

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2002

Marion County Public Works, Salem, Oregon

Members Present: Charles Radosta, Chair, ITE/Kittelson & Associates; Rob Burchfield, City of Portland; Gordon Renskers, OSP; Bill Ciz, ODOT Region 1; Cynthia Schmitt, Marion County; Joseph Marek, Clackamas County; Stephen Wilson for Gary Judd, Deschutes County; Ed Fischer, Secretary, ODOT State Traffic Engineer; Randall Wooley, City of Beaverton

Members Absent: Robin Lewis, City of Bend; Gary Judd, Deschutes County

Others Present: Orville Gaylor, Rick Wood, Doug Bish, Steve Lindland, Heidi Shoblom, Michael Ronkin, Paul Davis, ODOT Traffic Management Section; Robert Morast, Washington County; Lew Garrison, City of Salem, Ed Chastain, Lane County, Eric Niemeyer, Jackson County; Rick Braden, Oregon State Parks; Nick Fortey, FHWA

Introduction/Approval of January 18, 2002 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Charles Radosta called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves. Ed Fischer introduced Bill Ciz as replacing Stephen Wilson as of this meeting and Eric Niemeyer, who will replace Gary Judd starting with the July meeting. The Committee then voted approval of the January 18, 2002 meeting minutes as corrected.

Old Business

Approval of Guidelines for the Operation of Variable Message Signs

Rick Wood introduced the final draft of the subject Guidelines, with changes incorporated from the last meeting and requested committee approval of it. It was pointed out that the web page listing needed to be fixed, and a few typos were to be given to Rick to fix. There was some discussion as to varying use of the words "Wreck", "Crash", "Accident" and "Incident". Rick said he'd clean that language up, likely just using "Wreck".

Decision: Joe Marek moved, Cynthia Schmitt seconded, and the committee approved the guidelines as amended.

Update on the MUTCD Administrative Rule

Doug Bish said that the Admin Rule has gone through the comment process without any comment received. Therefore it will go to the Transportation Commission for approval at their meeting on April 10th. However FHWA had some comments that needed resolution in order to do that. Nick Fortey said these were the last two issues FHWA wasn't happy with.

FHWA is resisting Supplement 2A.02 Definitions, substituting LT, RT and AV instead of LFT, RHT and AVE to abbreviate Left, Right and Avenue. In the interest of uniformity throughout the states, they don't see enough justification for the variations. These abbreviations are typically used in supplemental directional guide signs at intersections.

The committee discussed extra sign width using the FHWA approved definitions, whether FHWA's versions were more or less understandable, and whether it would be possible to put out a later supplement substituting abbreviations. Orville said at least in the case of Left, he would go ahead and spell it out rather than use LFT.

Decision: Committee consensus being that this wasn't worth fighting over now, Rob Burchfield moved to eliminate Supplement 2A.02. Ed Fischer seconded and all voted in favor. Steve Wilson clarified with a motion to notify FHWA that we continue to have an issue over this and will be in further discussion over it. Cynthia Schmitt seconded, and again all were in favor.

FHWA is also resisting Oregon's proposed Supplement to Section 3B-16. It would approve alternate use of 12"-24" wide solid stop line pavement markers supplementary to YIELD signs, eliminating the requirement for exclusive use of a row of isosceles triangle pavement markers (along with the YIELD signs). FHWA doesn't understand why Oregon wants to do this. Oregon uses the solid lines commonly at free right turns to traffic lights, where the right turn isn't signalized, perhaps separated by an island. The Traffic Line Manual currently allows their use. The first roundabout did not use a yield line but had a dashed entrance line. The committee discussed the maintenance of isosceles triangles versus the solid lines and whether there's a strong need to deviate from the MUTCD here. Rick said that he believed the discussion started because in Oregon law, under the discussion of what to do at Yield signs, it talks about where vehicles should stop and says that would be at a line as used for the Stop Line. So it's easier to stick with that, and if we're not going to, then the law may need a little modification.

Decision: Committee consensus was to not argue this issue with FHWA either, Randall Wooley moved to delete the supplement for Section 3B-16. Ed Fischer seconded and all voted in favor.

Bill Ciz then asked how the information about changes in the Millennium Edition and Supplements will be gotten to ODOT maintenance staff and others who need to know. Ed said a summary of all the changes in the new MUTCD and ODOT supplements should probably be made up and distributed. As the weather changes and striping crews start getting busy, they should be made aware of the changes. Other committee members expressed an interest in wider distribution of such a summary. It was agreed that some folks likely aren't even aware that there is a new MUTCD.

✓ Action Item - Committee consensus was that ODOT should prepare a summary of all changes in the Millennium Edition of the MUTCD and Oregon Supplements thereto for ODOT Regions, LOC/AOC, and interested others after both have been adopted. The fact that the new MUTCD is downloadable from FHWA's website will be included.

Update on the Expected Distribution of the Next MUTCD

Ed Fischer said that he'd had discussions with Ernie Huckaby of FHWA regarding the distribution of the new MUTCD. Huckaby is on the team responsible for the updates to the Millennium Edition. The first errata that came out last summer was just for typo's . Then Revision 1, issued back in June of last year (having to do with accessible peds) followed, and the interim final rule didn't come out until last month. Delays due to Section 508 of the Americans With Disabilities Act requiring the federal government to make their websites available to the blind with audible tags are holding up publication of the final rule for the next amendment. There will be a lot of changes to each chapter, particularly Parts 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10. The FHWA plans to have the changes in the Federal Register for review in April. This may well slip into May, and it's probably going to be the summer of next year before the update is in final form. So the best advice as far as ordering copies of the MUTCD is to hold off on buying more than one office copy. Ed said ODOT Traffic has bought a few CD's and noted that the MUTCD is downloadable from the FHWA website. The new standard highway signs book in Metric is going to be available on FHWA's website in April. It is hoped that later in the year the English version will be out. FHWA is hoping to receive comments on it for 60 days after it's available on the website. When the next revision to the MUTCD does come out, the committee will need to recall it's subcommittees to review the revision for any changes needed to the Oregon Supplements. Rick Wood noted that the subcommittee on Parts 4, 8 and 10 has already reviewed the first revision without finding any major changes. It was also noted that the ITE has just put out a new Traffic Control Devices Handbook.

Update on ODOT Traffic Line Manual

Doug Bish handed out copies of the English striping standards and the verbiage for the Traffic Line Manual. He said he'd like to get comments on both documents from members as soon as possible. The last version of the Traffic Line Manual came out in 1996. It is primarily used by highway maintenance traffic personnel that go out and put down lines. As standards change maybe the taper of the road wouldn't accommodate what we do in standard new construction so they'd need some guidance on that. It also gives guidance on practices for when we put down crosswalk markings. The yield line needs to be changed. It also has passing zones. Comments are due by the end of April so it can be brought back to the next OTCDC Meeting.

The committee discussed when use of the marking "ONLY" is still required. Bob Morast said there's some confusion in Washington County where their operations personnel think "ONLY" is no longer required. Orville agreed with Bob that it is still required, particularly in trap lanes. He said with the new MUTCD, there's been quite a few more situations where the requirement is added. There will be a Metric version. Orville said the drawings are the same as will be in the ODOT/APWA standard drawings except for interstate drawings.

✓ Action Item - Committee members should get comments on the drafts back to Doug Bish or Jan Gipson by April 30, 2002.

Update on the Short Term Work Zone Handbook (STWZ)

Doug Bish said that if good guidance is obtained from FHWA's next Notice of Propose Rulemaking on where they're going with MUTCD Part 6, ODOT is looking at including some of that and putting out a new short term work zone handbook. Even if such guidance isn't obtained, Jan may go with what we have on a short term work zone handbook because it's going to be a while before the next MUTCD revision comes out. Doug said the plan is to combine current books into one book. He said there is currently a book for state highways, one for all highways, and one for survey crews. He believes at least the book for state highways and all highways can be combined.

Possible 2003 Legislation

Ed Fischer reported on the legislative concepts that were just approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission that will be proposed to the 2003 Legislature. There are 39 of them, but only two of them are of germane to the committee. The first is one, which may need involvement or assistance from the committee is defining when children are present in school zones. The other would do other housekeeping on state speed laws, removing language that no longer applies in Oregon, removing urban/rural language, deleting reference to federal maximum limit, and retaining speed limit designations for special areas such as school zones, alleys, etc. The committee discussed other possible legislation that the OTC didn't propose. Ed asked members to let ODOT know if there are any other ideas on legislation. Rob Burchfield suggested cleaning up the language regarding YIELD lines to comply with the new MUTCD.

New Business

Update on the 2002 Standard Specifications

Dale Deatherage reported on the new publication that will be coming out in the next month or so. He said that this publication was in response to an initiative from the Governor that this would be a good idea and 150 Oregonians from various jurisdictions, consultants, contractors and professional organizations have been working on this. He said the community associated with letting contracts (state public agency directors) have received a new directive from the Department of Justice requiring approval from DOJ of the new publication. The DOJ subsequently had significant revisions to the publication. They've since pretty much completed work on it and it is due out April 4, 2002.

The Standard Specifications will be available in three ring binders or in a bound book the size of the Yellow Book, in a maroon/blue/white cover. The cost will be \$50.00 and will replace APWA or any other particular jurisdiction's publication on specifications. Advance copies are also available on the web in PDF format at <http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/roadway/specs/home.htm>. Hard copies may be ordered on the web at <http://www.odot.state.or.us/ContractorPlans/ManualSubmitOrder.htm> or by calling ODOT's Contractor Plans office at (503) 986-3720.

The implementation date has yet to be decided but it can be used by anyone who would like to as long as it's not on an ODOT project (one that goes through Commission Services). Standard Drawings will be available as a separate publication. As folks start using the publication and see any areas they think need changing, they may submit their ideas and the steering committee will consider them for updates. The publication was originally going to be Metric but it has been revised to have dual units. There are standard drawings that go with the book but they will be separate and separately purchased. ODOT plans to update the special provisions to mirror the new MUTCD. The Standard Drawings are only in English, and only include about 35-40% of the drawings which can be expected to be used by local agencies, such as those that deal with roadways, waterline work, etc. The drawings will be in AutoCADD format. APWA is expected to furnish the English AutoCADD drawings.

Countdown Timers for Pedestrian Signals

Joe Marek handed out reading material and asked for committee comments on the timers. He is considering using them on an experimental basis. The devices give pedestrians information on how long they have left to cross at a signalized crosswalk. Opinion from members was generally positive. Ed said ODOT has avoided liability issues in the past by getting FHWA approval to use new products. There are several experiments with the timers going on throughout the country, including Springfield, Oregon. Rick Wood cautioned that they probably shouldn't be used at railroad preemption locations where the signal may preempt out of a flashing DON'T WALK. He also suggested that it be determined whether the device meets ODOT specifications, and that it should be run it through the environmental lab. Ed agreed that care should be taken on where the timers are tried. He said he'd only seen them at small intersections where there wasn't much traffic or need for them. He did notice that they are visible from some distance by drivers, who might see them as a reason to accelerate in order to "beat the time". He suggested they should be louvered to prevent visibility in the main line of traffic. He thought it was probably worth looking into, particularly in cases of large or divided intersections to provide pedestrians with this extra information.

Joe asked if the committee would take a vote on the advisability of experimenting with the timers. The committee agreed that they would prefer to see more information on current experiments before taking such a vote. Some early data does seem to indicate that the signal is reducing the incidence of pedestrians leaving the curb too late in the WALK cycle.

✓ Action Item - Joe Marek will bring back more information to the committee at a future meeting.

Orange County Report on Protected/Permissive Phasing

Joe Marek also passed out copies of a report from Orange County, California, that came up with new recommendations for the use of protected/permissive phasing, particularly adjustments to signal head placement for the doghouse signal. They were not on the lane line, but three feet into the main travel lane with another far side head for people turning left to see. The report also recommended not using the LEFT TURN YIELD ON GREEN BALL sign. It was pointed out that the sign is required in the new MUTCD but the new Oregon Supplements make it optional. The committee discussed various ongoing experiments with protected/permissive signals in Oregon and elsewhere. It was agreed to give committee members time to review the subject and bring up as a discussion item at the next meeting.

✓ Action Item - Protected/Permissive Signal issues as brought up in the Orange County report will be placed on the next meeting agenda as a discussion item.

Moving July 19th Meeting to Lane County

Charles Radosta brought up his discussion with Ed Chastain regarding having the July meeting to Eugene to accommodate members who are based closer to that area. The committee agreed to have the meeting there if Chastain provides a room and victuals.

- ✓ Action Item - Ed Chastain will arrange for accommodations and the committee will hold the July OTCDC meeting in Eugene.

Joint ITE/OTCDC Meeting in May

Charles Radosta announced that again the May meeting will be in conjunction with the ITE meeting. This year that will be in Portland at the Kennedy School. A map will be provided along with the agenda prior to the meeting.

Combining OTCDC Fall Meeting with the ACTS Safety Conference

Charles Radosta asked for committee comment as to whether last year's meeting in conjunction with the ACTS conference worked out well. Consensus was that it did. This year's conference will be held at the Embassy Suites by Washington Square in Portland in October. It was suggested that ODOT could coordinate with ACTS to put on a presentation on changes to the new MUTCD. Discussion was had on possible difficulties for providing a note-taker for out of town meetings. It was agreed this would be worked out. The actual date of this meeting, which will replace the September meeting will be worked out and announced in the next meeting.

- ✓ Action Item - Date of combined OTCDC/ACTS Safety Conference meeting will be placed on the next meeting agenda as an information/discussion item.

Non-Agenda Items

Flashing Permitted Yellow Arrow Displays

Randall Wooley said that Beaverton was planning to join the Flashing Permitted Arrow Experimental Project on three signalized intersections - Allen-Wilson, Allen-Menlo and 5th-Western (all local streets) in the city. Ed Fischer expressed a concern that he's already addressed in a letter to Eric Niemeyer. He said on the three-section head arrangement, he thinks maybe the committee ought to establish a standard on how that display is going to work. It's still experimental and there's a concern that when the middle section is used as the flashing amber, the motorist may have difficulty seeing or noticing when it goes to the solid yellow clearance interval. Now that the technology allows a bi-modal head (LED head that can be green or yellow), Ed thought maybe it should be wired so that the lower head would have the green arrow for the protected phase and also be able to flash yellow for the permissive phase so that when the clearance phase arrives, you see the movement to the middle section before it turns to red. That may be a more discernable/visible change for the motorist. Additionally, in Jackson County's case, he thought that use of the three section head (because of clearance limitations), may mean conflict monitoring of that phase isn't getting done. That needs to be checked and is of greater concern than the display. If we're not monitoring the potential conflict of a green signal on the side street while the permissive yellow flashes on the main street, and an accident occurs, it could be big trouble. So Ed wants anybody going into this experiment to be sure that all appropriate phases are monitored. Rick agreed that the main concern is with the side street. Ed said he is leaning toward requiring the bi-modal use of the bottom signal. Eric said he could see where the change from flashing yellow to solid yellow could be difficult to discern. However, in the county's case, because the flashing yellow arrow changes to solid yellow at the same instant that the two adjacent indications also turn yellow at the same time. Ed said that was a good point but that the committee should have further discussion on the subject.

- ✓ Action Item - Flashing Permitted Yellow Arrow Displays should be put on a future agenda for further consideration as to whether/what standards need to be established for this kind of signal.

Highway Route Shields on Local Roads

Rob Burchfield brought up the issue of continuing route signing when the state transfers segments of highway routes as well as other off-system signing that the state would like local jurisdictions to maintain. There was considerable discussion of the competing interests and views regarding highway routes, highway numbers, route shields, directional signing, etc. without a final resolution.

Oregon Trail Signs

Orville said that ODOT has renegotiated with the National Parks Service and they will pay ODOT to make signs for them and distribute them to the appropriate jurisdictions. These will be back on line soon and distributed as time allows.

Orville Gaylor - PDH's

Orville then passed out a memo detailing how registered professional engineers can take credit (hour for hour) for attendance at OTCDC Meetings under their Professional Development Hours requirements to continue their certification.

The meeting Adjourned at: 12:00 p.m.

Our next meeting is scheduled for May 17th, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. at the Kennedy School in Portland.