GEOTECHNICAL REPORT

PAVEMENT DISTRESS SR 430 (US 395) MILEPOST WA 8.57 to WA 11.70 WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

E.A. 73274-9 SEPTEMBER 2008

MATERIALS DIVISION

STATE OF NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MATERIALS DIVISION GEOTECHNICAL SECTION

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E.A. 73274-9

September 2008

WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

Prepared by: ______________________________

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INTRODUCTION

NDOT is preparing a Contract to preserve and rehabilitate SR 430 (US 395) from the end of the barrier rail North of Bowers Mansion Road (SR 429) to Pagni Lane, from Milepost WA 8.57 to WA 11.70 (Cumulative Mileage 7.964 to 11.037). The scope of the project includes cold milling to a depth of 4 inches and overlaying 3 inches of Plantmix Bituminous Surface (PBS) with 1 inch of Open Grade for both Northbound and Southbound outside travel lanes, and cold milling to a depth of 1 inch and placing 1 inch of Open Grade for the remaining roadway. The District II Maintenance staff identified three areas within the project limits where base failure is suspected because of the deteriorated condition of the pavement in those areas. The District II Maintenance Staff requested that the Geotechnical Section evaluate these concerned areas. The Boring Location Map in Appendix A provides a map of the project area and depicts boring locations and locations of suspected base failure.

A field visit at the project site was arranged on June 2, 2008 with Jerry Conners from the District II office, Tom Lumpkin from the District II Maintenance Division, Ashley Ablahani and Abbas Bafghi from the Geotechnical Section, and Kevin Marshall and Maynard Hinton from the Materials Division Field Exploration Crew. During the field visit, pavement distress in several areas was observed. The most notable distressed pavement areas were located on the outside travel lane in the Northbound direction between stations "Pe" 23+00 and "Pe" 45+00, and on the outside travel lane in the Southbound direction between stations "Ge" 107+00 and "Pe" 14+00. These limits include the areas of suspected base failure identified by the District II Maintenance staff. No signs of severe pavement distress on the inside travel lanes in either direction were noted.

PROJECT HISTORY

The historical record of pavement construction and resurfacing in this area is shown in the Project History Table in Appendix B. It shows that the last time any work was performed in the area of pavement distress was in 1995, with 3 inches of cold milling followed by the placement of 3 inches of PBS with Open Grade.

FIELD INVESTIGATION

On June 16 through 19, 2008, the NDOT Geotechnical Section conducted a subsurface site investigation in the aforementioned areas of pavement distress. The subsurface soil conditions were explored by drilling twelve dry auger borings with a diameter of 10 inches each to a maximum depth of 14 feet, using a Diedrich 120 drilling rig equipped with 6-inch hollow stem auger flights. Continuous logs of the subsurface conditions as encountered during the investigation were recorded at the time of drilling. Representative soil samples were obtained using SPT (Standard Penetration Testing) and CMS (California Modified Sampler) equipment and procedures. All soil samples were classified using the Unified Soil Classification System (USCS) in accordance with ASTM D 2487. The Boring Location Map, the Key to Boring Logs, and copies of the Boring Logs are provided in Appendix A.

The boreholes were inspected for water seepage shortly after drilling. Water was observed in boreholes LBM5 located approximately at station "Pe" 10+00, LBM6 located approximately at station "Ge" 123+90, LBM7 located approximately at station "Ge" 121+65, LBM9 located approximately at station "Ge" 114+40, and LBM10 located approximately at station "Ge" 112+75 in the Southbound outside travel lane. No boreholes were capped to allow for periodic water monitoring.

LABORATORY TESTING

Laboratory testing of selected samples consisted of:

- Natural Moisture Content (ASTM D 2216 and AASHTO T-265);
- Atterberg Limits (AASHTO T-89 and T-90);
- Particle Size Gradations (ASTM D 1140 and AASHTO T-88); and
- Resistance Value (R-Value Nevada T115). R-Value testing is a measure of subgrade strength and expansion potential and is used in design of flexible pavements.

Results from these laboratory tests are presented in the Summary of Results Tables, Particle Size Distribution Reports and Line Sampling Data Results in Appendix C.

DISCUSSION

Northbound Lanes

Pavement distress was observed in the outside travel lane wheel paths in the Northbound direction between stations "Pe" 23+00 and "Pe" 45+00. This distress can be classified as fatigue cracking, a series of interconnected longitudinal cracks located in one or both wheel path(s) caused by repeated traffic loadings on the pavement surface. An unstable base, inadequate drainage, insufficient pavement thickness, degradation and/or stripping in the asphalt concrete combined with the traffic loadings will accelerate this type of distress. The longitudinal cracks observed in the Northbound lanes were up to 2 inches wide and pieces of asphalt have begun to break away from the crack edges through the action of traffic. Photo 1 below shows both fatigue cracking and patching at station "Pe" 40+00. Patching has been performed on this section of roadway in an effort to keep the pavement surface intact. Photo 1 was taken at one of the three areas where District II Maintenance staff suspected base failure.

Geotechnical field investigation indicated that the subgrade soils in both cut and fill areas in the outside travel lane in the Northbound direction between stations "Pe" 23+00 and "Pe" 45+00 have high R-Values from 72 to 78 and non to low plastic fines with Plasticity Indices (P.I.) of 1 to 3. Groundwater was not encountered in any of the three boreholes in the Northbound lanes. The asphalt and base thicknesses were measured at each borehole. The asphalt thickness ranged from 7 to 9 inches and the base thickness ranged from 4 to 6 inches.

Southbound Lanes

Fatigue cracking, longitudinal cracking, rutting and transverse cracking were observed in the outside travel lane in the Southbound direction between stations "Ge" 107+00 and "Pe" 14+00. The most prevalent pavement distress can be described as interconnected longitudinal cracks accompanied with pavement depressions, as shown in Photo 2 at station "Ge" 124+00. Photo 2 was taken at the second location where District II Maintenance staff suspected base failure. The interconnected longitudinal cracks in the Southbound lanes come in the form of both fatigue cracking in the wheel paths and a poorly constructed pavement lane joint running parallel along the skip line. The maximum width of the cracks was five inches and pieces of asphalt have begun to break away from the crack edges. These cracks are considered high severity cracks.

Fatigue cracking and rutting in the wheel paths in the Southbound outside travel lane at station "Ge" 115+80 is depicted in Photo 3. Photo 3 was taken at the third location where District II Maintenance staff suspected base failure.

Transverse cracks, which are at approximately right angles to the center line, could be found in a few isolated areas in the Southbound lanes. This type of cracking is primarily caused by expansion and contraction of the pavement binder due to temperature changes or by age hardening of the asphalt. The transverse cracks found on the Southbound lanes were hairline or very narrow cracks which can allow only a small amount of the infiltration of moisture into the structural pavement section. Therefore, these cracks are considered low severity cracks.

Photo 2

Photo 3

Roadway drainage is a problem in the Southbound outside travel lane between stations "Ge" 115+50 and "Pe"13+00. According to the District II Maintenance Staff, water puddles in this travel lane area after rain and snow events, and the surface water run-off drains into the depressed and cracked pavement areas causing damage to the roadway structural section. The variations in roadway cross slopes, low points along the roadway alignment and rutting in the wheel paths in the Southbound outside travel lane can be seen in Photo 4. Photo 4 was taken at station "Ge" 122+00 looking Northbound.

Photo 4

Geotechnical field investigation indicated that the subgrade soils in the outside travel lane in the Southbound direction between stations "Ge" 107+00 and "Pe" 14+00 are mostly clayey soils with varying R-Values as low as 12 to as high as 78 and low to medium plastic fines with P.I. ranging from 2 to 17. Shallow groundwater, up to 5 feet below the surface, was encountered in several boreholes. The asphalt and base thicknesses were measured at each borehole. The asphalt thickness ranged from 6 to 8 inches and the base thickness ranged from 8 to 20 inches.

CONCLUSIONS

Severe pavement distress was observed only on the outside travel lanes in either direction. Heavy trucks usually travel in the outside lane ("the slow lane"). Consequently, the heavy wheel loads apply more pressure on the pavement and contribute to the deterioration of the pavement section in the outside lanes. In addition, the longitudinal cracks running parallel along the skip line indicate a poorly constructed pavement lane joint. Furthermore, as the Project History Table in Appendix B shows, the inside travel lanes were constructed before the outside travel lanes as this section of road was widened on both sides after the original construction. The difference in the design, materials, and quality of construction may have contributed to the variation in the performance of the pavement sections of the inside and outside lanes.

Once the asphalt layer exhibits distresses such as fatigue and pieces of asphalt break away from the roadway surface, traffic loadings are transmitted to the base layer more directly and with more impact. This can eventually cause the base section to weaken and deform. An unstable base, inadequate drainage, insufficient pavement thickness, inconsistent pavement structural section, poor quality of material and/or degradation of the asphalt combined with traffic loadings will accelerate pavement distress.

Northbound Lanes

Existing fatigue cracks are the results of pavement wear and pavement distress due to aging and heavy traffic loading. Pavement cracks usually start as hairline or vary narrow cracks and widen with age. Existing cracks were more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide and can allow the infiltration of moisture into the structural pavement section. Therefore, these cracks must be repaired to prevent the base section from weakening or deforming.

Southbound Lanes

The existing combination of fatigue cracking, longitudinal cracking, rutting, and transverse cracking observed in the Southbound lane is considered high severity pavement distress. Aging of pavement and heavy traffic loading in combination with ponding of roadway surface water run-off on the outside travel lane, presence of clayey subgrade soils with low strengths, an inconsistent pavement structural section and the existence of shallow groundwater have contributed to the pavement distress in this area. The severity of this combination of detrimental factors may have caused weakening and/or deformation of the base section.

Water can be considered as one of the main causes of progressing pavement distress. The worst pavement distressed locations exist where the cross slope of the road directs the pavement surface water run-off into those areas and causes saturation of the structural pavement section. The depressed pavement sections in the Southbound outside travel lane have created low spots in the cross slope of the roadway. Water flows into the pavement section from the ponding surface water run-off. Since the water has no way to drain out, it remains within the structural section for an extended time creating a "bathtub" condition. Free water within the pavement section weakens the pavement structure. The ability of the structural section to support wheel loads is severely reduced when the pavement section becomes saturated. A drainable pavement system is needed to remove infiltrated water which can not be prevented from entering the pavement structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A pavement's ability to carry heavy traffic loads depends on both the pavement materials (asphalt surfacing and granular base) and the strength of the underlying soils. Following are our recommendations for Repair Strategies based on the severity and extent of the pavement distress.

Northbound Lanes

Existing fatigue cracks in the Northbound outside travel lane are greater than 1/2 inch wide and are numerous. These cracks are considered to be high severity cracks. These cracks allow moisture to infiltrate into the pavement structural section causing structural failure. Without crack filling, asphalt pieces can break away and additional cracks can develop and become wide enough to require patching. Filling and sealing cracks will reduce moisture penetration and prevent further subgrade weakening. Fatigue cracking indicates a need for strengthening with an overlay or reconstruction. Because the subgrade soils have high R-Values with non to low plasticity, we recommend milling and replacing the cracked pavement layer with an overlay. We recommend no change or additions to the scope of the project for the repair strategy for the Northbound lanes.

Southbound Lanes

Water remaining for a long time within the pavement structural section and presence of clayey subgrade soils are recognized as the primary causes of the pavement distress in the Southbound outside travel lane. Clayey subgrade soils lose strength when they become saturated due to ponding of the surface water run-off. Therefore, it is important to prevent ponding of the water within the travel lanes. A properly designed pavement structural section to accommodate the presence of the low R-Values of the clayey subgrade soils and providing an effective pavement drainage system are the recommended solutions.

The most severe pavement distress has developed between stations "Ge" 114+00 and "Pe" 13+50, approximately 1,600 feet in the Southbound outside travel lane. Analysis of this section of roadway determined that 8 inches of new Plantmix on top of 20 inches of Base is needed to provide a stable pavement structural section. Details presenting the parameters used in this analysis and the results are in Appendix D. We recommend removing the existing structural pavement section to a depth of 28 inches below the surface and placing a nonwoven geotextile followed by 10 inches of millings, 10 inches of Aggregate Base, 8 inches of PBS, and 1 inch of Open Grade. It is important that proper cross slope for this section of roadway be constructed to allow sufficient surface water run-off.

Ponding of the surface water run-off on the Southbound outside travel lane seems to occur between stations "Ge" 115+50 and "Pe" 13+00, approximately 1,400 feet in length. Ponding of the surface water run-off must be prevented by either providing a subsurface drainage system (such as Edge Drain or Trench Drain) to drain the water away or by raising the roadway profile grade. Paved roadway surfaces will need to be constructed having a minimum of 2% cross slope or crown across the roadway. The 2% cross slope will provide approximately 3 inches of fall on a 12 foot wide travel lane. Shoulders should be constructed to have a greater slope to improve surface drainage. This can be accomplished by raising the roadway profile grade. Due to the presence of commercial businesses in this area and the necessity of having access driveways, establishing a roadside ditch does not appear to be practical. If the decision is made to construct a subsurface drainage system, details will be provided at a later date.

We advise that the limits of our recommendations be verified by District II Maintenance Staff.

Construction for this project is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2009. Because the condition of the existing pavement may deteriorate further before the start of the construction, we recommend temporarily repairing severely distressed areas. Following is the repair strategy that is recommended for the full width of the Southbound outside lane from stations "Ge" 111+25 to "Ge" 111+75, from stations "Ge" 115+60 to "Ge" 116+10, and from stations "Ge" 119+40 to "Pe" 14+00, for an approximate cumulative length of 1,200 feet :

- a) Mill 3 inches of the existing roadway surface;
- b) In areas with severe distressed pavement, most likely more than 3 inches and up to the full thickness of the pavement will be removed. In areas where the full pavement thickness has been removed, moisture condition and compact the aggregate base as much as practical. Patch and compact these areas with hot asphalt plantmix to the level of the remaining milled sections.
- c) Pave the milled surface with 3 inches of dense graded hot asphalt plantmix (Type 2C, PG 64-28NV). If possible, provide a proper cross slope that directs surface water run-off towards the shoulder.

The above recommended limits may be adjusted based on the condition of the roadway surface at the time of repair. In addition, seal the remaining extensive cracks with appropriate asphalt sealant and patch any areas where extensive pavement deterioration exists with plantmix bituminous surface on the northbound and southbound lanes within the project limits.

REFERENCES

- 1. AASHTO, "Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges," $17th$ Edition, 2002. Washington D.C., 1996. Includes Interims published in 1997 through 2002.
- 2. NDOT Materials Division, "Flexible Pavement Distress Identification Manual," May 2007.

APPENDIX A

Boring Location Map Key to Boring Logs Boring Logs

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KEY TO BORING LOGS

MOISTURE CONDITION CRITERIA

SOIL CEMENTATION CRITERIA

Blow counts on Calif. Modified Sampler (Ncms) can be converted to Nspr by:

 $(Ncms)(0.62)$ = Nspr Blow counts from Automatic or Safety Hammer can be converted to Standard SPT N60 by:

> $(N_{\text{AUTOMATIC}})(1.25)$ =N60 $(Ns_{\text{AFFT}})(1.17) = N60$

LAST MODIFIED: October 11, 2004

APPENDIX B

Project History Table
Project History Table

APPENDIX C

Summary of Results Tables Particle Size Distribution Reports Line Sampling Data Results

EA/Cont #

Job Description US 395 Washoe City Pavement Distress

CMS = California Modified Sampler 2.42" ID U = Unconfined Compressive H = Hydrometer CM = Compaction SPT = Standard Penetration 1.38" IDCS = Continuous Sample 3.23" ID CD = Consolidated Drained G = Specific Gravity SL = Shrinkage Limit RC = Rock Core CU = Consolidated Undrained PB = Pitcher BarrelCSS = Calif. Split Spoon 2.42" ID Φ = Friction $K =$ Permeability PL = Plastic Limit K = Permeability CPT = Cone Penetration TestTP = Test PitP = Pushed, not driven Ch = Chemical RQD = Rock Quality Designation Ch = Chemical RQD = Rock Quality Designation $R =$ Refusal Sh = Shelby Tube 2.87" ID MO = Moisture Density HCpot = Hydro-Collapse Potential

- DS = Direct Shear C = CohesionN = No. of blows per ft., sampler $OC = Consolidation$ D = Dispersive $N =$ Field SPT
- PI = Plasticity Index UW= Unit Weight LL = Liquid Limit W = Moisture Content NP = Non-Plastic $O =$ Organic Content $N = (N_{\text{css}})(0.62)$ $RV = R - Value$ $X = X-Ray$ Defraction
- UU = Unconsolidated Undrained S = Sieve Serve E = Swell/Pressure on Expansive Soils

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APPENDIX D

Pavement Design and Analysis Report

1993 AASHTO Pavement Design

DARWin Pavement Design and Analysis System

A Proprietary AASHTOWare Computer Software Product

Flexible Structural Design Module

SR 430, AADT Projected out to 2009 1.0 Mile South of Mount Rose Highway Used R-Value of 20

Flexible Structural Design

Simple ESAL Calculation

Total Calculated Cumulative ESALs

Specified Layer Design

6,197,485

