

Maryland State Highway Administration GUIDANCE ON IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

Given the variety and differing complexity of roadway projects, some projects are likely to have much greater effects on traffic conditions than others. Recognizing that not all road projects cause the same level of work zone impacts, it is reasonable to identify those that will have greater impacts such that the appropriate resources can be allocated to these projects. The Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule ("The Rule", 23 CFR 630 Subpart J) establishes a category of projects called "significant projects". A significant project is defined as one that, alone or in combination with other concurrent projects nearby, is anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts that are greater than what is considered tolerable based on State policy and/or engineering judgment.

What is the purpose of identifying significant projects?

Consideration of work zone impacts at the systems-planning level (either on a network-wide basis or corridor basis) can have several positive effects. For example, in cost estimation and budgeting for projects, an understanding of the expected level of work zone impacts of the road project will help in deciding what transportation management strategies are likely and to what extent a public information campaign is required. This understanding can then serve as the basis for developing reasonable cost estimates that are commensurate with the impacts of the project. Further, the analysis of the cumulative impacts of concurrent road projects will help better schedule construction, thereby minimizing the impacts on road users, businesses, and other affected parties.

When should significant projects be identified?

Significant projects should be identified during the planning phase of project delivery, prior to the development of alternatives. During subsequent project development stages, the significant project status should be reconfirmed. As more information becomes available for making project-specific decisions, certain projects that were thought to be significant may no longer be significant as a result of change in certain circumstances, and vice-versa.

What happens when a project is identified as a significant project?

For all significant projects, a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) shall be developed. The TMP will consist of the temporary traffic control plan, as well as transportation operations and public information strategies to manage work zone impacts. In addition to work zone impacts management strategies, the TMP may also include contingency plans, incident management plans, detailed roles and responsibilities, and implementation costs.

Who is responsible for identifying significant projects?

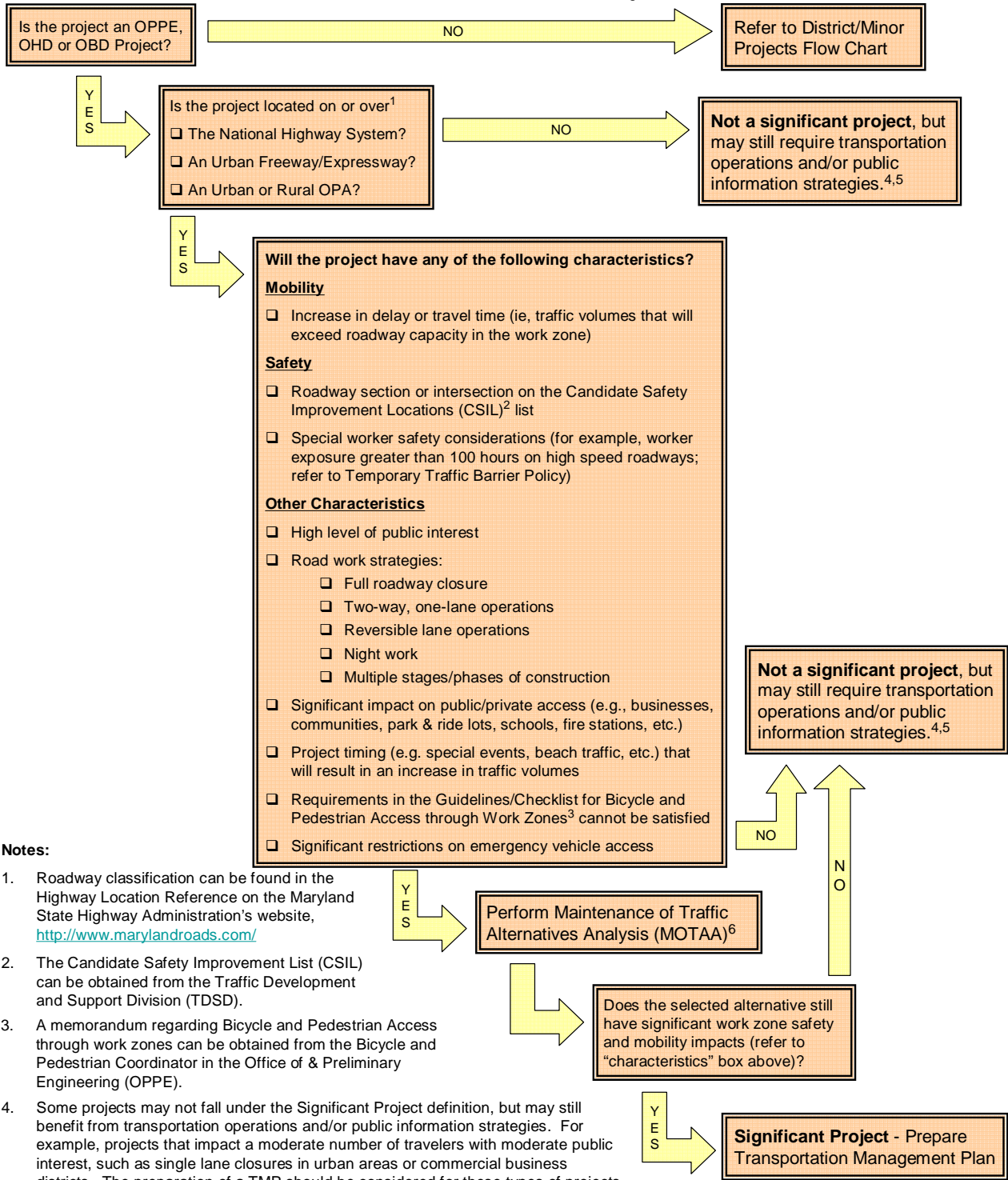
SHA and its project partners, including the FHWA, and other appropriate regional and local stakeholders, ideally should work together as a multi-disciplinary team to identify significant projects.

Exceptions

The Rule specifies that all Interstate system projects within the boundaries of a designated Transportation Management Area (TMA) that occupy a location for more than three days with either intermittent or continuous lane closures shall be considered as significant projects. For projects that are classified as significant through the application of this provision, but in the judgment of SHA they do not cause sustained work zone impacts, SHA may request an exception from the FHWA Division Office to the requirements triggered by the classification. Qualitative or quantitative criteria and methods (or a combination of both) can be used to illustrate that the specific project or categories of projects will not have sustained work zone impacts. For Federal Aid projects, approval of exceptions from the FHWA Area Engineer is recommended no later than semi-final design.

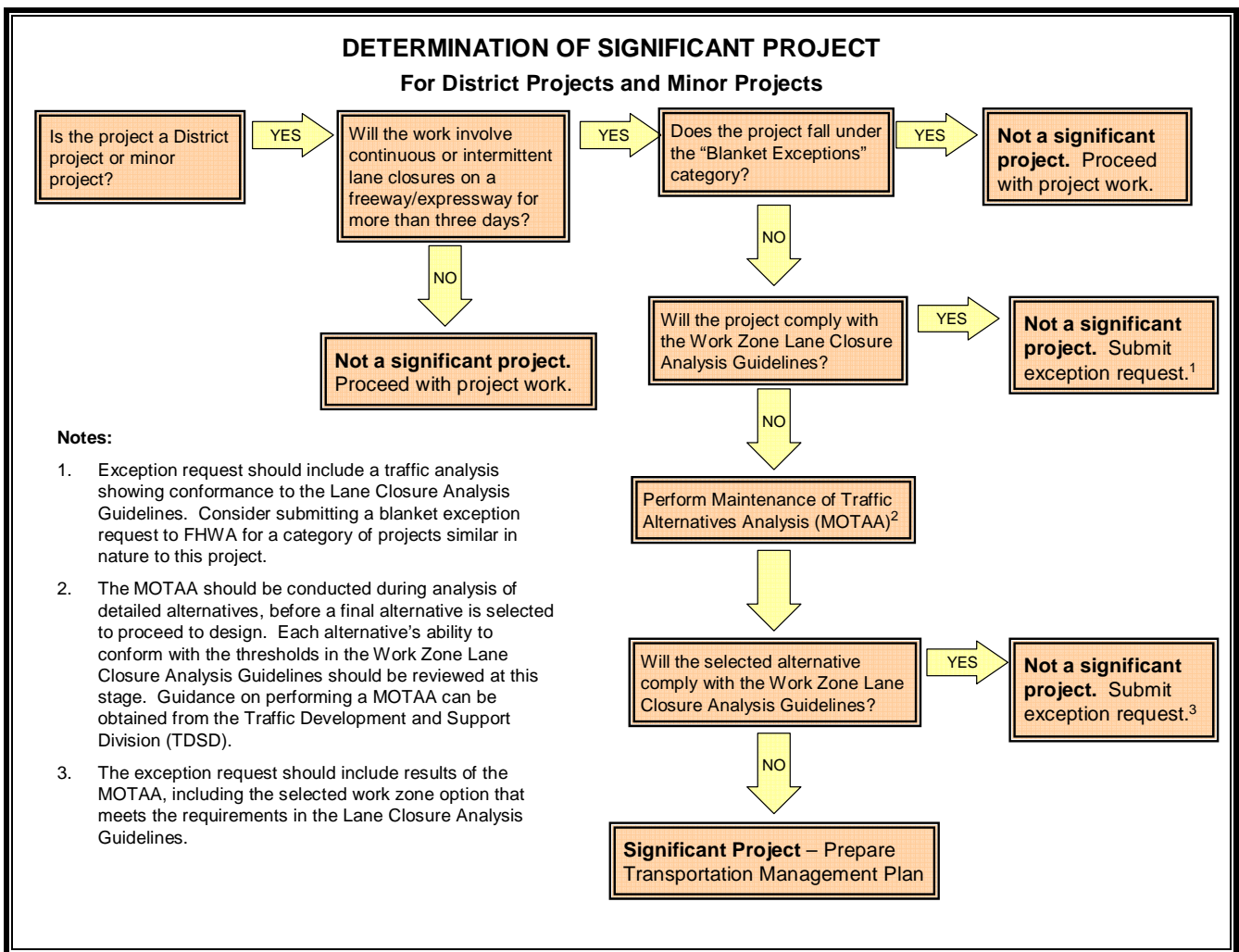
DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT PROJECT

For OPPE, OHD and OBD Projects



Notes:

- Roadway classification can be found in the Highway Location Reference on the Maryland State Highway Administration's website, <http://www.marylandroads.com/>
- The Candidate Safety Improvement List (CSIL) can be obtained from the Traffic Development and Support Division (TDSD).
- A memorandum regarding Bicycle and Pedestrian Access through work zones can be obtained from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator in the Office of & Preliminary Engineering (OPPE).
- Some projects may not fall under the Significant Project definition, but may still benefit from transportation operations and/or public information strategies. For example, projects that impact a moderate number of travelers with moderate public interest, such as single lane closures in urban areas or commercial business districts. The preparation of a TMP should be considered for these types of projects.
- Projects on the Interstate system within the boundaries of a designated Transportation Management Area (TMA) that occupy a location for more than three days with either intermittent or continuous lane closures will require the submittal of a significant project exception request to the FHWA Area Engineer.
- The MOTAA should be conducted during analysis of detailed alternatives, before a final alternative is selected to proceed to design. Each alternative's ability to conform with the thresholds in the Work Zone Lane Closure Analysis Guidelines should be reviewed at this stage. Guidance on performing a MOTAA can be obtained from the Traffic Development and Support Division (TDSD).



Acronyms:

CSIL – Candidate Safety Improvement Locations

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

MOTAA – Maintenance of Traffic Alternatives Analysis

OBD – Office of Bridge Development

OHD – Office of Highway Development

OPA – Other Principal Arterial

OPPE – Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering

TMA – Transportation Management Area

TMP – Transportation Management Plan