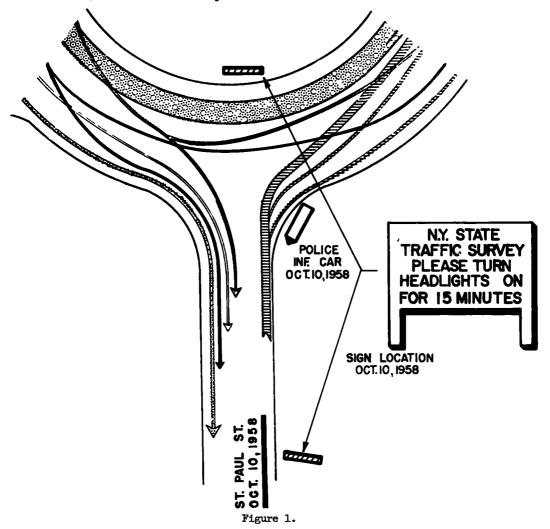
Novel Traffic Survey Method Utilizes Vehicle Lights

M. A. BEBEE, Director, Bureau of Highway Planning, New York State Department of Public Works

● DURING the week of October 6, 1958, a unique traffic survey was conducted in Rochester, N.Y., by the New York State Department of Public Works. The method eliminated severe congestion problems that would have occurred if any of the conventional methods requiring the traffic to stop had been used.

The facility under study was the Memorial Bridge Traffic Circle not far from the principal Eastman Kodak plant and other large industries in the northern part of the city. With peak-hour traffic volumes as large as 1,400 per lane entering the circle and six connecting streets, it was obvious from the first that a considerable operation was involved.

Several possible methods of making the survey had been considered, including the conventional roadside interview, the license plate survey, numbered stickers or colored facial tissues, and 10-sec motion pictures. All of these methods were discarded for



various reasons. It remained for a clerk, who was concerned with the administrative details of the survey and not with procedures, to make the novel suggestion that one approach be studied each day during the afternoon peak hours and that the motorists be simply requested to turn their lights on so their cars could be counted at the five exits.

GOOD PUBLICITY PAYS OFF

The press, radio, and television were quite enthusiastic about this approach and provided the very best of publicity. Their emphasis was on motorist participation. One paper stated: "Motorists will be asked to use their automobile headlights to shed some light on one of the city's traffic mysteries."

The operation became known as "Lights On." In addition to the excellent publicity, there was exceptional cooperation from all concerned, including the motorists. The police furnished a sound truck as each approach was studied. The position of the truck and the type and location of information signs are shown in Figure 1. A composite of the results is shown in Figure 2.

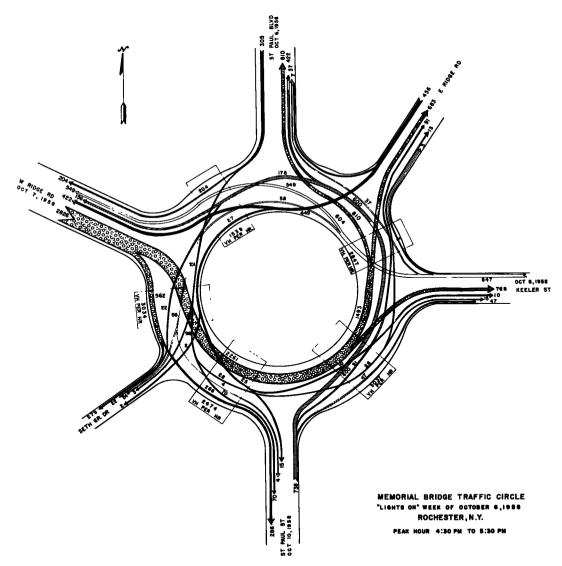


Figure 2.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that this simplified type of survey is applicable to many spot studies and that the method might introduce a whole new area of study, involving motorist participation.