

WORK ZONE SAFETY & MOBILITY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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Prepared by:

Vermont Agency of Transportation



The following document was drafted in response to updates made to the work zone regulations at 23 CFR 630 Subpart J, published by the Federal Highway Administration. This document applies to all federal aid projects that have a pre-final contract administration/step submittal date after January 1, 2008.

Work Zone Safety and Mobility Vision

Current and future work zone safety and mobility issues mean that transportation practitioners need to minimize and manage the work zone impacts of transportation projects. In order to meet safety and mobility needs during highway maintenance and construction, and to meet the expectations of the traveling public, it is important to systematically analyze and assess the work zone impacts of projects and take appropriate action to manage these impacts.

The following has been adopted as the Vermont Agency of Transportation's (VTrans) work zone safety and mobility vision statement: *To provide optimum safety for workers and the traveling public while maintaining acceptable levels of mobility in an efficient environment for the contractors to complete the project work in accordance with their contracts.*

Work Zone Safety and Mobility Goals and Strategies

Goal: To provide a safe work zone for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists (the traveling public) and construction personnel.

Strategy: Development of site-specific traffic control plans, while ensuring compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and state design standards and specifications.

Goal: To minimize construction-related delays.

Strategy: Construction-related delays will be monitored. A change to the traffic management plan will be considered for construction-related delays greater than ten minutes.

Goal: To gain further knowledge of work zone procedures applicable to the State of Vermont.

Strategy: Summarize the work zone field evaluations to identify the effectiveness of implemented safety measures and to improve future Transportation Management Plans (TMP).

Goal: To ensure that the appropriate personnel have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to design and/or implement a TMP.

Strategy: Management will be responsible for ensuring that their personnel has been provided appropriate training in accordance with their defined roles. Training to include but not limited to: flagger certification, NHI courses, AGC training, and the Vermont Local Roads Program courses.

Project Classification

The purpose of the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Guidance document is to allow VTrans to better anticipate the impacts associated with individual projects. Examples of impacts include internal project coordination, project scheduling and overall cost. Every federally funded project will require a TMP. The classification of the project will determine the complexity of the TMP. All transportation projects must be classified into one of three types of projects: significant, moderate, or minor projects. To accurately classify a project, several design characteristics must be analyzed to provide **guidance** in determining the appropriate project classification. The following characteristics should be evaluated when determining any project classification. These characteristics include but are not limited to:

- Project Location (Urban/Rural Setting)
- Primary Network (Interstate, Interchanges, Major State Roads, Major Intersections, NHS, Truck Network)
- Construction Duration (Months, Years)
- Access Management Category (Driveway Density, Business/Industry Density)
- Traffic Volumes (Average Annual Daily Traffic, Peak Hour Traffic, Existing Crash Rates, Car-Truck-Pedestrian-Bicycle Volumes)
- Proximity To Other Construction Projects
- Available Detour Routes

A project classification should be identified by the appropriate Project Manager¹, and confirmed by their respective Program Manager as early as the scoping process. This classification should be analyzed periodically throughout the design process to ensure that any design changes or site characteristic changes will not require a classification modification. Project classification is used to help identify the impacts associated with different types of transportation projects. This classification is used to determine what TMP should be applied to the project. The following definitions closely follow FHWA's Work Zone Self Assessment, http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/docs/wz-sa-docs/sa_guide_s4.htm.

¹ Please note that the position titles used in this document are typical Program Development Division titles. Applicable Operations Division titles as well as alternate VTrans Division titles may be substituted as necessary.

Significant Projects: Significant projects have a high level of public interest and will likely impact a large number of travelers. This impact must be analyzed individually and also in combination with concurrent active projects. It will have moderate to high user-cost impacts and the duration is usually moderate to long. These characteristics create work zone impacts that fall outside of the typical work zone safety and mobility thresholds. Examples of this work type may include: major corridor reconstruction, high impact intersection reconstruction, full closures on high volume facilities, major bridge reconstruction or repair, repaving projects that require long term lane closures, etc (e.g. Shelburne-South Burlington US 7 Reconstruction Project). It is important to note that significant projects are unique in that they have considerable impacts to the project area as well as the surrounding community.

Moderate Projects: Moderate projects have the potential to affect the level of public interest and may impact a modest number of commuters. These projects would include typical roadway, bridge, and paving projects.

Minor Projects: Minor projects have a minimal impact to the traveling public and a short duration. Typical projects within this category include sign installation, bridge inspection, pavement marking, and various maintenance activities.

Transportation Management Plans (TMPs)

TMPs are strategies/methodologies that will be implemented to ensure safe and mobile work zones within transportation projects. The project classification will determine the detail level required for the TMP. There are three major components of a TMP;

Temporary Traffic Control Plan (TTC): A TTC plan describes temporary traffic control measures to be used for facilitating road users through a work zone or an incident area. The TTC plan plays a vital role in providing continuity of reasonably safe and efficient road user flow and highway worker safety when a work zone, incident, or other event temporarily disrupts normal road user flow. The TTC plan shall be consistent with the provisions of the MUTCD and AASHTO Roadside Design Guide.

Transportation Operations Component (TO): The TO component shall include the identification of strategies to mitigate impacts of the work zone on the operation of the transportation system within the work zone impact area. The work zone impact area consists of the immediate work zone as well as affects to the surrounding roadways and communities. Examples of practices that may be used to satisfy the TO component may be found at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/rule_guide/sec6.htm#sec63.

Public Information Component (PI): The PI component shall include communication strategies that seek to inform the general public of work zone impacts and the changing condition of the project. The general public may

include road users, area residences and businesses, and other public entities. Examples of communications strategies that may be used to satisfy the PI component may be found at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/rule_guide/sec6.htm#sec63.

Significant Projects: The TMP for significant projects shall consist of a TTC, a TO, and a PI.

Moderate/Minor Projects: The TMP for moderate and minor projects shall consist of a TTC. A TO and a PI are not required, but may be applicable to certain projects as determined by the Project Manager.

Design Strategies

The development of a TMP is an iterative process that may vary significantly between projects. Work on a TMP should begin early in the project development process. There are numerous resources available to the designer to assist in the development of this plan: several of these are listed in the reference section of this document. The following outlines the key components of the TMP development process.

Preliminary Data Collection: As early as scoping, the project design team collects, analyzes, and documents all applicable project data.

Determine Project Classification: A project classification is determined based on the initial data that was collected. The project classification defines what components are required in the TMP.

Develop TMP: Work zone management strategies should be identified based on the project characteristics and used to develop all necessary aspects of the TMP. Applicable resources should be contacted during this step to obtain their input. This may include utilization of previous work zone feedback provided by the Construction Section. Plans and contract documents shall be based on standard specifications and include necessary pay items.

Update/Revise TMP: As a project progresses through all of the design stages the TMP should be re-evaluated to ensure that any project changes do not affect the TMP. It is possible that the project classification could change during the project design stages.

Finalize TMP: Ensure that the contract plans, special provisions, and estimate include all of the applicable elements of the TMP and allow the flexibility to develop or modify a TMP.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Step 1: A preliminary analysis will be performed by the *Design Team* to determine project classification. This preliminary analysis will be documented in the project's design file.
- Step 2: The *Project Manager* will have the responsibility of monitoring the project and proposed classification and informing the respective *Program Manager*.
- Step 3: The *Design Team* will develop a transportation management plan. The *Project Manager* will monitor the classification status. If there are significant changes, the project classification may be modified.
- Step 4: The *Construction Resident Engineer* will be responsible for identifying and documenting deficiencies in the TMP that compromise the effectiveness of the work zone and coordinating any improvements with the Contractor/State safety representative. Examples of data that may be included in the work zone documentation includes; crashes or other traffic incidents, traffic delay, traffic conflicts, and public comments. The *Project Manager* may assist in addressing any proposed modifications to the TMP during the construction process.
- Step 5: The *Regional Construction Engineer* will complete a work zone summary of TMP effectiveness based on the work zone documentation and any applicable work zone reviews performed by Traffic Operations.
- Step 6: The *Work Zone Safety and Mobility Committee* will consist of representatives from multiple sections within VTrans. This committee will review the work zone summary and will be responsible for updating the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Guidance document based on feedback from the year's construction projects. This committee will be responsible for sharing all applicable information throughout the Agency as well as with additional working groups and committees.

Application/Feedback

The Construction Engineer will submit a summary of TMP effectiveness and recommendations for improvements at the end of the construction season based on the work zone documentation provided by the Regional Engineers. The Work Zone Safety and Mobility Committee will meet annually to discuss these summaries. These summaries will serve to identify common TMP practices that are not working effectively, and will also assist in identifying TMP practices that are successful. The Work Zone Safety and Mobility Guidance document and supporting documentation will be revised to reflect the field evaluation summaries.

References

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Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies. U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, November 2005.