

Gorski Consulting Website

Archived News - 2016 - November

November 27, 2016

Transport Truck Conflicts At Expressway Interchanges – Research Data Collected

Every day, super highways such as Highway 401 in southern Ontario transport huge amounts of cargo across North America. Some of this cargo may be quite hazardous. At the same time these highways can approach their limits of safety under certain conditions. A common area of conflict occurs at entrance ramps where heavy trucks must accelerate and enter the flow of traffic, sometimes when the gaps are reduced.

Given the importance of this concern Gorski Consulting has conducted a detailed study of traffic at a specific interchange of Highway 401 near London, Ontario. Nine video cameras were used to document the speed and position of heavy trucks as the process of entering the highway from an on-ramp occurred. The actions the truck driver entering the highway was studied as well as the actions of the truck drivers passing straight through on the highway. The data is now being processed and an article will soon be posted to the articles page of this website.

November 23, 2016

What Is That Mexican Game Where You Swing the Bat (Blindfolded) at That Hanging Prize!



After all, this is just child's play!

Excuse our sarcasm as we read the latest news article from the St Thomas Times - Journal newspaper discussing the future plans to deal with the roadway problems on Wonderland Road near the new Highway 401 interchange in London, Ontario . The author, Patrick Brennan, is good, the content is very good, it is just the reality that reeks like a month old cod on the public deck.

The reality is that politicians are scrambling around while blind-folding the public so as not to be hit by the question as why Wonderland Road was not repaired, or upgraded, or anything, until the present dilemma.

A portion of the disastrous road was the responsibility of the poor Township of Southwold. But everyone knows that Southwold lost a large tax base when the massive Ford assembly plant closed a number of years ago. When the Province of Ontario built

the magnificent Hwy 401 interchange were they also swinging blindly and not recognizing that they would draw traffic onto the poorly maintained/designed portion of Wonderland Road? The Provincial solution was a “not my problem”, it is Southwold’s responsibility, let them deal with it.

It is ironic now to see this magnificent sculpture of the interchange, built with all the modern safety designs and roadside barriers, yet, just a few hundred metres away, is a road in utter catastrophe! What is Southwold expected to do?



It is with a tremendous sense of pride and accomplishment that representatives of Ontario’s Ministry of Transportation can stand on top of the new interchange at Hwy 401 and Wonderland and gaze to the north and south to observe the disastrous road conditions neighboring their mighty sculpture.

As Mr. Brennan explained, the choice was to request that the larger municipal agency of Elgin County assume the responsibility for the road. However a majority of the users of the road are likely to be the inhabitants of the much larger City of London. When Elgin County approached the City for a contribution the City of London reportedly never

responded. So now Mr. Brennan informs us that the County will not rebuild Wonderland until 2018 or 2019 and that convincing the Province of Ontario to assist “will be a slow process”.

Our further question remains: What happens if a major collision occurs because of the roadway defects? What if a school bus carrying 35 children (like a couple of days ago in Chattanooga) crashes and kills 5 or 6 and sends dozens to the hospital with major injuries?

This is not a child’s game we are dealing with. We just hope no one has to live through that nightmare.

Propaganda Versus Informed Journalism – A Present Road Safety Problem



How helpful would seat-belts have been in the massive roof intrusion experienced by the Chattanooga school bus that resulted in many child fatalities? That question has not been raised in the demand for installation of seat-belts.

This morning the NBC Today show discussed seat-belt installation on school buses in reaction to the tragic multiple deaths of children in the school bus crash in Chattanooga.

Similarly the CBS Morning Show ran a story about deaths occurring in rear impacts from seat-back collapses. In both cases legitimate issues appeared to be presented.

The NBC show demonstrated its point that school buses should be equipped with seat-belts by presenting video footage of children and dummies being tossed around the interior during real and controlled-test rollovers. This is dramatic material that undoubtably would cause the public to believe there is utter nonsense in failing to equip buses with seat-belts, and that was the message presented without proper explanation. The explanation that was required, but was not presented, is that the wearing of seat-belts by children on a school bus causes additional problems in the **proper** wearing of those seat-belts and that legislators and safety experts have known for decades and “improper” usage of seat-belts have caused many hidden deaths to children. Many children who would require being in a booster cushion will not be equipped with one on a school bus and this lack will cause children to “submarine” under a belt causing massive abdominal injuries. These are the critical issues that the NBC Today show failed to mention.

Similarly the CBS Morning Show presented a segment on seat-back collapse in rear end impacts demonstrating with video that the heads of front seat occupants end up striking the rear seat back or other objects in the rear resulting in significant head injuries. Its argument was that manufacturers have failed to report incidents where seat-back collapse has caused a death and they pointed to the “black hole” that exists in manufacturer operations where they can skirt around many of their safety obligations. Again, a good point, however, this segment also failed to inform the public of the need for better information-gathering by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) which is in dire need of better funding, overhaul and cleansing of a “protect the manufacturer” mentality.

In many everyday instances the public is bombarded with propaganda that is dressed up as scholarly and informed news. Large, corporate, news-reporting agencies are capable of reaching equally large sectors of the public without the opportunity for an independent entity to question their content. It is why Gorski Consulting recognizes that our independent point of view is greatly needed.

November 22, 2016

Johnthony Walker May Have Been Speeding But There Could Be Additional Issues in Chattanooga Multi-Fatal School Bus Crash

The media and everyone involved appears to be blaming the school bus driver, Johnthony Walker, for speeding and thus causing the loss-of-control of his bus leading to the multiple child fatalities that occurred yesterday in Chattanooga. That may prove to be the case, but reality can be more complicated.

It is rare that a single factor is the only cause of a tragic collision. As an example, Johnthony Walker was travelling southbound on Talley Road toward the intersection with Sunset Ave when the loss-of-control occurred, as shown the photo below.

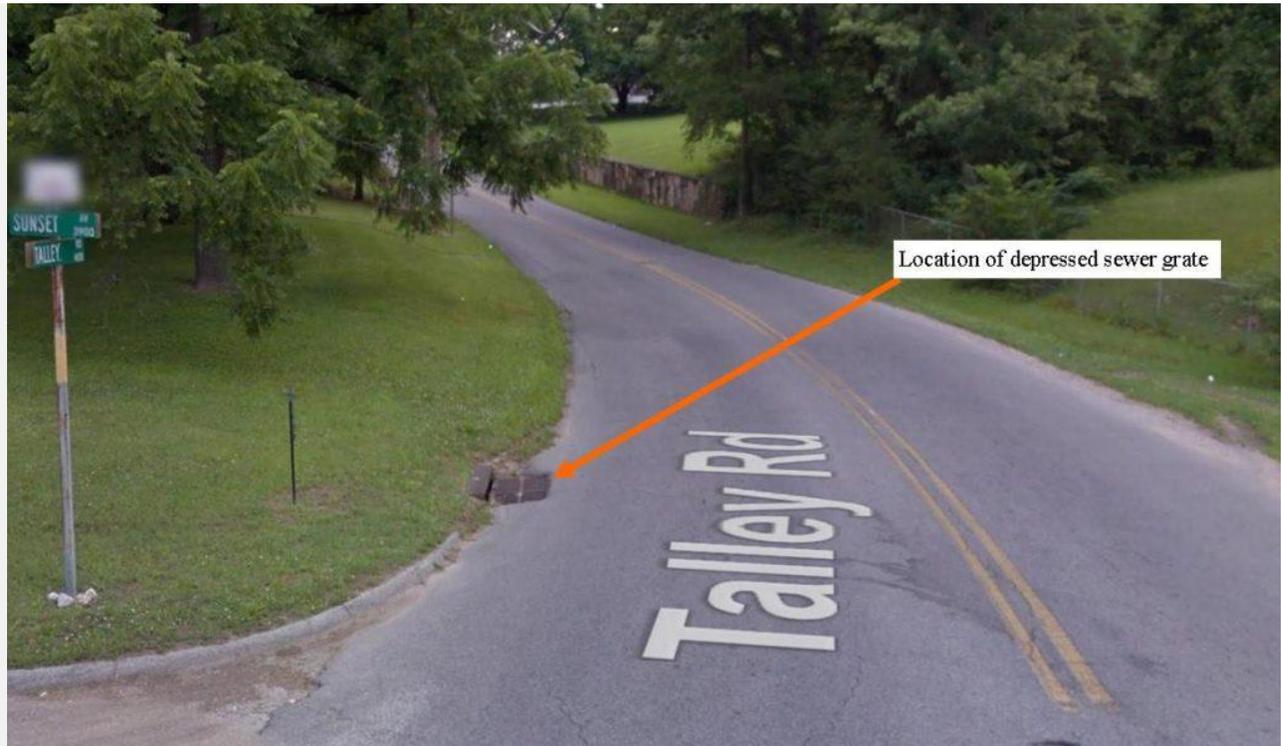


View of Talley Road at the intersection with Sunset Avenue in Chattanooga Tennessee. A depressed sewer grate may have been a factor in the bus loss-of-control.

A depressed sewer grate was located on the right side of the southbound lane of Talley Road at the location shown in the above photo. When a vehicle travels quickly around a curve it is common for the driver to “cut the corner” or bring the right side wheels close to the inside edge of the lane. Thus, if the school bus was travelling too fast its right side

wheels might have crossed over the depressed sewer grate resulting in the initial disturbance that eventually led to the bus rolling over.

The photo below shows a view looking northward along Talley Road where an orange arrow shows the location of the depressed sewer grate.



View looking north on Talley Road just north of the intersection with Sunset Avenue. The location of the depressed sewer grate is indicated by the orange arrow.

The photo below shows a closer view of the depressed sewer grate.



View looking south at the depressed sewer grate.

A dark shadow along the edge of the grate shown in the photo below indicates the extent of the depression.



Close-up view of the depressed sewer grate. Note the dark shadow at the edge of the grate indicating the extent of its depression.

We are not saying that this was the cause of the collision events. However the purpose of this is illustrate how collision events and their causes can be complicated. High speed alone may not be the only trigger that leads to a deadly consequence. An unbiased, independent and experienced investigator must consider all the potentially relevant causes and report them accordingly. The public should also hold judgment until the facts are fully illuminated.

November 10, 2016

Data Now Available From Road Surface Testing on Wonderland Road South of Highway 401 in South-Western London, Ontario



Road surface problems on Wonderland Road have prompted Gorski Consulting to conduct testing to determine the extent of the problem.

With the completion of the Highway 401 interchange at Wonderland Road in south-western, London, Ontario in November of 2015, there was a considerable increase in traffic volume on Wonderland Road. Whether due to poor planning or otherwise, the portion of Wonderland Road connecting the major expressway was never up-graded

from its old, low-service condition. One of the repercussions was that Wonderland traffic at Glanworth Road was originally controlled by a stop sign. But with the increased traffic volume there was significantly more traffic stopping at Wonderland than passing through, uncontrolled, on Glanworth. Several significant collisions occurred at this intersection within a few months of the increased volume.

It was also apparent that the old surface of Wonderland Road was disintegrating, as can be seen in the photo at the top of this news segment. The photo shows that some patching was attempted resulting in a total failure of the surface.

Answers as to how and why these problems occurred have not been forthcoming, nor has any public entity asked those important questions.

Gorski Consulting has been involved in a project of documenting the condition of road surfaces in South-Western Ontario. Objective data from that testing has been posted on the Road Data page of this Gorski Consulting website. In consideration of the apparent problems on Wonderland Road, we conducted testing on October 23, 2016 and have posted the results on the Road Data webpage. The new data can be found under the "City of London" link. We expect to upload an article to the Articles page of this site shortly which will provide the details of this testing.

UPDATE: November 20, 2016; 1955 Hours

The promised article that details the road surface testing on Wonderland Road has now been uploaded to the Articles page of this Gorski Consulting website.

November 5, 2016

Recognition Of Harpooning Danger Is A Very Slow Learning Curve



News media photo from February 21, 2016 of a car that was harpooned by a horizontal railing at the intersection of Horton Street and Wharncliffe Road in London, Ontario

The evidence is there, ever-present for anyone to see, but when we do not understand its meaning we are constructively blind.

The harpooning of a vehicle by an inappropriate roadside structure can be a devastating incident, yet it can also be completely unrecognized. When a narrow structure enters the confines of where an occupant is seated there is essentially nothing that modern technology can do to prevent a catastrophe. Much like drowning in water or being trapped in a burning vehicle, the fate of a car occupant caught in a harpooning incident is simply and completely dependent on luck.

As an example, the above photo was taken by a local news agency describing an unimportant collision that resulted in no major injuries. Yet no one focused on the fact that a horizontal pole from a roadside railing had penetrated the right portion of the

vehicle's windshield. If there had been a right-front occupant present, and if the circumstances were lined up, the end of the penetrating pole could have struck the occupant in the head and the result would have been deadly. But because this did not occur no one took notice of this potential.

The photo below shows a westward view of the north side of the intersection of Wharncliffe Road and Horton Street, taken on February 26, 2016, or just a few days after the collision. In the foreground is a view of a non-struck railing while in the background is the damaged railing that was struck by the above-mentioned car. Looking at the undamaged railing one would conclude that there appears to be sufficient protection from a harpooning incident because there is a curved portion of the rail in front of the horizontal railing ends. But what is the actual situation and how did this railing perform in the actual collision? Let's take a look on the other side of the road at the damaged railing...



View taken on February 26, 2016, of non-struck railing in the foreground and the struck railing in the background.

The photo below shows an overall view of the area at the damaged railing.



Overall view of the north-west corner of the intersection looking at the damaged railing.

The photo below takes us closer to the damaged end of the struck railing.



Closer view of the damaged end of the railing.

The photo below shows the deformed ends of the damaged railing.



View of deformed ends of the damaged railing.

And finally, the photo below shows a close-up view of the end of one of the damaged, horizontal poles of the railing.



Photo showing the damaged end of one of the horizontal poles of the damaged railing.

A detailed discussion of this incident and its repercussions is beyond the scope of this news item. We hope to prepare a full discussion shortly as a separate article in the Articles page of this website. Meanwhile, readers should look at the extent of damage to the striking vehicle to consider the speed at which this railing might have been struck and then consider whether the noted separations in the railing are appropriate for the safety of the driving public. See our discussion shortly in the Articles page of this Gorski Consulting website.

UPDATE: November 6, 2016; 1130 hours

The noted harpooning article has now been uploaded to the Articles page of the Gorski Consulting website.

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