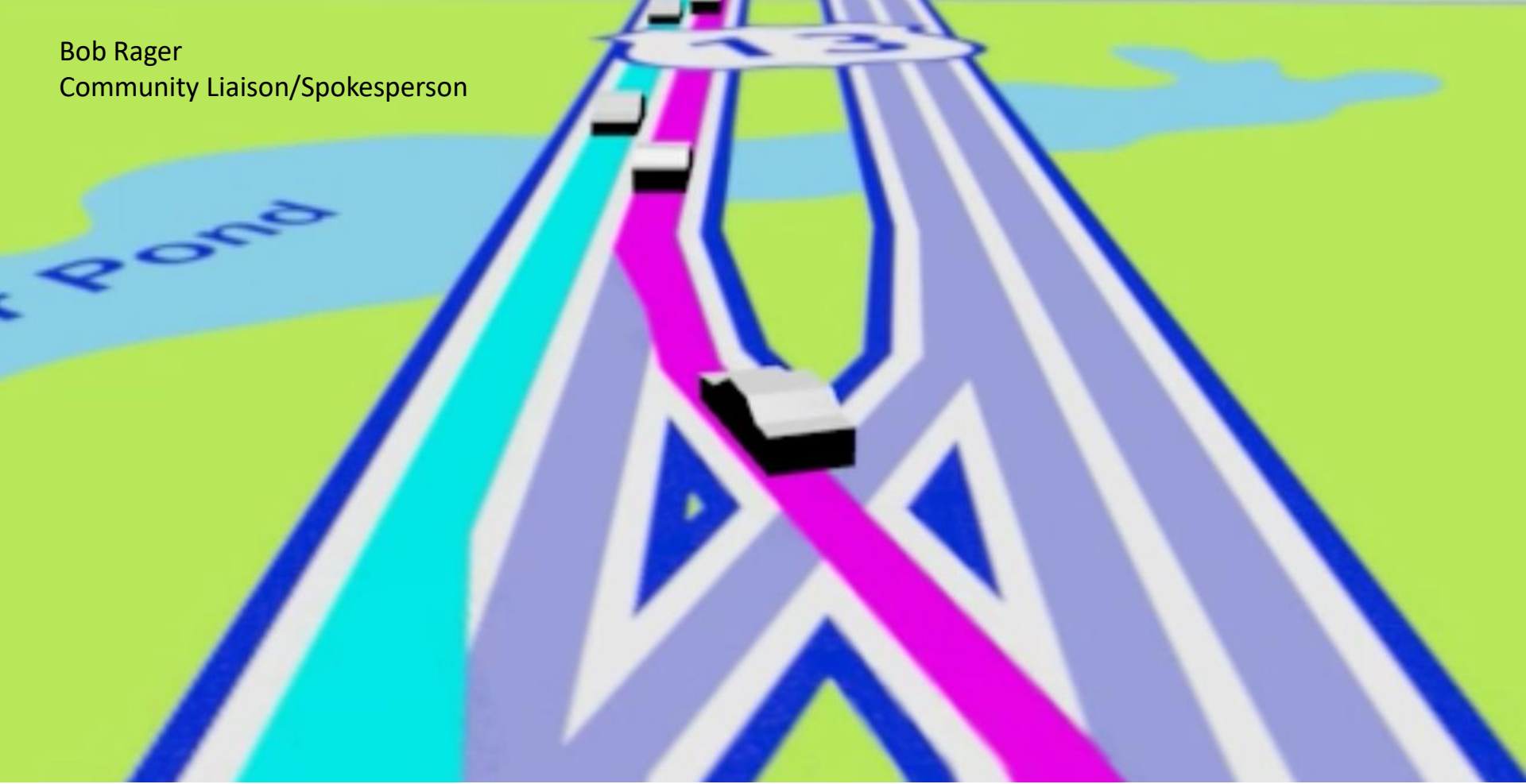


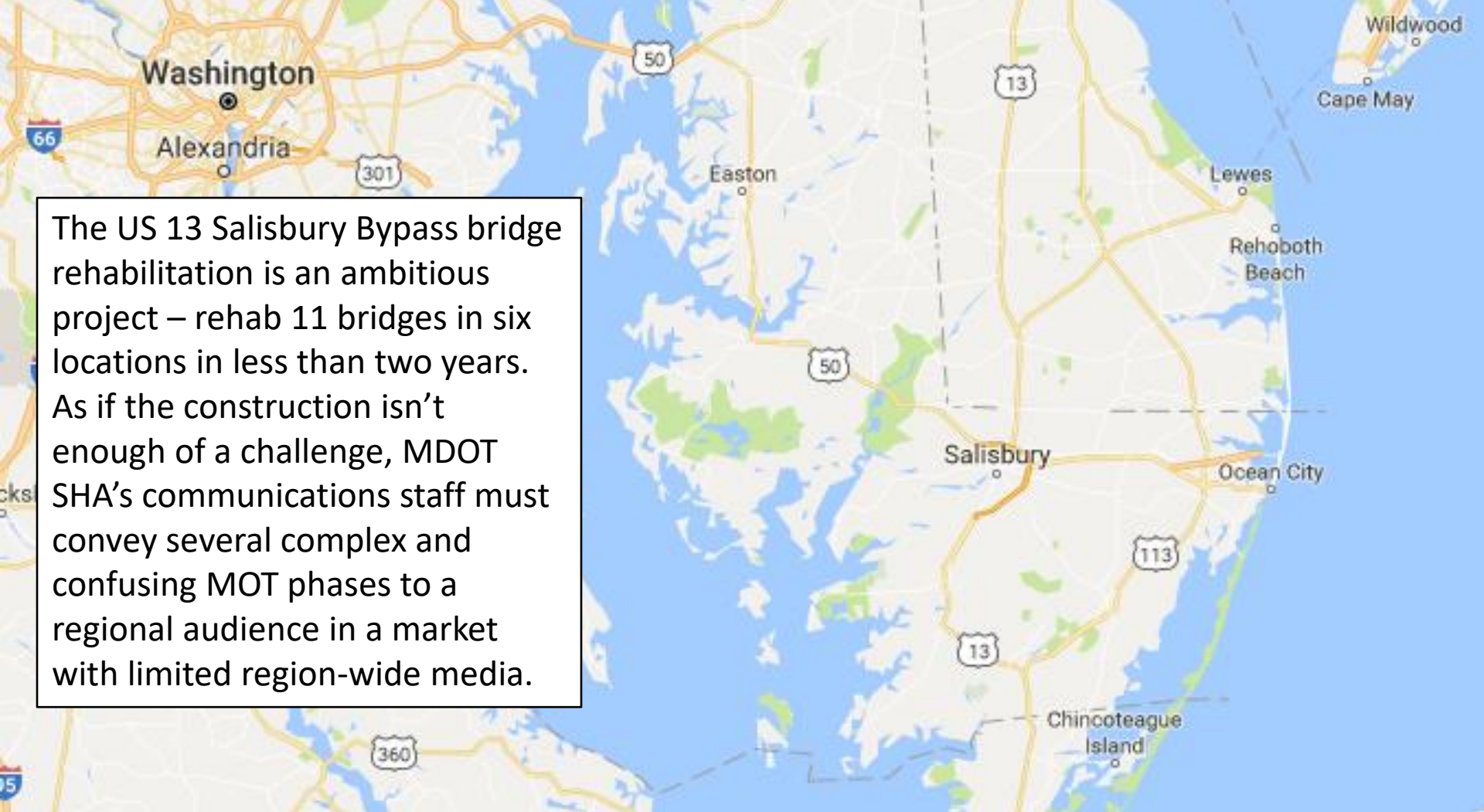
Bob Rager  
Community Liaison/Spokesperson



# The Power of “X”

*How One Letter Drove a Successful  
Shoestring Campaign in Salisbury, MD*





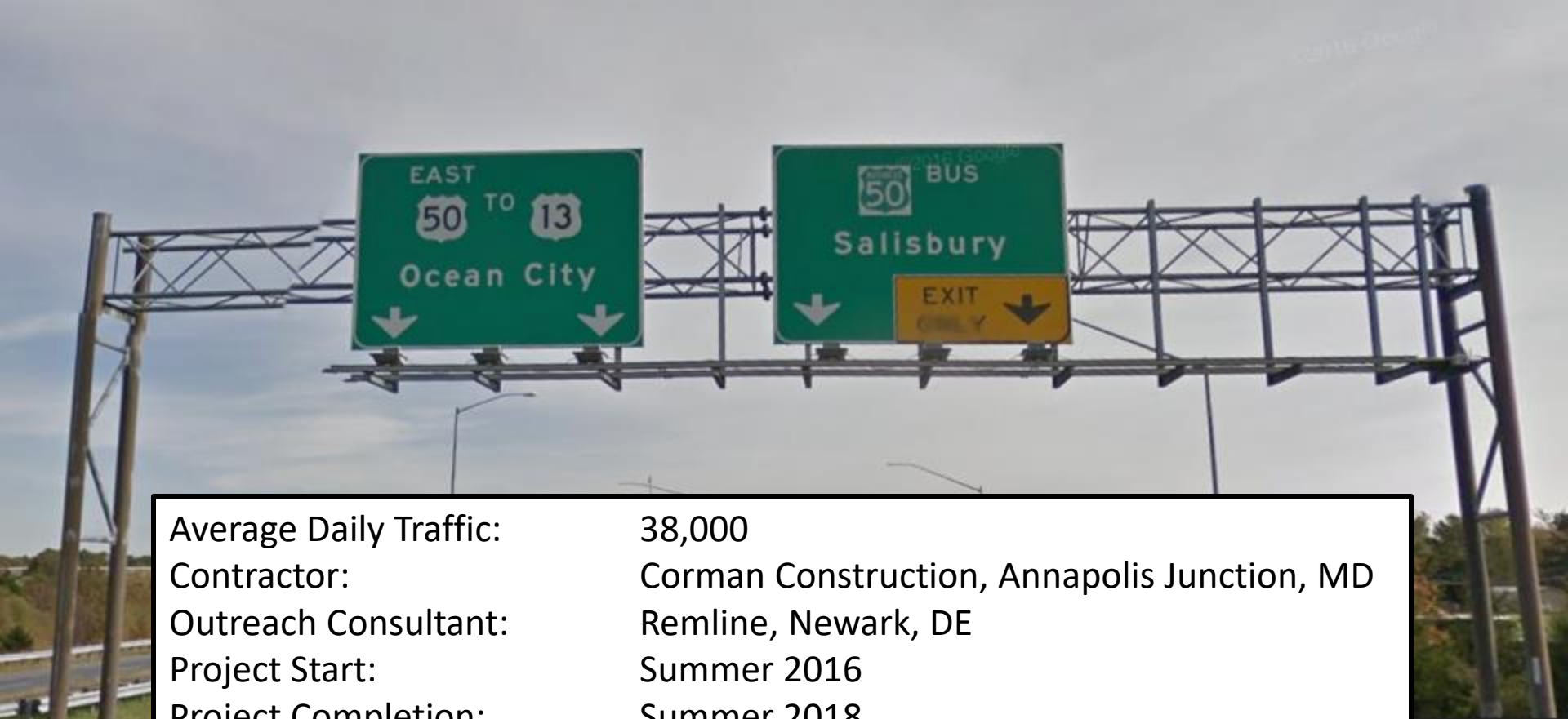
The US 13 Salisbury Bypass bridge rehabilitation is an ambitious project – rehab 11 bridges in six locations in less than two years. As if the construction isn't enough of a challenge, MDOT SHA's communications staff must convey several complex and confusing MOT phases to a regional audience in a market with limited region-wide media.

## Salisbury, MD

Population: 33,000

DMA: 162,000

TV News Outlets: 2 (plus one cable/web only)



Average Daily Traffic:	38,000
Contractor:	Corman Construction, Annapolis Junction, MD
Outreach Consultant:	Remline, Newark, DE
Project Start:	Summer 2016
Project Completion:	Summer 2018
Recent Milestone:	MOT shift out of contraflow, May 2017

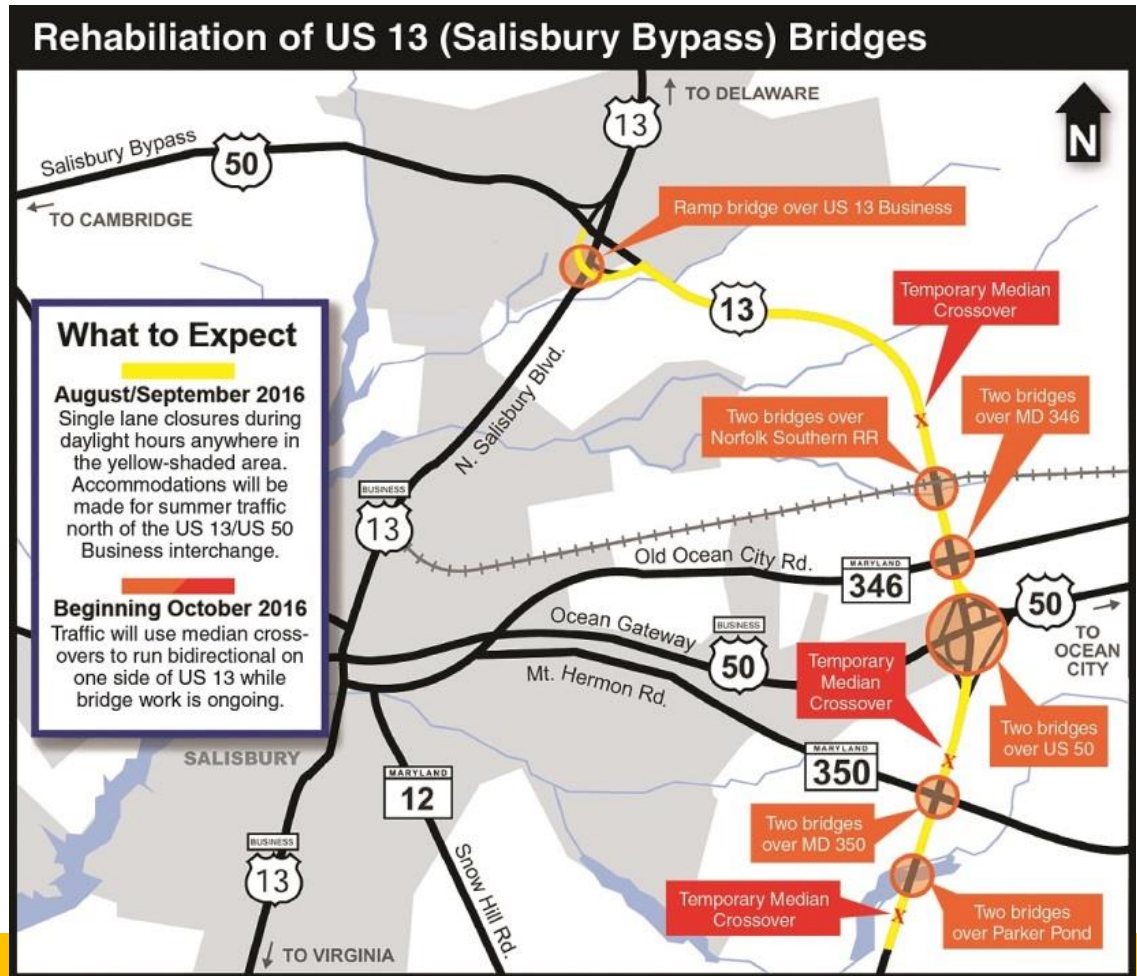
## US 13/US 50 Salisbury Bypass Bridge Rehab

\$24 million project to rehabilitate 11 bridges in two years. Work includes latex overlays and end section replacements.



## Setting the Stage

Simple public meeting display board showing work locations was modified to include general dates for Phase 1 construction as well as the first reference to the median crossovers needed to clear traffic from one side of the Bypass.

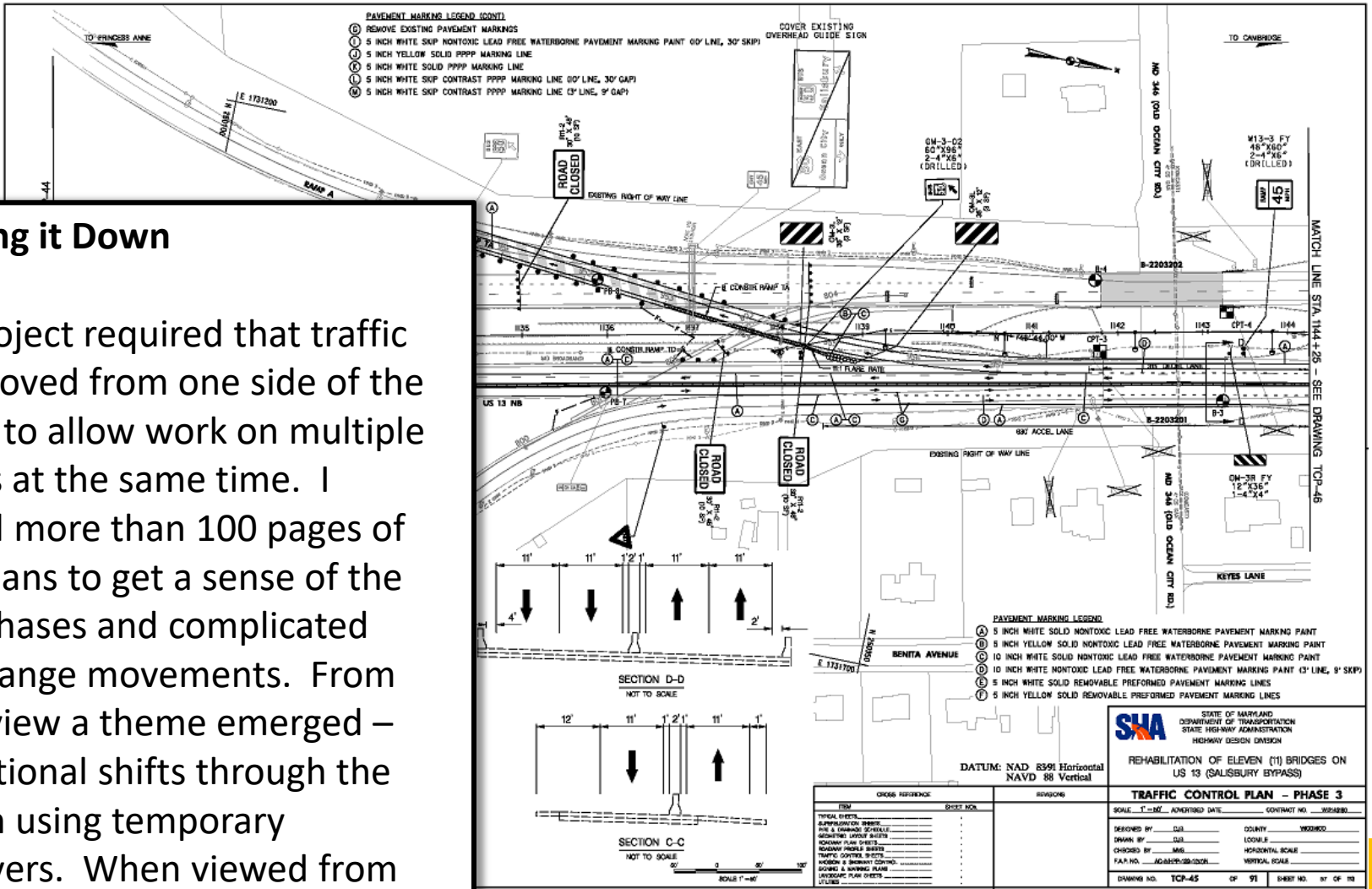


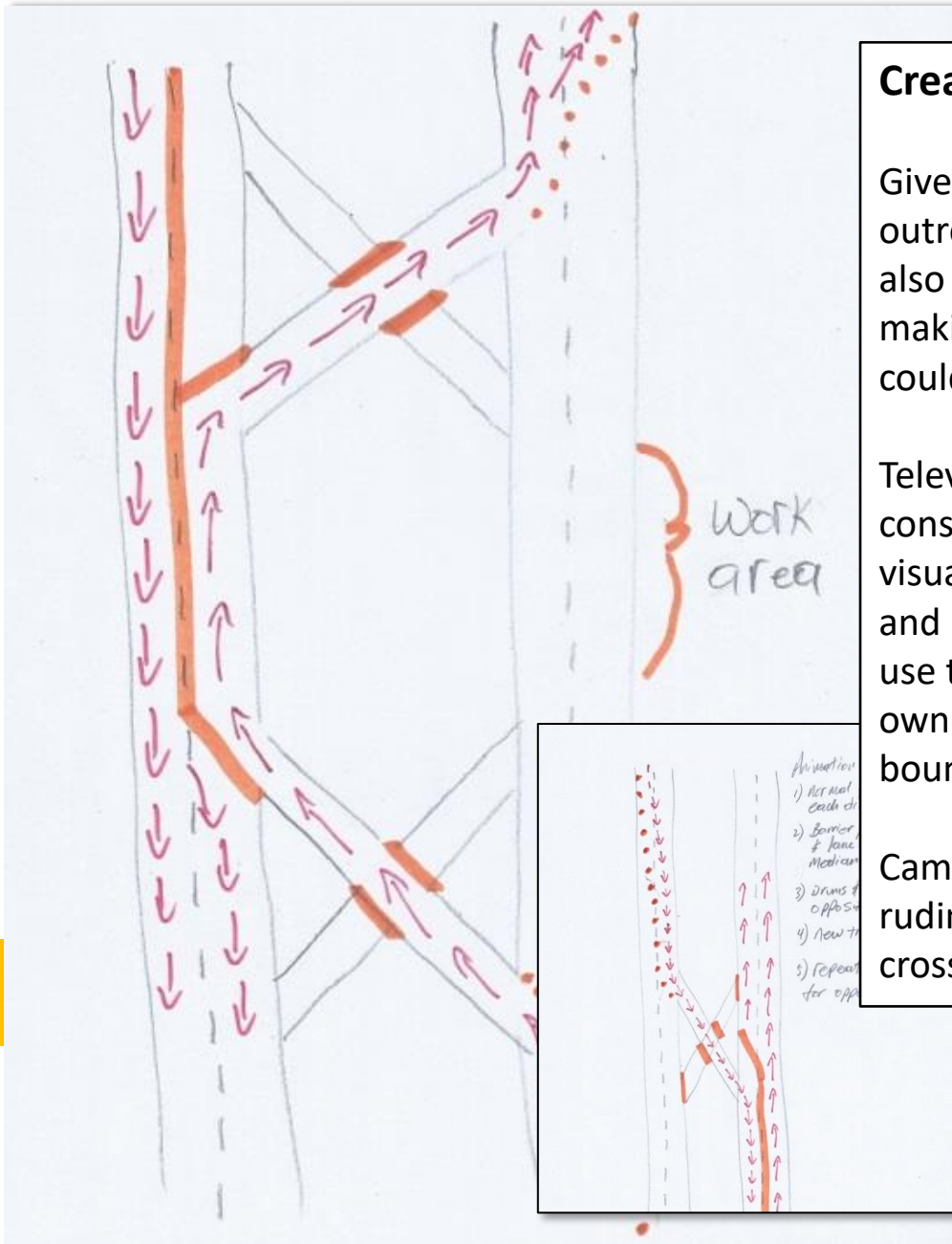
## Campaign Goals:

- 1) Educate media – traffic is the story, bridge work is secondary
- 2) Condense all MOT into one simple animation
- 3) Leverage local television coverage/appeal with minimal investment

## Breaking it Down

This project required that traffic be removed from one side of the Bypass to allow work on multiple bridges at the same time. I studied more than 100 pages of MOT plans to get a sense of the work phases and complicated interchange movements. From this review a theme emerged – bidirectional shifts through the median using temporary crossovers. When viewed from above each crossover resembled an “X.” A campaign was born.





## Creating Some “X” Appeal

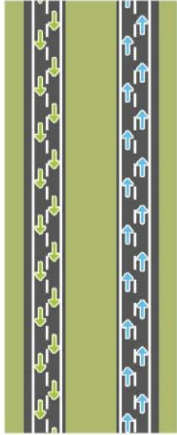
Given the complicated MOT features, primary outreach needed to be visual to be effective. It also needed to be concise and unambiguous, making print media a risk since even good artwork could raise as many questions as it answered.

Television was the best hope, and I set out to consolidate all of the traffic patterns into simple visuals that would appeal to broadcast reporters and make sense to the wide variety of drivers who use the Bypass - from local residents and business owners to long-haul truckers and Ocean City-bound vacationers.

Campaign development began with these rudimentary sketches showing how the main crossovers would function.

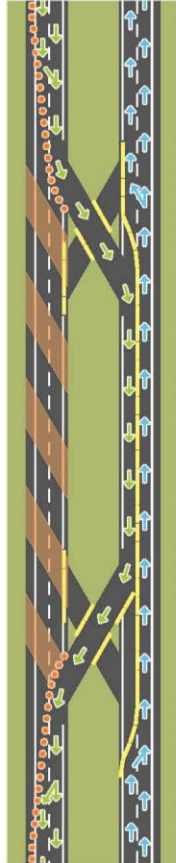
## Diagram of New Traffic Patterns During US 13 (Salisbury Bypass) Bridge Rehabilitation

Normal Pattern



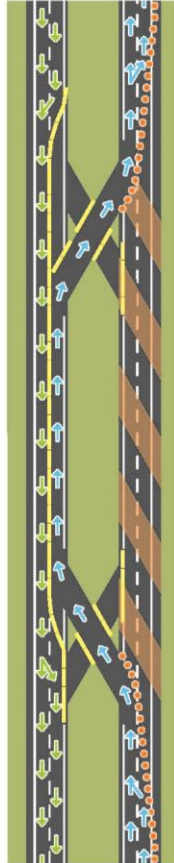
Above shows a typical section of US 13 Salisbury Bypass. Divided highway with two southbound lanes (green traffic) and two northbound lanes (blue traffic).

Southbound Crossover



During southbound bridge work, southbound traffic will merge to one lane, then crossover to the northbound side of US 13 where the traffic will continue as two-way, barrier-divided (one lane in each direction) throughout the work zone.

Northbound Crossover



During northbound bridge work, northbound traffic will merge to one lane, then crossover to the southbound side of US 13 where the traffic will continue as two-way, barrier-divided (one lane in each direction) throughout the work zone.

### Diagram Key



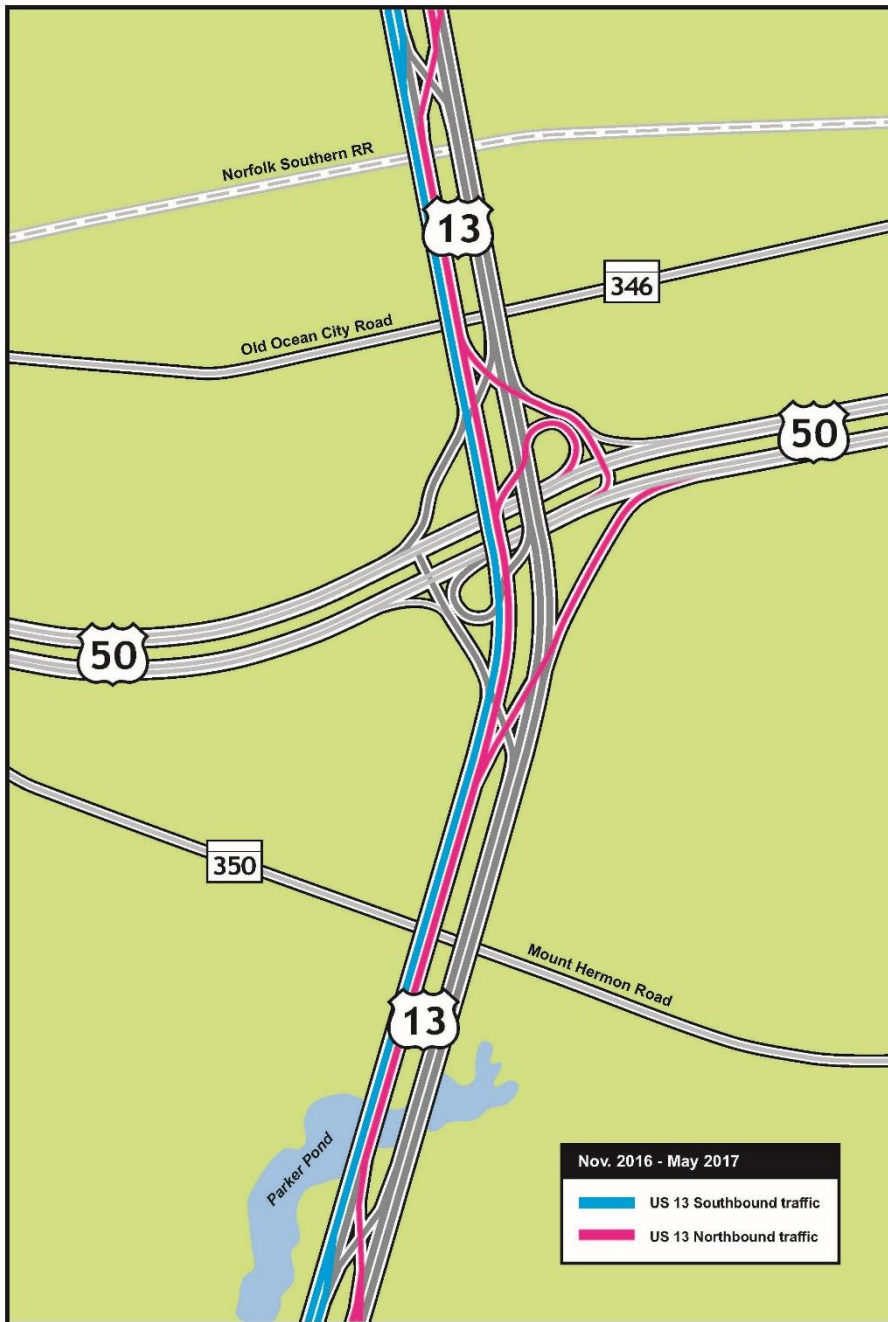
## A Little Help from Our Friends

Our creative consultant (Remline) was then called in to massage the crossover “X” concept and develop it for public consumption.

With the median crossovers now under construction we had our first good visual to convey a general sense of what motorists would see in the coming months. This diagram was released to area media well in advance of the first traffic shift.

From here we began to refine materials while still maintaining the same simplified traffic focus.





## Refine and Release

We then built on the initial “X” media push by plotting each of the four MOT phases on a simple map. These maps were released to media a few weeks in advance of the first traffic shift.

Like the previous artwork, the maps worked well when accompanied by a good explanation of the pattern - but they still didn’t convey traffic *flow*, particularly at the on and off ramps.



*Click video  
to play*



## Getting Animated

Shifting back to internal resources, I picked one of the four MOT maps as the basis for a single animation and guided development so the finished product would be released to media within a week of the first major traffic shift. The animation needed to demonstrate traffic flow. It had to be brief, clear and accurate so any motorist could understand what was coming, how to safely navigate the new pattern and why this change should not create unnecessary concern over safety or gridlock. Above all, the animation needed to provide TV reporters a clear picture and a good hook. It did.

Click any video to play

## Campaign Results

(First Eight Months of 24-Month Project)

- 30+ Salisbury Bypass stories in regionally-targeted print and broadcast media
- 12+ unique TV news stories
- Multiple TV news hits in one day
- Over 1 million estimated viewer impressions in first eight months
- Three lead stories on prime time television newscasts
- **ZERO PAID AD PLACEMENTS**
- **LESS THAN \$20k** total cost including consultant resources
- **FACTUALLY ACCURATE PRESS!**
- TV reporters consistently conveyed traffic focus
- **Drive-time TV live hits during milestone traffic shift, May 2017**
- Further message leveraging via TV social sites

