

DISTRICT 9 SAFETY REVIEW TEAM MEETING

Monday, August 16, 2010
9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Jim Brushhart, District Deputy Director
Mark Johansen, Staff Specialist
Doug Buskirk, Planning Administrator
Darrel Armstrong, Highway Management Administrator
Gary Cochenour, Production Administrator
Greg Baird, Traffic Studies Engineer
Patricia Wetzel, Transportation Engineer
Jennifer Phillips, Transportation Engineer
Richard Chaffin, Traffic Management Analyst (DSRT Chairperson)

AGENDA:

Pike County, State Route 32 & 220/Germany Road

This location was previously studied as part of the District Safety Annual Work Plan. The approved safety project is well progressed into the design stage. The DSRT met on June 15, 2010 to determine if we should remove the traffic signal from the project that is proposed at intersection of State Route 32 & Schuster Road where the new State Route 220 will be relocated to. In the June 15 meeting it was determined we need more information before we make the final decision. The signal was originally recommended for the intersection several years ago when the DSRT previously studied this location. Since that time District 9 has a new focus on high speed four lane divided highways to avoid installing stop and go traffic control signals. This is the case for State Route 32 especially since we have a 60 mph speed limit. The District would like to look at other alternatives instead of automatically installing traffic control signals when an intersection meets a warrant. Traffic control signals create the potential for rear end accidents and these accidents have the potential to be severe with the high speeds like we have on State Route 32. It should be noted that in an adjacent District (District 8) they have also determined they will look at other alternatives instead of installing traffic control signals on State Route 32. In fact, they have taken the lead and have begun proactive steps towards eliminating traffic control signals on State Route 32.

The team looked at the new traffic counts and the new signal warrants that were completed since the June 15 meeting. The traffic volumes were analyzed by diverting the existing State Route 220 traffic across Schuster Road since this will be upgraded to become State Route 220. It was determined that we no longer meet the peak hour warrant from the new traffic counts. This warrant was met before. It should be noted that school was not in session during the new traffic count and there is some reduction in commercial traffic since Mills Pride is closing. Also, we are now removing some of the right turning traffic when we perform signal warrants (right turn reduction). The only warrant the intersection now meets is the 4 hour volume warrant. This warrant is now met a little stronger than it did previously. There was considerable discussion on whether or not to remove the traffic signal from the safety project. We are not currently experiencing accidents at the intersection and the project will not create significantly higher

traffic volumes at the new intersection. There were only two accidents at the intersection for years 2006, 2007, and 2008 which was the current three year accident period looked at in the June 15 meeting. After considerable discussion the team determined that we should not install the traffic control signal because we are not experiencing accidents and the signal will create a potential for rear end accidents on State Route 32 which is a 60 mph four lane divided highway. Additionally, it is the overall focus of the District to avoid installing traffic signals on State Route 32. This was not the focus several years ago when the recommendation was made. It was stated during the discussions that we should go ahead and construct the traffic signal in the project but design it as an overhead flasher that could later be converted to a stop and go traffic control signal. Some of the team members were opposed to this because it is thought the flasher would provide minimal benefit to enhance safety at the intersection and it could force us to install the signal at a later date if we start experiencing problems. The team would want to look at other alternatives to a traffic control signal if we start seeing operational or safety problems at the intersection. After a long discussion the team decided to go ahead and construct the flasher with strain poles and a traffic signal controller that could be converted to a stop and go signal in the future if necessary. The signal heads will be installed as single unit heads instead of three section heads so motorists should not confuse it as a stop and go signal. The flasher heads will be red to the side streets and yellow to State Route 32.

In addition to the discussions about removing the signal from the project the team decided to once again discuss the current State Route 32 and State Route 220/Germany Road intersection. This intersection was discussed extensively in the June 15 meeting and it was determined to leave the intersection as it is currently being designed in the project. The current design changes State Route 220 (which will become a county road) to a right in/right out configuration and leaves a full access for Germany Road except for the thru movement across the median. Since the June 15 meeting there have been three accidents at this intersection involving motorists entering State Route 32 from Germany Road. One of the accidents was a double fatality. The team discussed several alternatives most of which have been previously discussed. The team decided we should go ahead and keep working on the current design because we do not want to delay to the current project. Any of the alternatives the team may want to pursue would probably have to be a separate stand alone project because we will have to pursue additional funding and we may need to purchase additional right of way. All of the alternatives the team discussed will involve further restrictions to the full access of Germany Road since restricting the access would further enhance the safety of the overall intersection. The discussions for improving the safety of this access involved relocating the intersection, constructing an overpass over State Route 32, or channelizing the State Route 32 westbound thru traffic into the right westbound lane and allowing the Germany Road left turning traffic to have exclusive right of way to the S.R. 32 west bound left lane.

The meeting had to be adjourned due to team members schedules so it was determined we will meet at a later date to further discuss possible modification to the Germany Road access.

RDC

c: J. Brushart, DSRT members