

Skyway Bridge Run: Applying TSM&O Strategies to Special Events

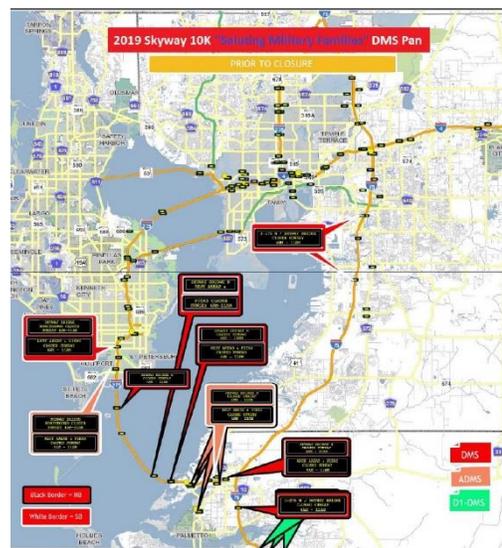
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For the second year in a row, District 7 Traffic Operations successfully used several Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) strategies to safeguard participants in the Sunshine Skyway 10K. On Sunday, March 3, 2019, 8,000 people participated in this point to point (Manatee County to Pinellas County) road race that permits runners to cross the northbound span of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge.

The following TSM&O strategies used by District 7 may be useful for the planning and management of an upcoming special event.

TSM&O Strategy #1: Interagency Coordination Meetings with Law Enforcement and Event Organizer

Get involved early with event organizers and impacted law enforcement agencies (i.e. get a seat at the table). The Department exchanged initial device maps and message panel plan several days before the event to ensure locations and messages were correct. The last coordination meeting was held on February 26, 2019, where the ITS Operations Manager, and the RTMC Manger met with FHP, St. Petersburg Police and Fire Department, the Coast Guard and the event organizer, The Armed Forces Foundations, to finalize discussions on posting Public Service Announcements(PSA), finalize messaging with the DMS signs, and to review the permits and plans for the event.



TSM&O Strategy #2: Secure Necessary Permits for Closure

With the event planned for early March, Traffic Operations received organizer Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans for review from the District Permits Engineer regarding the event in February. The plan proposed closing the north-side of I-275 from US-41 to the north rest stop area, near mile marker 13 for approximately 10 miles. The event organizers proposed using trailer-mounted Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) and static detour route markers to provide for a detour route on I-75. When issuing the permit, ensure the permit closure times align with the planned physical closures of the MOT.

TSM&O Strategy #3: Develop an ITS Plan Blue-Print for Future Events

Don't reinvent the wheel with your ITS device plan. Pre-closure/closure DMS plans and DMS messaging in the SunGuide® Software system used in the 2018 inaugural event served as the blue-print for this years event. Traffic Operations began discussing ways to support/improve the 2019 detour plan using RTMC resources such as Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV), Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) and Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) as well as RTMC operators. There were only slight modifications to the plan which saved valuable time. Upon modification to the plan, retain the files, so it does not have to be recreated for future events.

TSM&O Strategy #4: Broadcast Closure Message Prior to Event

Getting the message out early to the motorist may reduce driver confusion and frustration for weekend traffic (i.e. includes recreational and fisherman/boaters) because it is different than weekday commuter traffic. The Department used DMS messaging, the District 1,7 Public Information Offices(PIO), and Law Enforcement Office(LEO) to broadcast the closure on I-275, and I-75. While the event organizer's MOT plan was deployed weeks in advance, the RTMC's pre-closure DMS plan began broadcasting closure messages to motorists starting Tuesday prior to the event.



TSM&O Strategy #5: Coordinate with your Neighbors

The pre-closure/closure plan included three additional DMS from FDOT District 1 located upstream inside Manatee County before the I-275/I-75 interchange that reinforced the event organizer's PCMS already deployed. Messages were displayed during off-peak periods and activated outside morning and evening peak periods prior to the weekend. On Saturday, event messages ran continuously until Sunday 3:30 AM when the SunGuide® activated the scheduled the sign plan closure DMS messaging plan. The difference between the pre-closure and closure plans were additional DMS and Arterial Dynamic Message Signs being activated. The messages on the DMS not only broadcast that I-275 northbound was closed, including the rest area and fishing pier.



TSM&O Strategy #6 : Day of Event: Staff Accordingly

In District 7, a Shift Supervisor and Operator are scheduled on-duty for Sunday Operations. This was found to be adequate RTMC staffing for this event, and to effectively manage District-wide Traffic. Prior to 3:30 AM day of the event, Operators confirmed that the pre-closure messages on the DMS, HAR and FL-511 had been sent. After this time, the system was checked again to ensure the closure DMS, HAR and FL-511 plans were implemented and posted correctly.

TSM&O Strategy #7: Acknowledge RTMC Operations Personnel

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge Northbound span was reopened mid-morning on schedule to normal traffic without incident. With good coordination, thorough follow-through on posting messages, and good practices learned from the previous year, the Skyway 10K closure was successfully implemented. After completion of the event, the RTMC staff meeting was used to review the event lessons learned, and to acknowledge Operations personnel who successfully managed the event.

District 7 successfully used the aforementioned strategies for this event. By implementing the TSM&O strategies identified, an agency can enhance its planning and managing of a special event. For more information regarding this event, please email the ITS Operations Manager at Daniel.Buidens@dot.state.fl.us.