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STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION USES INNOVATIVE “ZIPPER” BARRIER FOR MD 140 BRIDGE PROJECT AT THE BALTIMORE / CARROLL COUNTY LINE

Reversible Lane and Signal System Begins in Mid-April; Speed Limit Reduced to 45 MPH Through Construction Work Zone

(April 2, 2015) – As part of the MD 140 (Westminster Pike) Bridge reconstruction at the Baltimore / Carroll county line, the Maryland Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration (SHA) needs to temporarily reduce the travel lanes across the bridge from four to three. To avoid excessive traffic back-ups, SHA will use a movable barrier and signal system to provide a reversible lane. By using a “zipper-like” barrier, SHA can better accommodate the most-heavily traveled direction of traffic and enhance safety in a limited size work zone.

During the weekend of April 11-12 (weather permitting), SHA’s contractor will implement the new traffic pattern with the “zipper” barrier and reduce the four lane bridge to three lanes. SHA will send updated information if it is postponed. One of the three lanes will be reversible carrying traffic towards Baltimore (eastbound MD 140) during the morning peak period from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and during the weekends.

For the evening rush hour, two lanes will be available towards Westminster (westbound MD 140) from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Overhead signals with green arrows and red “X” lane controls will guide drivers through the work zone. Traffic will remain in this phase through fall 2015 while crews widen the eastbound side of the bridge.

“Even with the reversible lane to accommodate the heavy directional volumes, drivers should plan extra travel time, especially during rush hours,” said SHA District Engineer Mark Crampton. “SHA continues to explore new technologies like the zipper barrier for safe, accelerated construction. With workers present and construction activity underway, SHA asks drivers to reduce speeds and remain alert for the traffic pattern changes. ”

The “zipper” barrier will extend one-half of a mile along the middle of the bridge. Crews will use specialized equipment to switch the barrier for the reversible lane. During each traffic switch, sometime between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and again between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m., there will only be one lane in each direction for 30-45 minutes. Overhead lane control signals will show the green arrow or red “X” for each lane, along with temporary traffic signs. View a video of a similar system by [clicking here](#).

The \$7.4 million bridge rehabilitation project includes replacing the deck (driving surface) and supporting steel beams and widening the shoulders of the MD 140 Bridge over the North Branch

of the Patapsco River (Liberty Reservoir). Crews are also widening the structure to provide 10-ft. outside shoulders.

SHA will also temporarily close the southern access point of Old Westminster Pike at MD 140, and direct traffic to use Old Gamber Road and MD 91 (Gamber Road). Motorists may also encounter temporary single-lane closures on MD 140 during the overnight hours during the next two weeks as crews install the barrier. Single lane closures will also occur during this phase of the project.

SHA is temporarily reducing the speed limit from 50 mph to 45 mph through the work zone for worker and motorist safety. Drivers are encouraged reduce speeds, remain alert for work crews and equipment entering and exiting the work area.

The MD 140 Bridge was constructed in 1946. It is structurally safe, but showing signs of deterioration due to age, requiring rehabilitation. SHA's contractor for the project is Anchor Construction Corp. of Washington, D.C.

SHA offers a bird's eye view of the project 24-7 through a closed-circuit camera feed on the project web page. To view the camera and for more information about the project, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/MD140bridge>. For questions about the MD 140 Bridge project or others in Frederick, Carroll or Howard counties, please call the SHA District 7 Office at 1-800-635-5119.

In addition to this project, drivers may also encounter mobile or short-term work zones. Always expect the unexpected, pay extra close attention and drive slowly through any work zone. Whether it's a tree trimming operation or a bridge project, be aware when orange is there: **Think Orange** (the color of construction equipment and signs), stay alert and slow down. Everyone is at risk. In four out of five work zone-related crashes, it is the driver or passenger who is injured or killed. In 2014, nine people lost their lives in Maryland work zone crashes, including four highway workers. While SHA and its transportation partners work hard to keep traffic safely moving in work zones, please partner with us because work zone safety is everyone's business – slow down and stay alert. Safer driving. Safer work zones. For everyone.

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