

# Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

March 25, 2005

## **Meeting Minutes**

Teleconference  
ODOT T-Building in Salem and  
ODOT Regions 1, 3 & 4

Members Present: [Eric Niemeyer](#), Chair, Jackson County; [Joel McCarroll](#), Vice-Chair, ODOT Region 4; [Charles Radosta](#), ITE/Kittelsohn & Associates; [Cynthia Schmitt](#), Marion County; [Randall Wooley](#), City of Beaverton; Doug Bish for [Ed Fischer](#), Secretary, ODOT State Traffic Engineer; [Rob Burchfield](#), City of Portland; [Joseph Marek](#), Clackamas County; [Alan Hageman](#), OSP; Deborah Hogan for [Robin Lewis](#), City of Bend

Member Absent: [Robin Lewis](#), City of Bend; [Ed Fischer](#), Secretary, ODOT State Traffic Engineer

Others Present: Kevin Haas, Greg Stellmach, ODOT Traffic Engineering & Operations Section; Mark Leer, Greg Raisman, City of Portland; Kevin Hottman, City of Salem

### **Introduction**

Chairperson Eric Niemeyer called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. All present members and guests introduced themselves. The only agenda item for the meeting was school speed zone legislation and the working group formed at the request of the Legislature. Members were tasked with hammering out the OTCDC's position on what direction to give OTCDC members Cindy Schmitt and Randy Wooley as working group representatives of the committee.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **School Speed Zone Legislative Working Group**

Eric thanked everyone for being there. Copies of questions to be answered and possible sign legends were sent to all members prior to the meeting. Cindy reported talking to House Transportation Committee Administrator John Houser to get Randy and her admitted to the working group although he would have preferred just having one OTCDC representative. The City of Portland has also asked to be admitted to the group. House Bill 2365, which was originally introduced with 50 co-sponsors, is likely to be the bill that goes forward out of 4 House bills and 1 Senate bills introduced. The first meeting of the working group is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> from 3 pm to 5 pm at the Capitol Building. The time is short because there will be a hearing when a proposal is supposed to be ready on April 8<sup>th</sup> at the Courthouse in Bend. The committee then started working down the list of questions to determine what consensus could be reached on the OTCDC position regarding changes to school speed zone law.

#### **When Flashing-**

Do we agree that flashing lights should be an option in all speed zones?

Should flashers "control" if present?

Are flashers the best regardless of speed, adjacent, rural, urban, etc?

In general, the committee agreed that flashers should be an option in all school zones. Although the expense of installing flashers would make it difficult to mandate for all school zones. The clarity of the message, "When Flashing", make flashing beacons an attractive option. There is some concern that using the beacons part time in school zones that are AT ALL TIMES or Time posted could be confusing.

Decision: Randy moved and Charles Radosta seconded that the OTCDC support allowing flashing lights to control school speed applications in any school zone. The motion carried unanimously.

#### AT ALL TIMES -

Do we generally agree that 24/7 doesn't work?

Is it OK for some agencies to keep "at all times" if that is the local preference?

The committee agreed the Legislature is not going to accept retaining an AT ALL TIMES condition for school zones. The committee agreed that AT ALL TIMES is not a workable condition and by consensus agreed not to support keeping it even as a local option.

#### Times of day-

Should the effective times be left up to the local agencies or should they be uniform statewide?

How do we feel about an all-day (i.e., 7 am to 7 pm) proposal?

How do we feel about the hours approach (half hour each side of crossing times)?

After much discussion, the committee was able to come to consensus that the times on signs should ultimately be left up to individual jurisdictions. It was suggested that the OTCDC come up with guidelines outlining options and formats to help promote consistency of application throughout the state. For some communities, an all day (6 am-10 pm) school zone would be about as bad as AT ALL TIMES. Flexibility in the law was suggested so that criteria could be developed later for how it is used. How to do that wasn't clear. A suggestion to limit the range of options to 3 or 4 that local jurisdictions could use appeared to be counter to the need to have a clear and simple law for all to understand and follow. There was mention of keeping times to the full hour for easier readability but no consensus was reached.

#### School Zone Definition-

Adjacent vs. not adjacent issue, is this a problem as it currently is?

Members generally agreed that there shouldn't be a distinction between school zones that are adjacent to the school grounds and those that aren't adjacent,

#### When Children are present-

What should be the definition of "when children are present"?

Does the current definition [ ORS 811.124, which refers to ORS 801.461(1)(b)] mean it only applies to crosswalks that are not adjacent to a school?

The committee discussed the fact that this will need to be changed if school zones adjacent to school grounds are to be included. It was brought up that a school zone may be used by more than one school with different hours of attendance. Troy Costales has spent time discussing criteria for WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT and that ODOT's proposal is similar to the definition in Washington:

- (1) "Occupying or walking within the marked crosswalk";
- (2) "Waiting at the curb or on the shoulder of the roadway and are about to cross the roadway by way of the marked crosswalk"; or
- (3) "Present or walking along the roadway, either on the adjacent sidewalk or, in the absence of sidewalks, on the shoulder within the posted school speed limit zone extending 300 feet, or other distance established by regulation, in either direction from the marked crosswalk."

SB 179 as introduced in the 2003 Legislative session sought to clarify the following problematic language defining when children are present.:

“ children are present at any time and on any day when children are in a place where they are or can reasonably be expected to be visible to a person operating a motor vehicle that is passing a school ground or a school crosswalk.”

ODOT, with OTCDC approval had recommended the definition for “When Children are Present” be changed as follows:

“...children are present at any time and on any day when children are:

- (1) Occupying or walking within a crosswalk;
- (2) Waiting on the curb or the shoulder of the highway at a crosswalk;
- (3) Present on or beside or walking along a highway, either on the adjacent sidewalk or, if there is not a sidewalk, on the shoulder of the highway; or
- (4) On an exterior unfenced portion of a school grounds and within 50 feet of a highway.”

The consensus of the committee was for Cindy and Randy to review earlier proposed language and be prepared to present something to OTCDC and the working group along the lines of what was proposed by ODOT and the committee two sessions ago. There was some discussion about how When Children are Present has been enforced in the past. It was also noted that it is a good option for locations with low numbers of pedestrians and locations where school crossing times occur over an extended period of time.

### Speed Distinction

The committee came up with another question as to whether there should be a distinction on school speed zoning based on what the surrounding speed limit is.

Most agreed that there should be no distinction. There was consensus that if there was speed limit criteria any distinction for various speed zones that 25 MPH would be a better dividing line than 30 MPH. It was suggested that guidance criteria, if there was to be such, might better come from the OTCDC than be specified in legislation.

### Effective Date

What is a reasonable effective date of the new law?

If the existing signing is an allowed option under the new law, does that change our opinion on the reasonable effective date?

Sufficient implementation time was important to the committee, as was making sure that there was a deadline for compliance by all jurisdictions. September 1 seemed like a good deadline and changing over during the summer was seen as causing less disruption for the school year. Given that guidance, the committee agreed to let Cindy and Randy negotiate what the effective date should be. They should keep in mind that any guidelines from the OTCDC and any subsequent approvals of the OTC will take time to process.

### Plaques-

How do we want to handle the complaints about size of lettering?

Do we want to increase the size of the plaques?

Do we want to standardize on allowing only one time period?

How is “School Days” working?

Any other proposals?

The committee had some discussion over plaque size and wording. There were no new ideas on better wording than “SCHOOL DAYS” on the signs. As to whether that wording is effective, it was pointed out that we have yet to go through a summer and so don't know that the signs are being understood as not applying except when school is in session. The committee wasn't ready to reach consensus on this item due

to uncertainty over what rules the signs would be establishing would be. The committee agreed not to address the plaque size and leave that to a later date to be addressed preferably by the OTCDC and not the legislation..

The committee asked that Randy and Cindy keep the OTCDC posted of any highlights of the working group meetings.

**Next Meeting Date**

The OTCDC meets next on May 20, 2005 at the Wilsonville Library at 9:00 am in conjunction with the ITE Conference

**Meeting Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m.