Road Work Ahead Sign Guidance
October 5, 2009





The purpose of this guidance is to provide MDT field crews and Transportation Management Plan (TMP) teams with help in the use of the W20-1, Road Work Ahead, advanced warning sign.

Use on Rural Construction Projects

Rural construction projects may have a number of intersecting roadways within the project limits. These roadways may be long open-ended roads, with connecting routes, and with a number of residences spread out along the road. Or, the intersecting roadway may be a short (one mile or two) distance and dead-end with just a few residences. Installment of the W20-1 as a permanent sign, no matter the type or length of roadway, has been the typical standard.

Roadways that are open-ended with connecting routes, numerous residents, or commercial businesses require posting of the W20-1 sign. If the W20-1 sign is required for more than three days, the MUTCD requires installing the sign as a permanent sign.

Intersecting roadways that terminate with no inlet or outlet, have only a few residents (5-6 max), and have no commercial businesses may not need a permanent W20-1 sign mounted. A public relations plan requiring the contractor to inform residents of construction may be a better solution. Using engineering judgment, the Project Manger will make the decision as to whether or not a portable sign mount is required for the W20-1. If the portable sign mount is used and after three days of construction along with pre-warning by the contractor, it is reasonable to expect that the residents are aware of the construction, removal of the temporary sign is allowable. Visitors to these residences will have previously driven through the construction project and do not need advanced warning when returning.

Use on Urban Construction Projects

The placement of the W20-1 signs in an urban project is generally required at all intersecting streets. Most urban streets are open-ended with a large number of residents and businesses involved. While a substantial amount of traffic may be local traffic through these intersections, an occasional motorist may proceed into the construction project unaware of the situation. In these cases, the permanent mounted W20-1 signs are required. However, there may exist cul-de-sacs or short dead-end streets in residential areas where a public relations plan requiring the contractor to inform property owners of

construction may be a better solution. Similar to the use on rural projects, the Project Manager will use engineering judgment when deciding to implement a portable sign mount for the W20-1 at these locations.

The intent of this guidance is to reduce the number of signs on a project and reduce traffic control costs without affecting safety or mobility. However, Project Managers may require permanent mounting of the signs at any time based upon their engineering judgment. Compromising the safety and mobility of road users in order to reduce signs or costs is not an acceptable solution.

Jim Wingerter
Construction Engineering Services Bureau