



The Eastern Transportation Coalition
Virtual Exchange: NYS Bridge Strike Task Force Initiative – December 15, 2023
Q&A Summary

The results of polling questions asked during the web meeting are at the bottom of the document.

Q: Michael Muha (New York State DOT): Have signs with pictures/no words been considered as a supplement? Language is a challenge in these times.

A: Robert Limoges (New York State DOT): Language was not a major hurdle.

A: Dan Carey (New York State DOT): We did conduct a study a few years ago about a preferred language. 80-85% of the respondents were English speakers and 10% did not speak English. There's still interest in picture-based signs (no-truck signs) and we know NYCDOT is looking into it. We're not allowed under MUTCD to come up with new symbol signs.

Q: Marygrace Parker (The Eastern Transportation Coalition): Were any of the bridge strikes in New York rail-related?

A: Dan Carey (New York State DOT): Rail bridges are a huge problem in New York. The video with height detection was a rail bridge. Part of the reason why we wanted to reestablish the Bridge Strike Task Force is because hits on railroad bridges are highly publicized. It's not something just isolated to New York City, Long Island, and Hudson Valley. It's statewide at this point. Rail bridges are also difficult to make changes to heights due to the engineering requirements.

Q: Sara Walfoort (Southern Pennsylvania Commission): So, to be truly useful, the warning signs need to be far enough from the vertical clearance issue that there is an exit option, correct?

A: Dan Carey (New York State DOT): Yes. Requirements in the MUTCD supplement explain that the signs need to be in a certain location along with a secondary installation in advance of the next exit and this exit is what needs to be taken. Positive guidance is recommended (ex. "trucks use I-95" or "trucks in the right lane to take the exit" instead of "passenger cars only").

C: Sara Walfoort (Southern Pennsylvania Commission): Including the reason WHY certain types of vehicles are prohibited is very interesting. Hopefully, it encourages compliance!

Just found this- WSDOT State Route Bridge Vertical Clearance Trip Planner.

<https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/data/tools/bridgeclearance/>

C: Robert Bradway (Connecticut DOT): In Connecticut, we are finding that GPS navigation also causes inattentive motorists to turn onto railroad tracks, detouring traffic over local roads/railroad crossings not designed for such heavy traffic and causing queues onto rail crossings. Also, bridge warning signs fade into the background of enhanced streetscaping.



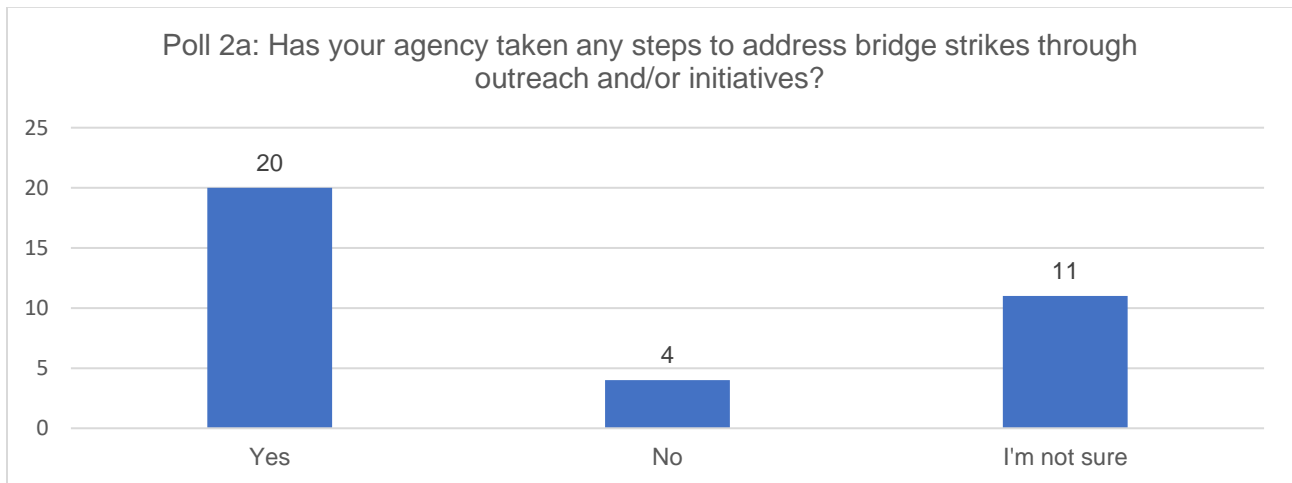
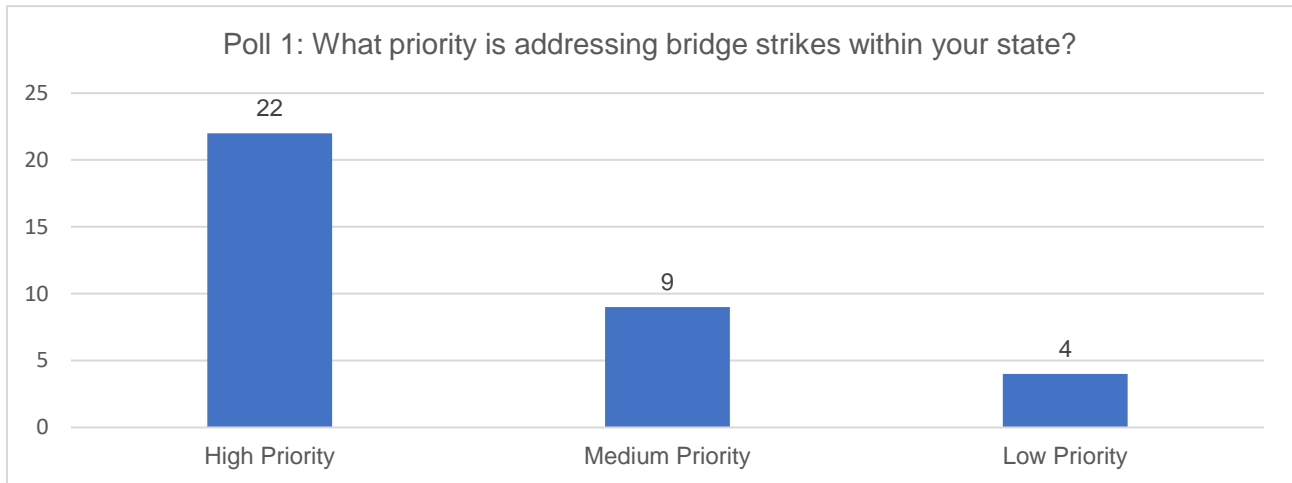
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- C: Andrew DeVault (Florida DOT):** Appetite for truck-specific GPS navigation software? (<https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+HB170>)
- C: Donald Logan (Virginia DOT):** We have been playing around with a typical supplemental sign that alerts trucks that this sign applies specifically to them (i.e., a yellow truck symbol, followed by a message to the truck). No uniformity yet.
- C: Jonathan Nicastro (New York State DOT):** Until a year ago there were some clankers under the jurisdiction of New York City along the entryways to the Belt Parkway. That may be a resource.
- C: Demel Gaillard (New York City DOT):** Our engineering team is hesitant about installing clanker bars. We recently removed one on the Brooklyn Bridge on the BQE approach, which has been an issue with non-compliant truck behavior and misplaced trucks trying to enter the bridge ramp. However, the key factor is a maintenance issue over time and a liability issue if the chains are not maintained well. We have a plan to ramp up enforcement and outreach. In our last meeting, we listed the top 10 egregious locations where we see more frequent overhead strikes. We will focus our attention on those points to try to decrease the number the percentage of bridge strikes. I think there are gems that we may be able to identify within the engineering treatments that we're given. I think it'd be cool to collect that data, compare geometric layouts to other places where you have issues, apply that treatment to that specific location, and develop a best practices guide.
- C: Sara Walfort (Southern Pennsylvania Commission):** A vertical height warning (with height info) is also useful to rental users for things like drive-through awnings, parking garage entrances/ramps, etc. It's sometimes hard to know your vehicle height until someone or something tells you.
- C: Robert Bradway (Connecticut DOT):** Railroad bridges don't always win - we recently had a rail bridge in Greenwich, CT displaced 5". Had train traffic not been notified in time, it could have been tragic. A local garbage truck company hit the bridge with a roll-off truck.
- C: L'Kiesha Markley (Maryland DOT-SHA):** We have been looking at Hypoint's bridge technology - Accelerometer & Hawkscan sensors for bridges but have not been able to pilot them to date.
- C: Robert Bradway (Connecticut DOT):** If GPS knows where Dunkin is ("turn right onto New Canaan Avenue after Dunkin Donuts") - it should be able to know where low bridges and rail crossings are.
- Q: Edgardo Perez (PANYNJ):** Have there been discussions by NYS to use low clearance warning signs on the bridge structures instead of regulatory signs (more consistent with neighboring states)?

Robert Bradway (Connecticut DOT), Richard Runyen (Pennsylvania DOT), and John Preiss (Rhode Island DOT) expressed interest in joining a Bridge Strike Task Force.



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Poll 2b: If yes, what were the steps taken?	
<i>Multiple responses from each state have been combined.</i>	
Agency	Response
Connecticut DOT	Fixed signs and a few trials of active warning systems. CT/Amtrak has started a few crash bars.
Florida DOT	Active signs at frequently struck bridges
Georgia DOT	Starting discussions on technology for prevention/ notification. Getting on a task force about bridge hits.
Maryland DOT-SHA	Internally but not in the trucking industry yet
Maryland Transportation Authority	Enforcement
New Hampshire DOT	Articles appear in local newspapers.
New York City DOT	Launching an education initiative in early 2024, will continue to work with regional partners to address the issue wholistically



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North Carolina DOT	Public awareness, TSI, and PSA. Media outlets...etc.
Pennsylvania DOT	PA has done at least 1 clanger bar in advance of a covered bridge Social Media Outreach a few years ago (pre-pandemic)
Rhode Island DOT	We just put out over-height detection system at two bridges and significantly increased fines for over-height trucks. Looking into automated routing for trucks.
Virginia DOT	No initiatives, we do plan on making CV info more available on our 511 services in 2024 such as low bridges. Overheight detection/warning sites.