



# Managing Work Zones for Improved Vehicle Access to Voting Day: Information Brief

Source: USDOT/Getty.

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## Document Purpose

Work zones can have a significant impact on travel to and from polling places by all types of travelers, including motorists, transit riders, and vulnerable road users. As part of the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) support for [Executive Order 14019, Promoting Access to Voting](#), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Operations encourages the use of traffic analysis and enhanced work zone management principles to improve access to voting days.

This information brief contains a checklist that agencies can use to help mitigate vehicular-access-related work zone impacts near voting locations.

## Work Zone Impacts Adversely Affecting Vehicle Access to Voting Locations

Work zones can cause significant vehicular delays getting to and from a voting location, restrict curbside access to the location, and restrict parking availability around the location. The impact may affect motorists, transit riders, and transportation network company services. Delays can also occur on alternative routes to voting locations as motorists divert away from the congestion caused by work zone activities on voting days.

Roadway construction and maintenance contracts, in-house maintenance forces, and utility contractor or vertical construction permits and agreements can all create impacts. Agencies may need to make efforts to minimize the likelihood that those impacts occur on voting days. Likewise, agencies may need strategies to mitigate such impacts if the impacts cannot be completely avoided. Effective work zone management may involve efforts in the following categories:

- Work zone processes, guidelines, and impact assessment
- Transportation management and public information exchange
- Monitoring and evaluation

## Checklist To Mitigate Increased Vehicle Travel Times to Voting Locations

### *Work Zone Management Processes, Guidelines, and Impact Assessment*

- Prior to voting days, reach out to the local board of elections to identify planned voting locations and determine whether current or anticipated work zones could impact voting location accessibility.
- Incorporate language into construction and maintenance contracts that restricts short-term lane closures from being in place on voting days. In addition, restrict temporary lane closures made by in-house maintenance forces on voting days.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) specifies that no work shall be performed and all existing lanes shall be open to traffic from 5 a.m. through 12 a.m. on General/Regular Election Day. —ODOT *Traffic Engineering Manual*, Section 642-6.

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) specifies to “not close travel lanes, ramps, or roads within 1 mile of a designated polling place during the primary and general elections that fall during an even numbered year.” —DeIDOT *Standard Specifications*, Section 801.3.5.C.

- Assess the project phasing schedule during project plan development to determine the potential for work-zone-related traffic delays occurring on voting days due to unique travel patterns.
- Include a step in the construction project management process to check whether any schedule changes to existing contracts might adversely affect accessibility to voting locations on voting days.
- Incorporate a step in the agency's lane closure permitting process to determine whether a lane closure permit request involves a lane closure on a roadway segment that serves a voting location on voting days.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) will add midterm and primary elections to the calendar of construction holds similar to holiday events. —NJDOT, in support of Executive Order 14019.

## Transportation Management and Public Information

- Include short-term strategies in transportation management plans (TMPs) that address expected voting day traffic impacts (e.g., implement a targeted voting day TMP), where warranted, as seen in figure 1.

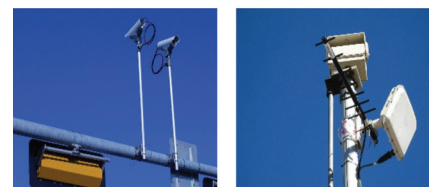
Examples of such strategies include but are not limited to:

- Restricting on-street parking or turning movements on critical routes serving voting locations
- Using portable changeable message signs and permanent changeable message signs to guide voting traffic and/or warn of downstream delays
- Positioning law enforcement to control traffic at critical intersections and driveways where congestion may develop
- Restoring bus service on voting days at transit stops that are near voting locations but are otherwise closed or relocated so that work zone activities can occur
- If schedule changes to existing contracts would result in capacity reductions on roadway segments by feeding voting locations that were not expected when the contract was implemented, modify the TMP to mitigate the unexpected impacts of the capacity reductions.
- Consider providing messages on social media and traveler information platforms about applicable detours or transit modifications that may affect access to voting locations impacted by a work zone.



Source: Federal Highway Administration.

**Figure 1. Signs that restrict parking and turning.**



Source: Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

**Figure 2. Intelligent transportation system surveillance equipment.**

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- Establish processes for monitoring road conditions around voting locations on voting days. Examples of such processes include but are not limited to:
  - Using existing intelligent transportation system surveillance data (figure 2) and third-party traffic data
  - Reporting by field staff, law enforcement, and others
  - Gathering and addressing citizen comments and complaints about voting accessibility
- If unexpected congestion and accessibility issues did develop, organize and conduct an after-event review with all affected agencies to determine causes and potential solutions for future events.

## Additional Resources

FHWA has additional resources for agency practitioners to use for improving traffic analysis and work zone management practices at their agencies in consideration of voting day: [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program\\_areas/votingevents.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program_areas/votingevents.htm).

This website includes:

- [Resources Related to Work Zone Management for Voting day](#)
- ["Frequently Asked Questions"](#)
- An information brief for *Managing Work Zones for Improved Vulnerable Road User Access to Voting day*

[https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program\\_areas/votingevents.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program_areas/votingevents.htm)

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For technical assistance or additional resources on this topic, contact [FHWAVotingAccess@dot.gov](mailto:FHWAVotingAccess@dot.gov).