***---DISCLAIMER, DELETE THIS IN FINAL SP DRAFT---***

***THIS STANDARD DYNAMIC ZIPPER MERGE PROVISION IS APPLICABLE FOR UP TO 6 MILES OF EXPECTED QUEUEING USING THE STANDARD DETAIL. IF MORE/LESS QUEUEING IS ANTICIPATED, THE PROVISION & DETAIL WILL NEED TO BE MODIFIED. SPs FOR DIGITAL SPEED LIMIT SIGNS (IF ORDINANCED) AND CONNECTED LANE CLOSURE DEVICES NEED TO BE INCLUDED IF THIS PROVISION IS USED. BEFORE INCLUDING ANY DYNAMIC ZIPPER MERGE SYSTEM IN A CONTRACT, CONTACT WORK ZONE TRAFFIC CONTROL SECTION.***

**DYNAMIC ZIPPER MERGE SYSTEM:**

(12/10/2019) (8/3/2021) (Rev. 10/13/2023)

**Description**

Provide, install, program, relocate, operate, maintain, and remove an automated, stand-alone, real-time Dynamic Zipper Merge System meeting the requirements noted herein, until project completion for the duration specified by the Engineer.

A Dynamic Zipper Merge System is a group of devices that work together using software to automatically detect traffic conditions and respond using preprogrammed response algorithms. The purpose of this system is to provide advance notification to motorists of traffic queues in advance of long-term lane closures in order to reduce the likelihood of high-speed crashes and to encourage either early or late lane merges depending on live traffic conditions.

The Dynamic Zipper Merge System shall detect the presence of a lane closure and slow/stopped traffic queues that develop in advance of the lane closure and display lane closure or slowed/stopped and driver merge instruction messages on the integrated message boards.

**Materials and System Operational Requirements**

A. General

These specifications cover the general operational requirements for the Dynamic Zipper Merge System. The Dynamic Zipper Merge System shall be positioned at locations indicated in the contract or designated by the Engineer.

Provide physical and electronic/software protections for all components of the system and processes pertaining thereto prevent access by unauthorized parties.

Provide the following for this project:

* Customized website integrated with each Dynamic Zipper Merge System for NCDOT and project partners.
* Traffic Management Software capable of analyzing data and accurately supplying the indicated information.

Provide the following equipment for each Dynamic Zipper Merge System:

* 7 Traffic Speed Sensors
* 6 Portable Changeable Message Signs
* 2 Full Matrix Display Portable Changeable Message Signs, capable of displaying a flashing arrow indication
* Communication equipment for all above devices to include all components and communication methods necessary to allow each device to send and receive data to and from the website and Traffic Management Software.
* Integration equipment to receive lane closure status from Connected Lane Closure Devices (see separate Special Provision).

B. Documentation

Provide a set of complete specifications and literature on the selected Dynamic Zipper Merge System. Address all the requirements of the Contract Documents in the submittal. Provide documents for each device containing all information necessary to determine product specification compliance. Provide the detailed security plan and protocol used to protect data and communications of the Dynamic Zipper Merge System to the Engineer for approval at least 10 days prior to the delivery of the Dynamic Zipper Merge System. This plan includes physical locking mechanisms where the locks are unique for this Dynamic Zipper Merge System (a key to be provided to NCDOT), password handling techniques, and limited static IPs for remote access to equipment.

C. Power Source

Provide power for devices for continuous operation, as defined in the section Malfunctions, Maintenance, and Inspection below. All utility hookups, solar panels, batteries and other power sources are incidental.

D. Installation

Locate and aim the devices to ensure data accuracy. Coordinate installation locations and details with the Engineer prior to installation.

E. Traffic Sensors

Provide sensors to withstand and operate in, without deterioration, inclement weather and visibility conditions including sunlight, light precipitation, temperature, light, fog, darkness, excessive dust and road debris.

Provide sensors which:

* Collect and report individual vehicle data;
* Collect and report data on a per lane basis;
* Collect speed, volume, and lane occupancy data, for the required direction(s) of traffic; and
* Communicate data to the Traffic Management Software at least once per minute.

Install and maintain sensors to continuously detect all public traffic on **[DIRECTION AND ROAD NAME]**. Configure sensors to allow active and inactive collection zones, so that construction traffic is differentiated from public traffic. At a minimum, detect speed, volume, and occupancy levels in each lane, each minute. Summarize data in 5 minute bins for data storage and transfer. Do not block or shield critical locations from the sensor. Test each sensor and re-test as needed to confirm the accuracy of the data reported.

Collect and report data to the Traffic Management Software which meets the following requirements at any given time during testing and operation:

* Per direction volume accuracy: greater than 90%;
* Per lane volume accuracy: greater than 90%; and
* Per direction average speed accuracy: greater than 90%.

F. Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS)

Provide and maintain Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) capable of displaying the traffic queue length and travel time advisories to motorists. Provide PCMS that meet or exceed the material and functional requirements as described in the Contract Documents. The PCMS shall be capable of communicating wirelessly with and being controlled by the Traffic Management Software. Provide signs which display messages and log the date, time and text of the messages when being controlled by the Traffic Management Software.

No more than 1 pixel illumination failure on the board shall be allowed at any given time during testing and operation. Continuously monitor PCMS status. Include in the monitoring procedure an evaluation of power levels, communication connections, and the number of unlit pixels. Also, use a human observer periodically to document that the correct message is displayed with the correct date and time.

G. Traffic Management Software

The software has three main functions: Queue Warning, Driver Merge Instructions, and Lane Closure Notification. Use software that meets or exceeds the following requirements for each function:

*Queue Warning*

The intent of the Queue Warning function is to detect traffic congestion and queue formation and notify approaching drivers of the conditions. Queue Warning is the most critical function of the system. Continuously monitor traffic and report the required operational characteristics to the software each minute. Use a combination of real-time speed and percent lane occupancy information reported by traffic sensors, compared with configurable thresholds, to initiate a slow, stopped, or driver merge instruction message. Display configurable messages on the PCMS located upstream of sensors that detect changes in speed and lane occupancy in such a way that approaching drivers see a slow message before a stopped message, and a stopped message before a late merge message. Include accurate distance until the condition in the slow and stopped messages, and round distances to the nearest ½ mile. Message examples include “SLOW TRAFFIC 2 MILES/WATCH FOR SLOW TRAFFIC,” “STOPPED TRAFFIC 1 MILE/PREPARE TO STOP,” and “USE BOTH LANES/TO MERGE POINT.”

Configure Queue Warning messages to override all other messages on a PCMS. Send communication to project personnel when traffic conditions violate predetermined thresholds. Data collected by the Dynamic Zipper Merge System will be owned by NCDOT and must be in a file format compatible with the STOC’s operating platform.

Include human observation in the monitoring procedure to document posted messages and times during an actual event. Compare those messages with the information available from the software. Complete software monitoring as needed and when requested by the Engineer.

*Driver Merge Instructions*

The intent of the Driver Merge Instructions function is to detect traffic congestion and queue formation and convert the lane closure from a traditional early merge scenario to a late lane merge condition. Driver Merge Instructions is another critical function of the system. Continuously monitor traffic and report the required operational characteristics to the software each minute. Use a combination of real-time speed and percent lane occupancy information reported by traffic sensors, compared with configurable thresholds, to initiate the appropriate driver merge instruction message. Display configurable messages on the PCMS located upstream of sensors that detect changes in speed and lane occupancy in such a way that approaching drivers see an early merge message when queueing is less than one mile in advance of the taper, and a late lane merge message when queueing extends beyond one mile in advance of the merge taper. Message examples include “RIGHT LANE CLOSED/1 MILE AHEAD,” “USE BOTH LANES/TO MERGE POINT.” and “MERGE HERE/TAKE TURNS.”

Configure Queue Warning messages to override all other messages on a PCMS. Send communication to project personnel when traffic conditions violate predetermined thresholds. Data collected by the Dynamic Zipper Merge system will be owned by NCDOT and must be in a file format compatible with the STOC’s operating platform.

Include human observation in the monitoring procedure to document posted messages and times during an actual event. Compare those messages with the information available from the software. Complete software monitoring as needed and when requested by the Engineer.

*Lane Closure Notification*

The intent of the lane closure notification function is to detect active lane closures when no queues are present and notify approaching drivers of the conditions. Lane closure notification is a secondary function and serves as the default function when Queue Warning is inactive. An example message for this function is “RIGHT LANE CLOSED/3 MILES AHEAD.”

When no lane closures are in place and no queues are present, each PCMS shall display flashing dots in all four corners to indicate the system is operating correctly.

Include human observation in the monitoring procedure to document posted messages when a Queue Warning event is not occurring.

*Reporting and Operational Requirements*

Communicate with and/or control all of the devices belonging to the Dynamic Zipper Merge System. Poll the sensors and PCMS a minimum of once per minute. Collect from each device, as applicable, and store in configurable bins the following data: device name and location, 50th percentile and 85th percentile speeds, volume, lane occupancy, message sign history, as well as battery status and communication status. Make historical data available to NCDOT staff at all times for the duration of work zone activity. Provide an electronic copy of all data, including date and duration of system malfunctions, to NCDOT staff after all work zone activity is completed and the Dynamic Zipper Merge System has been removed.

H. Website

The purpose of the website is to be a real time traffic operations dashboard showing current traffic conditions, real time speeds, and posted messages to the nearest minute. Display a full color map of the project area, using Google Maps or equivalent, which shows roadways impacted by project activities and for which data is being collected. Display current average speed at each traffic sensor for which data is available. Display a representation of each device in its approximate location, relative to the roadway and other nearby features, and indicate the operational status of each device. Display the messages posted on the message signs. Refresh information at least once per minute. In the event devices are moved to a new location in the field, automatically reflect these changes to the system layout on the website.

I. Traffic Control Devices

Provide traffic control devices as needed to set up, operate, maintain and tear down the Dynamic Zipper Merge System as shown in the Contract Documents. Coordinate device placement with other Contractors as needed to meet or exceed placement requirements in the Contract Documents.

If applicable, all PCMS used for advance notice of a variable speed zone within the Dynamic Zipper Merge System shall be removed and replaced with double indicated “VARIABLE SPEED ZONE AHEAD” static sign as shown on the detail.

J. Malfunctions, Maintenance, and Inspection

Operate the Dynamic Zipper Merge System, including all components listed above, continuously (24 hours per day, 7 days per week) when deployed on the project, for the duration specified by the Engineer.

In addition, the Contractor shall have portable mounted lane closure signs as detailed in Roadway Standard Drawing 1101.02, Sheet 4, available on site to be used in the case of a system malfunction. These static lane closure signs shall not be visible to traffic except in the case of a system malfunction and will remain in place until the system is fully functional again.

Continuously operate the Dynamic Zipper Merge System with no major malfunctions throughout its operation. System malfunctions include, but are not limited to, the inability of the equipment to provide accurate, real-time traffic data, inability of the equipment to determine lane closure status from connected lane closure devices; inability to withstand a construction roadside environment or normal weather conditions; or interference from construction equipment. Monitor and inspect equipment and data, and on a regular basis to avoid malfunctions. Upon discovery or notification of a system malfunction, the Contractor shall immediately make the pre-staged static lane closure signs visible to traffic and make all necessary corrections to the components of the system such that system malfunctions are corrected within a 24-hour period through repair or replacement of the equipment.

Components include sensors, message signs, communications equipment and all hardware and software required to place the real time information on the devices to operate according to Contract Documents.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to detect data malfunctions. Monitor, inspect, and maintain sensors so that malfunctions in data collection can be detected as soon as possible. Causes of malfunction may include high winds, shifting earth beneath or around the device, or interference by construction equipment. Monitoring, at a minimum, includes evaluation and documentation of power levels, communication connections, and accuracy of data provided to the Traffic Management Software. Monitoring data accuracy may include re-calibration and aiming of the device or retesting accuracy using human observers. Monitor as needed and when requested by the Engineer.

K. Complete and Operational System

Direct and indirect costs associated with operating the Dynamic Zipper Merge System are incidental to this bid item and may include FCC licensing, cellular communication, wireless data networks, satellite and internet subscription charges, solar power system support and battery charging and maintenance.

**Construction Methods**

A. System Manager

Provide one person, available 24 hours per day, as the System Manager for the Dynamic Zipper Merge System. Provide this person’s 24-hour contact information to the Engineer. Provide a system manager who is locally available to supervise, monitor, and maintain the system components including the website, relocate devices as necessary, and respond to emergencies.

B. Dynamic Zipper Merge System Deployment

Deliver all of the required devices to the place and time designated by the Engineer and confirm they are in good condition and in working order. Each PCMS shall be in new condition when delivered to the project site. Coordinate with the Engineer to determine final sensor locations, then deploy and install sensors. Complete stand-alone tests, system operational tests, final deployment, and system initiation prior to impacting traffic.

*System Logic and Programming*

The Contractor shall use the logic provided by NCDOT to program the Dynamic Zipper Merge System. This logic indicates what each PCMS will display in response to changing traffic conditions according to each speed sensor. Coordinate with the Engineer, Work Zone Traffic Control, and the State Traffic Operations Center staff prior to system installation to verify the system programming is accurate. Coordinate with the Engineer in the event system programming adjustments are necessary due to field conditions.

*Stand-alone Testing*

Conduct stand-alone tests of each device. Test sensors from their installed locations. PCMS may be tested in other locations. Turn all PCMS away from traffic during testing.

Complete a stand-alone test for each PCMS prior to installation, and to verify that the unit operates as specified. Include in the stand-alone test procedure tests for the following functions:

* Turning the sign on and off;
* Displaying and removing a test message;
* Counting pixels not illuminated (no more than 1 malfunctioning pixel);
* Checking message logs for accuracy; and
* Measuring sign legibility and visibility.

If a unit fails to pass the stand-alone test, repair or replace the unit, and repeat the test until successful.

*System Operational Testing*

Provide a System Operational Testing Plan to the Engineer for approval, at least 7 days prior to beginning testing. The Plan shall detail a five-day operational test procedure of the System Operational Requirements. Include in the plan procedures operation of the software using real time information from sensors already tested and installed and tested signs located in an off-project location. Begin testing 14 days prior to implementation to verify the system operates in a fully functional manner and as described.

Provide complete operations support from the Software supplier during the operational test, if applicable. Provide verification that the reported drive times, speeds, and volumes through the work zone accurately reflect actual field conditions. Use a human observer to monitor and document the posted messages. Post test messages two times per day during the test period to verify functionality and communications and verification that proper messages are being posted to the PCMS. If any equipment malfunctions occur for a combined period of two hours or more during the operational test on any day, restart the five-day test and no credit will be given for that day of the operational test period.

The Contractor shall be responsible for replacing all defective equipment at no additional cost to the Department.

Indicate the date and time of any activity necessary to maintain operation of the Dynamic Zipper Merge System during the operational test period. Include in each entry, at a minimum, the following information:

* A description of the malfunction;
* Identity of the malfunctioning equipment;
* Cause of equipment malfunction (if known);
* A description of the type of work performed; and
* Time and date of repair completion.

Once the operational test report is received and approved by the Engineer, the Dynamic Zipper Merge System will be considered operational, and the system will be accepted for use.

**Measurement and Payment**

*Dynamic Zipper Merge System Deployment* will be measured and paid on a Lump Sum basis upon completion of the first Dynamic Zipper Merge System delivered to the project site, installed, tested, and found to be fully operational.

*Dynamic Zipper Merge System Relocation* will be measured and paid on a per each basis upon completion of each system removal from one location on the project and installation to a different location on the project. Payment will be paid once the system is fully operational.

*Dynamic Zipper Merge System* will be measured and paid on a daily basis for each satisfactorily installed Dynamic Zipper Merge System, including all necessary labor, equipment, materials, communications, licensing, and software to maintain operation of the system. Each Dynamic Zipper Merge System is expected to operate continuously (24 hours per day, 7 days per week) with no major malfunctions. Monitor and maintain the system according to the Malfunctions, Maintenance, and Inspection section above.

All work zone signs will be paid for at the contract unit price according to Article 1110-4 in the Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures.

In the event of a system or data malfunction, payment will be made for the first day of the malfunction. If the malfunctioning Dynamic Zipper Merge System is not completely operational at the end of 24 hours, additional payment will not be made until the system’s operation is fully restored.

**Pay Item** **Pay Unit**

Dynamic Zipper Merge System Deployment Lump Sum

Dynamic Zipper Merge System Relocation Each

Dynamic Zipper Merge System Day