



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, DC 20590

November 20, 2008

In Reply Refer To: HOTO-1

Mr. Ronald L. Freeland
Executive Secretary
Maryland Transportation Authority
300 Authority Drive
Baltimore, MD 21222-2200

Dear Mr. Freeland:

Thank you for your July 10 letter to Nelson J. Castellanos, Division Administrator of the Maryland Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), forwarding your May 11, 2007, Final Report on the evaluation of your experiment number 3-181(Ex) with purple pavement marking "dots" to guide E-Z Pass transponder holders into the dedicated transponder lanes at the Fort McHenry Tunnel toll plaza on I-95 in Maryland. Mr. Castellanos forwarded your letter and report to my office for reply.

We are pleased that your evaluation has found that the experimental purple dot markings have provided documented operational benefits at the Fort McHenry Tunnel toll plaza. The reduction in lane changes with the dots in place indicates a potential for safety benefits, although the duration of your experiment was too short to document actual crash reductions, if any. The high level of customer satisfaction with the markings is also of value.

Your letter requests permission to expand the use of the purple dot markings by installing them at other suitable toll plaza sites in Maryland, such as those listed on page 35 of the 2007 evaluation report. In our November 15, 2005, letter approving your experimentation, we noted that:

The site of the experiment must be restored to a condition that complies with the provisions of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) within 3 months following the end of the time period of the experiment. If, as a result of the experimentation, a request is made that the MUTCD be changed to include the device or application being experimented with, the device or application will be permitted to remain in place until an official rulemaking action has occurred.

As noted previously, your experimentation to date has provided some data that is very promising in terms of the benefits of these markings. However, we do not believe that there is sufficient data at this time, from a sufficient number of sites that are geographically dispersed (not just in Maryland but around the U.S.), to justify consideration of including these markings in the MUTCD. We believe it would be beneficial for your agency to expand your experimentation

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with these markings by collecting, analyzing, and reporting on the before-and-after crash data at the Fort McHenry toll plaza and by adding the markings at other toll plazas in Maryland that may have different types of conditions present. However, it must be recognized that the experimentation process is not to be considered a carte blanche approval for widespread use of experimental devices on a system-wide basis. Thus, we would entertain a request from the Maryland Transportation Authority to expand the current experiment to include crash data at the Fort McHenry Tunnel site and to add purple dot markings at some specific selected additional toll plazas, with comparable data collection, analysis, and reporting.

If you wish to expand your experiment under these terms, please send us a letter so indicating, and we will consider granting approval. Otherwise, the existing purple dot markings should be allowed to deteriorate and not be maintained or replaced, and the explanatory signs should be removed.

Thank you for your interest in improving traffic safety through the use of innovative traffic control devices. If we can be of further assistance on this matter, please contact Mr. Scott Wainwright via e-mail at scott.wainwright@dot.gov or by telephone at 202-366-0857.

Sincerely yours,



Hari Kalla
Acting Director, Office of Transportation
Operations

July 10, 2008



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Mr. Nelson J. Castellanos
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
City Crescent Building, Suite 2450
10 South Howard Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

RE: Interim Report – Experimental Traffic Control Device Testing at Maryland Toll Plazas

Dear Mr. Castellanos:

The Maryland Transportation Authority is pleased to submit the second interim and final report for experimental traffic control device testing at Maryland toll plazas. The first interim report was submitted on March 9, 2006, and documented the process, methodology, and initial affect of purple roadway dots as a wayfinding device for *E-ZPass*[®] customers. This interim report documents the on going effects of the purple dots on driver behavior, summarizes the results of a second survey given to *E-ZPass*[®] customers, provides recommendations for improvements, and identifies potential future test sites.

The report documents demonstrated benefits of the dots in terms of reduced lane changes, improved lane utilization across dedicated *E-ZPass*[®] lanes, and positive customer responses. Based on these findings, we request permission from the Federal Highway Administration to continue application of the dots at suitable sites.

Thank you for your support of this study effort. Please let us know if we can respond to any questions, the contact for this study is Ms. Roxane Y. Mukai, Traffic Manager at 410-537-7848.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald L. Freeland".

Ronald L. Freeland
Executive Secretary

Attachment

C: Ms. Esther Strawder-Payton, FHWA
Mr. Scott Wainwright, FHWA (w/attachment)
Mr. Tom Hicks, SHA (w/attachment)
Ms. Roxane Y. Mukai, MdTA
Mr. Geoffrey V. Kolberg, MdTA