

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

May 14, 2004

Meeting Minutes

Hollinshead Barn
Bend, Oregon

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

Members Absent: [Jim Rentz](#), OSP

Others Present: Massoud Saberian, Doug Bish, Paul Davis, Greg Stellmach, Julia Wellner, Jan Gipson, June Ross, Scott Cramer, ODOT Traffic Management Section; Dan MacDonald, ODOT Rail Division; David Boyd, ODOT Region 4; Brian Barnett, City of Springfield; Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem; Bill Kloos, Keith Orr, City of Portland; Tom Larsen, City of Eugene; Robert Morast, Washington County; Orville Gaylor, Gaylor Consulting; Alan Hollen, 3M Corporation; Karen Giese, Marc Butorac, Chris Tiesler, Kittelson & Associates; Bill Ciz, Parametrix; Gary Judd, Deschutes County; Gary Wells, Oregon Fire Chiefs; Xavier Falconi, Falconi Consulting; Todd Mobley, Lancaster Engineering

Introduction – Additional Agenda Items – Approval of January 16 Meeting Minutes

New Chairperson Robin Lewis called the meeting to order. The committee and other attendees introduced themselves. Eric Niemeyer moved approval of the [January 16, 2004 meeting minutes](#). Randall Wooley seconded and the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

MUTCD Review Groups

Jan Gipson provided handouts and reviewed changes in the 2003 MUTCD's Introduction and Part 1. No Oregon Supplements were suggested. 'Interim Approvals' was probably the biggest change. It adds a process whereby a road authority can apply for an interim approval for a device or a practice that has been trialed, in the US or elsewhere and has research to back it up. If the approval is given, other states can also apply for interim approval without the requirement for research or experimentation. The interim approval is good until the federal approval makes it in to the MUTCD. If it ultimately gets disapproved by FHWA, all devices, or practices must be abated. Other changes in Part 1 included new and revised definitions and reference publications and standards.

Doug Bish talked about recommended changes to Parts 7 and 9 in the Oregon Supplements. Two changes have been recommended by Doug's subcommittee, defining the appropriate use of the plaques for AT ALL TIMES, SCHOOL DAYS/hours posted, WHEN FLASHING and WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT and redefining the use of Stop lines in conjunction with STOP HERE FOR PEDS.

Rob Burchfield suggested that the Oregon Supplements should be more specific for what they are replacing/modifying in the MUTCD. Ed said we'd take a look at that, but that we don't want to end up making the Oregon Supplement too long by quoting too much of the MUTCD there. Rob said that for review purposes at least, that it would be easier to interpret the proposed changes if the supplements are written so that we can compare the old language (delete) with the new language (proposed). Consistency and clarity should be the standard. Doug will work with Julia and get something into the sign policy and school area guidelines and bring something back to the committee for decision on the school sign assembly.

Joel McCarroll suggested that the supplement for School Speed Assembly be shortened considerably taking out all the references to the appropriate use of different plaques (incorporating those into the Sign Policy perhaps) and just saying "In addition to the plaques allowed by the MUTCD plaques stating AT ALL TIMES and SCHOOL DAYS may be used".

For Part 9, Doug's group just clarified bicycle lane signs may only be used in conjunction with marked bicycle lanes, and replacing the diamond symbol with bicycle lane symbol marking.

✓ Action Item – Doug will bring back final language for decision at future meeting.

Greg Stellmach brought forth suggested Oregon Supplement changes for Part 3. First was a clarification in accordance with new Oregon law that in advance of crosswalks stop lines shall be used rather than yield lines. Ed Fischer moved changing "Yield to Peds" to "Stop for Peds in all cases of paragraph 8 of 3B.16. Rob Burchfield 2nded and the committee agreed

Regarding marking of speed humps, the need for marking these brought forth some suggested language that the committee modified as follows (Rob Burchfield moved, Ed Fischer seconded):

3B.26 Speed Hump Markings

Speed humps are most effective when the driver knows they are in place. Pavement markings are the best way to be sure the hump is visible. "Speed humps should be marked on public roadways to identify their location."

Following further discussion of speed humps and crosswalk stop lines, Massoud Saberian encouraged other interested people to join in reviewing Parts 4, 8 and 10. He passed out his proposed schedule for review and presentation of any language for the Oregon Supplements prior to presenting to the OTCDC in July and finalizing language by October 2004 and presentation to the OTCDC for final approval. He has a CD for those who are interested with a PowerPoint presentation of the differences between the Millennium and 2003 MUTCD's. The October final approval date was changed to September since the Committee will be meeting then.

Jan Gipson said there was a committee working on Part 5 and there were probably no significant changes. Any supplements that do come out on it will probably come out of the changes to Parts 2, 3 and 6.

On Part 6, there are 33 types of changes identified so far. Some are innocuous. Others may require supplements. The accessibility changes are the main changes. The concerns these raise may be covered in the Short Term Traffic Control Handbook as they aren't critical in longer term installations. The new Incident Response section is fairly general and shouldn't need a supplement. Anything specific should be able to be handled in the Handbook. Changes that relate specifically to visual disabilities and intersection traffic control during temporary traffic control will require a closer look.

Traffic control planning emphasis is a whole new section. A proposed federal ruling on these new temporary traffic control planning requirements recently had some changes issued, for which Jan provided a handout for informational purposes. Jan expects some supplements to come out but her committee has not yet met. She's getting a review matrix together for the committee.

Julia Wellner updated the committee on Part 2 from her handout and said she hoped to have proposed supplements for the July meeting. There will be a lot of work to have supplements finalized at the September meeting.

Status Report on SB 663 U-turn Study

June Ross reviewed the Legislature's directive to study the feasibility of expanding the number of U-turns in Oregon. This was an update from the October 2003 OTCDC meeting where the committee had provided some input. Criteria is in the current OAR on when U-turns can be allowed and in ODOT's Sign Policy and Guidelines establishes more specific information on adequate radii for establishing U-turns, both for trucks and other vehicles. This is also addressed in the Traffic Manual and Signal Policy and Guidelines. These go further than the ORS or OAR in saying that U-turns should not be permitted if there's going to be conflicts with right turn overlap. June reported on survey conducted of the ODOT regions to find out the number of current U-turn locations and any processes being used to determine if they should be permitted. Further input on additional criteria that might be needed was also collected. Conflicts with other vehicles and capacity issues were brought up. Some consensus was found that if we do change the law, some criteria might be useful if it's not too prescriptive. Other concerns included the practicality of posting signs, especially if space is limited or mast arms aren't long enough. Surveys of cities and counties were also conducted and 30 agencies responded, including Portland and Salem so a fairly good sample was achieved. Other states were also surveyed and 27 responded. Only Wisconsin, among the responses, had a law similar to Oregon's. All the other responding states, including our neighbors, allow U-turns at intersections unless specifically prohibited.

June's tentative conclusions from this less than exhaustive research is that a very small percentage of signalized intersections in Oregon currently allow U-turns (about 2%) on city, county and state highway roadways. The consensus seems to be that the signs could be increased to about 5% of signalized intersections, maybe a little more if aggressively pursued. Factors to consider as reported by cities and counties are safety, conflicts with other vehicles, access, adequate spacing and liability. Liability was also a concern with the Committee back in October if signing might be seen as saying a U-turn is safe. In order to significantly increase the number of locations where U-turns are allowed, Oregon statute would need to be changed to be more like other states. The advantage to this would be uniformity with bordering states. Many state laws seem to be based on guidance provided by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances that states that the driver can make U-turns only if it can be made safely without interfering with other traffic. This is consistent with the Uniform Vehicle Code and clearly puts the responsibility on the judgment of the U-turning driver if a crash occurs. Most states didn't have specific criteria for placing signs that prohibit U-turns. They appear to rely on engineering judgment.

The committee discussed the issues further from June's discussion questions listing as to the pro's and con's of changing current law. Consensus appeared to be that the experience of the majority of states and consistency with them was the primary "pro" and the possibility that it might end in less than optimal legislative language was the major "con". Ed Fischer said that if research results in a positive recommendation to the Legislature, proposed language would probably be included. He also said that whatever recommendation is made, it will likely be enhanced by the support of the OTCDC. A draft will be brought back to a future meeting. U-turns at railroad crossings, non-signalized intersections and where there is right-turn overlap may also be considered in the draft.

Sign Policy & Guidelines for School Areas

Julia Wellner had a handout for members and said that the proposed signing changes were in response to SB 179. They are separate for now from the ongoing review of the 2003 MUTCD. Rob and others had concerns about this separation because signs might need to be changed significantly again under the new MUTCD at an added financial burden for jurisdictions. Julia said we had to be ready for SB 179 by the legislative deadline of July 1. Rob thought we should and could do both. Also mentioned was the fact that the "FINES DOUBLE..." sign is not accurate and should probably be replaced with a "FINES HIGHER..." sign.

The committee discussed one modification on page 7-1 that would allow overhead use of School Crossing sign OS2-1 for supplemental use only. It includes crosswalk lines and is no longer included in the MUTCD but could be used overhead as a supplement to the standard ground-mounted School Crosswalk Assembly (S1-1 with diagonal arrow). Consensus was to phase out this sign to conserve inventory space and simplify, and to allow S1-1 without the rider as a supplementary overhead sign.

Due to a shortage of time, it became clear that another meeting was going to be needed in the next couple weeks to review the proposed signing changes prior to July. The committee agreed to meet again May 21st at the Marion County Shops if a room was available. Julia said that if anybody had comments prior to the next meeting, they can send them to her and she'll try to incorporate.

Mobile InfraRed Transmitter (MIRT) Update

Bill Kloos presented a two page summary on MIRT's with two main issues - pirated technology being offered to private citizens and recent ODOT addition of Tomar StrobeCom to the Qualified Products List (QPL) as an option to 3M Opticom for ODOT projects which presents compatibility concerns. More study is being done and questions need to be answered. He wanted any OTCDC comments on the proposed plan, and wanted to know if others wanted to participate on the MIRT committee and/or Tomar/3M testing. He introduced Deputy Chief Gary Wells from Tualatin Valley representing Oregon Fire Chiefs to discuss their concerns.

Chief Wells said that the fire chiefs are concerned about compatibility as a result of changes as a public safety and firefighter safety issue. They don't have a problem with multiple vendors, just multiple technologies. Their experience is no two systems ever work the same. Second, they've invested considerable money in one system and are concerned that their money will be wasted. They have some real concerns about unanticipated costs down the road if standards change and they aren't sufficiently consulted.

Bill said they will be doing more testing, including the encoding option but they're concerned that pirates may be up to that challenge as well. He also brought in a flyer that was found on windshields in a parking garage and gave the copy to Ed Fischer.

Ed Fischer said that ODOT might have been a little more explicit in their letter, for which he apologized but everyone should know that ODOT does not intend to do anything that would in any way disrupt systems that are already in place. We do want to have competition and save the taxpayers money through selective use of competition. However, it's ODOT's intent to be sure that if there is a system in place and a new signal is installed that requires preemption, if the encoded system is needed, that will be specified for that signal.

Ed also said that he wants to make sure that there's a real problem before getting too excited but he has previously contacted the attorney generals office last November and found there may be a possibility of

going after people advertising the pirated systems for violating the Fair Trade Practices Act for advertising anything that's illegal without at least indicating on the advertisement that it's illegal. This can be expensive, though and ODOT doesn't have the budget. Bill Kloos suggested other sources such as the Chiefs Association might be able to help with the funding. Ed said he would keep the MIRT Committee and Fire Chiefs informed and it will come back to the Committee as needed. He also noted that it is illegal to sell the preemption devices to Police organizations that have not been given specific authorization by the road authority to have and operate the devices. He suggested that 3M, Tomar and any other vendors should be careful about violating the law in this way. Bob Morast asked if there was any way to find out who was authorized. ODOT has only authorized the Sweet Home Police to use them on state highways. The City of Portland has two vehicles that are authorized. Keith Orr commented that emitters must have a parking lockout to prevent continuous inadvertent preemption of signals. Ed Said that requirement was included in authorization letters.

No Pass Pennant Signs

This item was preempted for lack of time and will have to be rescheduled.

Discuss July 16th OTCDC Meeting Location

The committee agreed to accept Eric Niemeyer's offer to have the July meeting in Medford. Eric will provide plenty of hot coffee and top notch pastry, as well as other local recreation options after the meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEM

June Ross mentioned that she's gotten little response to an email transmission to final revisions to the red light running guidelines. She therefore thinks that ODOT will go ahead with the revision and make it available to cities. The same is true regarding response to her modifications of the guidelines for variable message signs, more specific guidance regarding ice messages.

Robin said use of preemption devices in advance of roundabouts is an issue in Bend where the fire department is resisting signing agreement for further roundabouts without preemption capabilities. Robin's working to get a viable solution that defines when preemption of roundabouts would be a good option. She'll report back to the committee. It will be similar to the "Stop Here for Peds", except it will be "Stop Here for Emergency Vehicles" in advance of the roundabout.

She also passed out handouts from the preempted agenda item on No Pass Pennants. Ed said this was the result of a survey of State Traffic Engineers around the country. He said Oregon is one of only three or four states that do not use the "No Pass" pennants. This is in the current Oregon Supplements. Ed wants the sign committee to consider this and that a lot of states have some specific criteria used for deciding when and where to use the pennants.

Future Meeting

The next meeting will be held May 21, 2004 at [Marion County Public Works](#).

The meeting adjourned at 12:00.