

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY SAFETY CONCEPT PAPER
Concept Paper Summary

Applicant Information

Applicant Agency: Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
Implementing Agency: Sarasota County Sheriff's Office

Concept Paper Title: Sarasota County Work Zone Safety Enforcement
Priority Area for Concept Paper: Work Zone Safety

Amount Requested: \$123,950.00

Type of Project: Local

Type of Request: Initial

Previous Year's Project Number (if Continuation):

Head of Agency

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Project Contact

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Statement of the Problem:

Sarasota County has experienced an increasing number of serious traffic crashes, fatalities, increasing speed violations and distracted drivers over the past few years. The county is continually growing and with this growth comes construction and an influx of more vehicles. With more vehicles and construction, comes congestion followed by frustrated, agitated, and distracted drivers.

Each year more people are visiting the county during the winter and extending their stay or have just relocated, adding to the population and vehicular traffic on our roadways. Sarasota is home to many attractions for visitors and residents, including Spring Training for MLB, world-class rowing events, and even some of the world's best beaches. More people make more traffic and with more traffic more opportunities for traffic violations and crashes.

Sarasota is located between Tampa and Ft. Myers, and with over 41 miles of interstate, millions of cars ride

through our county between Tampa and Miami each year. Our county has several north-south thoroughfares including US 301, US41, and Interstate 75 and many east-west ancillary connectors which contribute to the flow of traffic. With our continued growth, new housing developments are sprouting up all over the county. Roadway construction alters traffic patterns and contributes to detours and congestion typically pushing drivers onto major thoroughfares to bypass the work zones.

Currently, we have four major roadway projects happening in Sarasota County and an additional project on the agenda. With those five projects, we anticipate additional work zone crashes. According to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) 2023 Highway Safety Matrix, Sarasota County ranked third highest of twenty-six counties for work zone violations, crashes, and injury crashes. The most recent data collected is as follows:

Current Work Zones:

SR72 at the Proctor & Dove Roundabout
I-75 & Clark Road Interchange
North River Road from US41 to I-75
US41 from Beneva Road to Caribbean Drive

Future Work Zones:

I-75 & SR780/Fruitville Road Interchange

Crashes Recorded in Work Zones:

In 2019 – 71 crashes
In 2020 – 125 crashes
In 2021 – 88 crashes

Although many factors contribute to the congestion and work zone crashes, we need to find a productive solution. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office conducts enforcement throughout those areas, but there is a need to have designated details to focus on the work zones and reduce crashes, violations and fatalities. Additional funding is needed for the personnel for overtime to staff those work zones and launch our proposed solution.

Supporting Data:

Current Work Zones:

SR72 at the Proctor & Dove Roundabout
I-75 & Clark Road Interchange
North River Road from US41 to I-75
US41 from Beneva Road to Caribbean Drive

Future Work Zones:

I-75 & SR780/Fruitville Road Interchange

Crashes Recorded in Work Zones:

In 2019 – 71 crashes
In 2020 – 125 crashes
In 2021 – 88 crashes

Proposed Solution:

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office believes the success of any traffic safety program includes the components of education, enforcement, or safety measures. This proposed program will look to reduce traffic

crashes, work zone violations, serious injuries, and fatalities which occur in work zones by implementing all the components.

The agency, specifically the program director, will review crash data on a weekly basis to determine where and when the highest frequency of crashes, including serious injury and fatalities occur. We will develop a schedule for traffic and road deputies to conduct “zero tolerance” overtime high visibility enforcement (HVE) operations {Countermeasure 2.2 High Visibility Enforcement} at the known work zone locations or in additional work areas as needed. The high visibility enforcement details will be based off data from FDOT and local data collected regarding crashes, violations and fatalities. The most recent data indicates the highest occurrences of crashes are from 0800hrs to 1600hrs. Monday through Friday, have the most crash data with Monday, Tuesday and Friday having the highest occurrences of crashes recorded. In order to maximize the effectiveness of HVE operations, we propose to conduct an estimated four to six operations per month, staffed with a minimum of two up to four personnel per operation. We anticipate each operation will be approximately four to six hours. Our safety measures will include utilizing message boards; giving the motoring public advanced notice of an upcoming work zone and using social media to advise the public of the work zones. Incorporating both road message boards and social media, we will be able to alert residents and visitors of any changes in the work zones and caution them when driving through those zones. In addition to the safety notices posted on social media, we will be able to expand and educate those traveling in and through Sarasota County of work zone safety. {Countermeasure 2.1 Communications and Outreach on Distracted Driving}

Expanding our enforcement to include those high visibility operations, increasing work zone safety through message boards and social media updates, and educating our motorists through direct contact during the operations and through social media are the primary components to reduce work zone crashes, injuries and fatalities. Funding received will be used to staff the HVE overtime operations.

Sustainability:

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is committed to the safety of our citizens, those who work in the county and those who drive through the county each day. As a result, the Sheriff's Office has established a full-time Traffic Enforcement Unit, whose purpose is to ensure that all traffic laws are followed by all drivers on our roadways.

The Traffic Unit will continually emphasize safety on the roads and respond to areas of concern. The high visibility enforcement program will be reviewed to determine whether the goals and objectives have been met. The Unit will incorporate high visibility enforcement operations upon the commencement of the program to maintain law enforcement presence in and around work zones, although staffing the HVE operations may be restricted due to budgetary caps without additional funding.

The Sheriff's Office will maintain our relationship with our local FDOT office and our FL Law Enforcement Liaison. The information obtained and shared in this relationship will ensure the Traffic Unit is aware of new situations and new possible funding to improve the safety on our roadways in work zone areas.

Project Objectives:

- a. Start enforcement activities within 60 days of subgrant award, unless otherwise approved by the FDOT State Safety Office.
- b. Conduct a minimum of “#” work zone overtime enforcement operations each month.
- c. Provide work zone safety information and education to the public each month utilizing multimedia outlets (social media, message boards, and printed materials, etc.).
- d. Strive to decrease work zone crashes and fatalities county wide by #% when compared to the previous three-year average

Evaluation:

- a. Enforcement activity start date.
- b. The number of work zone enforcement operations conducted monthly
- c. The number of instances that work zone safety messaging information and education was provided to the public. The number of instances that work-zone information and education is provided to the public through the use of social media platforms.
- d. Crash and fatality data will be collected and analyzed at the end of the project period to determine the increase or decrease in work zone crashes compared to the previous three-year average.

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BUDGET CATEGORY	NARRATIVE:	FEDERAL FUNDS	MATCH	TOTAL	INDIRECT ELIGIBILITY
A. Personnel Services					
Overtime Salary and Benefits	Overtime Salary and Benefits for Law Enforcement Personnel, benefits to include FICA(Social Security and Medicare) Retirement and Worker's Compensation.	\$123,950	\$0	\$123,950	
Subtotal		\$123,950	\$0	\$123,950	
B. Contractual Services					
Subtotal		\$0	\$0	\$0	
C. Expenses - Any purchase with a per item unit cost of \$200 or more from any line item within this Category, excluding software, must have FDOT State Safety Office written approval, prior to purchase.					
Subtotal		\$0	\$0	\$0	
D. Equipment Costing \$5,000 or More					
Subtotal		\$0	\$0	\$0	
E. Indirect Cost					
%		\$0		\$0	
Subtotal		\$0		\$0	
Total Cost of Project		\$123,950	\$0	\$123,950	