design and Barrier Placement
Chapter 6: Ancillary Design Information
NCHRP 581: Content Examples

Exhibit 4-7. Example plan view of median crossover.

CONSTRUCTION ZONE
Parallel Design

Taper Design

Exhibit 4-15. Temporary interchange exit ramp for a median crossover.

Exhibit 5-3. Cross sections for outside lane and shoulder closure for part-width construction on a four-lane divided highway.

Exhibit 6-3. Example emergency turnout.
AASHTO Resources

- **AASHTO A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book):** Limited guidance on work zones.
- **AASHTO Roadside Design Guide:** Chapter 9 discusses traffic barriers, traffic control devices and other features in work zones.
- **AASHTO Highway Safety Manual:** Includes methods for estimating increase in crashes due to construction.
Fundamental Principles
1: Know Your Site

Street View and Photolog are useful, but there is still no substitute for spending time at the site:

• 3D geometrics – physical dimensions
• How motorized and non-motorized traffic/users make use of the facility
• Differences between night and day
• Quality of detour/alternate routes – safety, pavement condition, lane widths, grades, degree of curvature, truck route? Require mitigation improvements?
• Interaction with other roadways and infrastructure

“Only through endless walking can the designer absorb into his being the true scale of...spaces.” --Edmund Bacon Design of Cities, 1974
2: Accommodate All Users at All Times

Plan and design for the safe accommodation of all road users during every stage of construction:

- Pedestrians and bicyclists
- Transit vehicles and riders
- Motor vehicles including motorcycles
- Heavy trucks (including those carrying hazardous materials and oversize/overweight loads that require state issued permits)
- Construction-related traffic
- Incident management vehicles

Challenges:

- Adequate accommodation for infrequent types of road users
- Stage changes and other transitional periods
- Extended lulls in construction activity
- Adverse weather and lighting conditions
- Access to properties adjacent to the roadway
3: Make the Work Zone “Self-Explaining”

- Keep geometrics and roadside design as similar to permanent layouts as site conditions allow
- Provide visual cues that show drivers what speed and maneuvers are appropriate
- Make transitions gradually and delineate them clearly
- Provide clear route guidance
- Avoid over-reliance on signage
- Avoid frequent or abrupt changes in geometrics and number of lanes
- Avoid abrupt increases and decreases in running speeds
- Avoid violating driver expectations

Also see: MUTCD Section 5G.01
4: Manage Queueing and Delay

Know your traffic:
- Get data about how traffic volume varies by season, day of week, and time of day.
- Identify periods with unusually high/low volumes of pedestrians, buses, heavy trucks, etc.
- Evaluate site-specific traffic effects of holidays and events

Obtain a traffic analysis and use its results to manage traffic impacts:
- Adjust lane closure days/hours to minimize queuing and delay
- Provide queue warning to prevent back-of-queue crashes
- Manage queues by encouraging diversion of excess flow to alternate routes
5: Make Sensible Investments in Alternate Routes

- Provide clear alternate route signing and marking
- Resolve localized bottlenecks such as insufficient left turn capacity
- Improve signal timing and progression
  - Fix malfunctioning loop detectors, etc.
  - Install GPS-based controller clocks to maintain tight coordination
- Address issues that disproportionately affect throughput:
  - Illegal parking
  - Loading zones
  - Poorly-positioned bus stops
6: Expect the Unexpected

Design-in a contingency plan for:
- Traffic incidents in the work zone
- Occupational injuries on the work site
- Lost/misdirected motorists
- Lost/misdirected materials delivery vehicles
- Construction delays
7: Coordinate with Other Agencies & Organizations

Reduce unexpected and unusual situations by coordinating plan preparation with:

- Other highway agencies
- Transit
- Law enforcement & other emergency responders
- Schools
- Utilities
- Railroads
8: Include Appropriate Contractual Provisions

- Training requirements for workers and their supervisors
- Routine inspection of traffic control elements
- Inspection and maintenance of roadside safety
9: Promote worker and road user safety

- Be alert for site defects and point them out to someone who can resolve them.
- Stay up-to-date on best practices for work zone safety.
- Mentor junior staff about common pitfalls and their solutions.
- Encourage sharing of technical information about work zone design, including both positive and negative examples.
- Encourage constructive dialogue on procedures, policies, standards, and legislation that can improve work zone safety.
- Use project-related public outreach to reinforce work zone safety messages.
- Set a positive example by complying with traffic laws and using safe practices when driving through work zones.
Class Exercise

• A suburban arterial normally operates at 45 to 50 mph.
• During construction the safe running speed will be about 35 mph.
• What could you do to give the roadway the “feel” of a 35 mph facility?
Class Exercise

Situation
• A suburban arterial normally operates at 45 to 50 mph.
• During construction the safe running speed will be about 35 mph.
• What could you do to give the roadway the “feel” of a 35 mph facility?

Potential Tactics
• Install advisory 35 mph speed signs.
• Space the channelizing devices closely.
• Use temporary pavement marking or a double row of channelizing devices to narrow the lanes and provide a wider lateral buffer for worker protection.
• Install temporary fencing along the outside curbline to make the road space look narrower to drivers and keep pedestrians out of the work zone.
• Create temporary pedestrian refuges to allow two-stage crossings and emphasize ped/bike safety.
• Require construction vehicles, contractor vehicles, and agency vehicles to observe a 35 mph maximum speed.
• Time the traffic signals for 35 mph progression and provide signage indicating that this is the case.
Traffic Management Exposure Control Measures

Exposure control can be accomplished by diverting some or all traffic away from the work site, reducing the duration to complete the project, or altering the time when work is conducted.

- Off Peak or Night Work Zone Operations
- Contracting Strategies to Expedite Completion
- Innovative Construction Techniques to Expedite Completion
Off Peak or Night Work Zone Operations
Construction Techniques to Expedite Completion

Slide-In Bridge Construction
Construction Techniques to Expedite Completion

Precast Concrete Panel Pavement Systems
Frequent Design Problems
Sign Clutter

- Overuse of traffic signs can dilute important messages and cause information overload.
- Even without construction, many locations are cluttered with traffic signs and advertising.
- Adding work zone signs can worsen clutter, especially if all permanent signs remain in place.

- Is there enough time to read and mentally process all signs at normal driving speed?
- Are some signs hidden by others?
Sign Clutter Reduction

- Determine and prioritize all permanent and temporary messages
  1. Regulations and essential safety messages
  2. Major routing decisions
  3. Informational / “nice to have”
- Evaluate sign spacing and legibility
- Purge illegal advertising signs
- Remove or cover unnecessary signs
- Position pedestrian, bike, and transit signs where they are less likely to distract motorists
- Where possible, simplify wording and graphic design of signs
Pavement Edge Drops

- Edge drop hazards → rollover crash risk
- Verify grade differences during plans development
- Mitigation methods:
  - Temporary barriers
  - Temporary backfill
  - Adjust/revise grades
  - Change construction sequence
  - Limit traffic to low speed
Figure 25. North Dakota’s Longitudinal Edge Drop-Off Guidelines
Constructability
What is Constructability?

Constructability is a pre-construction process exploring:

• Extent to which a design facilitates ease of construction, subject to the overall requirements for the completed project.

• A system for integration of construction knowledge and experience in planning, engineering, procurement, and field operations in the building process.

• A process for balancing various project and environmental constraints to maximize achievement of project goals.

Constructability includes:

• Review of completeness and adequacy of project documentation.

• Analysis of buildability, scheduling, logical sequencing, and complexity of project elements.
Consequences of Poor Constructability

Constructability issues can result in:

• Traffic delays
• Construction delays
• Change orders / cost overruns
• Disputes
• Public/political dissatisfaction with project delivery
• Claims that the PS&E package was inadequate

Source: Institute of Professional Engineers of New Zealand, Practice Note #13 (2008)
Common Constructability Issues

- Conflicting work operations requiring the same physical space.
- Work operations and traffic management requiring the same space.
- Inability to get materials in/out of a work area efficiently.
- Inability to use areas (for construction or for traffic) because work elsewhere is not completed.
- *They are often made worse when there are two or more contracts, contractors, or agencies doing work in the same area.*
Constructability Tools

- Clear project objectives
- Independent plan reviews
- 3D renderings of each project stage

Construction of the Eiffel Tower, December 1888
Class Discussion

• What are some constructability issues you have encountered in your previous projects?
• What were the mobility and safety impacts?
• How did you communicate the problem to others in your organization?
• How did you resolve the problem?
• What steps are being taken to avoid similar problems in the future?
Staging Alternatives

A Small Group Exercise
Re-Decking Wellington Rd Bridge

Wellington Rd over Hwy 401

Site
Re-Decking Wellington Rd Bridge

One of six bridges that to be let as a package.
Aerial View of Site
Alt 1: Staged Construction
• Full Retaining Abutments
• Limited Space Under Bridge
Staging Considerations:
• Demolition Debris
• Work Duration
Alt 2: Detour
Alternative 2
Alternative 2

Temporary Paving

Temporary Paving
Alternative 2
Alternative 2
Alternative 2: Wellington Rd Detour
Traffic Volumes

Westbound
- 20,000 AADT
- 1500 PHV

Eastbound
- 25,000 AADT
- 1500 PHV

Northbound
- 5000 AADT
- 400 PHV

Southbound
- 5000 AADT
- 400 PHV
- 2500 AADT
- 200 PHV
- 2500 AADT
- 200 PHV
Polling Question